

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Lincoln Park

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 25th Avenue West and 5th Street

City or town: Duluth State: MN County: Saint Louis

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

<p>Signature of certifying official/Title: _____ Date _____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p> <p>In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>Signature of commenting official: _____ Date _____</p> <p>Title : _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain: _____)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

Public – Local X

Public – State

Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

District X

Site

Structure

Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Outdoor Recreation

LANDSCAPE: Park

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Outdoor Recreation

LANDSCAPE: Park

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: WPA Rustic

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: EARTH, STONE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Duluth's street grid is generally not aligned on cardinal points. Standard practice in the city is to refer to northeast as east, northwest as north, southwest as west, and southeast as south. Lincoln Park, for example, is located in West Duluth, which is southwest of Duluth's commercial downtown. This nomination adopts the Duluth nomenclature.¹

Located about two miles west of downtown Duluth, Lincoln Park is long and narrow, following Miller Creek as it rapidly descends between Skyline Drive/West 14th and West 3rd Streets. Lincoln Park Drive, the park's only vehicular access, traverses the park's entire length, with two spurs for access at 10th Street and north of 6th Street. Stairways facilitate pedestrian movement between the park, nestled in the creek's ravine, and the higher residential neighborhood surrounding it. Pedestrian and bicycle paths weave throughout the park. While the park's overall

¹ Much of the information in the following description is taken from Charlene Roise, "The Evolution of Lincoln Park," prepared by Hess, Roise and Company for Duluth Parks and Recreation, June 2021. The report was completed as part of a Section 106 review for improvements to Lincoln Park (SHPO Number: 2017-2457) and referenced several other cultural resource studies including Patrick Nunnally, "Jewel of the North: Duluth's Parkway System" (1997); RLK-Kuusisto and Sanders Wacker Bergly, "Lincoln Park Restoration and Rehabilitation Plan, City of Duluth, Minnesota" (1998); William E. Stark, "Skyline Parkway Cultural Resources Inventory, Duluth, St. Louis County, Minnesota" (2011); and Cardno, "Determination of Eligibility, Stream Engineering Design and Construction Engineering: Miller Creek at Lincoln Park" (2015).

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character is picturesque and informal, the section between West 14th and West 6th Streets is particularly steeply sloped and rustic, with irregular Gabbro boulders forming waterfalls and rapids in the creek and defining its banks. The creek is edged by a dense growth of trees including maple, pine, mountain ash, and birch, with a thick understory of bushes and other plants. Between West 6th and West 4th Streets, the landscape is relatively level and more open, with a concentration of facilities including a historic stone pavilion, picnic shelters, tables and benches, play areas, sports fields, and parking. The grade drops again south of West 4th and is heavily vegetated, with the land becoming marshy before the creek passes under West 3rd Street.

The property's integrity is very good. It retains its location and picturesque setting along Miller Creek, surrounded by residential neighborhoods. Its overall design was historically vernacular, not the high-style work of a landscape architect, and the design continues to exhibit a vernacular character today. While some of the park's features have been modified over time by human and natural forces, this is to be expected at an outdoor property in a harsh, northern climate. The consistent use of local materials like stone and wood, as well as earth-toned colors, make changes blend in with the existing features. Workmanship is most evident on the stone pavilion, which has benefited from a recent rehabilitation. The quality of these aspects of integrity reinforce the feeling and association of Lincoln Park, a popular place for groups and individuals to recreate and enjoy nature since the 1890s.

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Narrative Description

Lincoln Park is about two miles west of downtown Duluth in an area historically known as West Duluth. The surrounding neighborhood takes its name from the park. The land framing the park is mostly residential, with scattered institutional uses (churches, a former school) to the east and southeast and some undeveloped, wooded areas to the northwest. The long, narrow park extends about half a mile from West Skyline Parkway to the north to West 3rd Street to the south. The eastern boundary is fairly regular. From the north, it follows North 24th Avenue West south from Skyline Parkway to the alley between West 9th and 10th Streets, turning west along that alley. From the south, it follows North 25th Avenue West north from West 3rd Street to the alley between West 8th and 9th Streets, turning east along that alley. The line connecting the two alleys has two 90-degrees turns.

The western boundary is more complicated. It follows North 25th Avenue West between Skyline Parkway and West 10th Street, then jogs northwest to include a wooded ravine before crossing West 10th Street. Continuing south and west, it edges residential lots before connecting with Lincoln Parkway at the alignment of the West 10th Street alley. It remains on the parkway until nearing West 6th Street, where it briefly runs northwest before taking a southern course on the alignment of North 26th Avenue West. After a slight bump to the west to include a small area between the West 6th Street alley and West 5th Street, the boundary follows 26th Avenue to 3rd Street, excluding a private parcel east of that road. All in all, the park contains approximately 43.3 acres.

No properties in the park have been previously listed in the National Register. The park is also associated with the Skyline Parkway Historic District, which the Minnesota State Historic



*Lincoln Park boundaries are outlined in red.
(from City of Duluth, "Declaration of Restrictive Covenant,"
2023, Exhibit 2)*

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Preservation Office (SHPO) recommends as National Register-eligible. The city has designated the Lincoln Park Pavilion a local historic landmark.

The following description uses guidelines issued by the Secretary of the Interior/National Park Service for the treatment of cultural landscapes with these organizational and character-defining features: spatial organization and land patterns; topography; vegetation; circulation; water features; and structures, site furnishings, and objects. The count was derived from guidance within the updated National Register Bulletin: Identifying, Evaluating, and Documenting Traditional Cultural Places. Specifically, that “a nomination for a place that contains many smaller features scattered across a large area may account for them by designating the entire land area as a contributing site.” Features within the park that are not specifically counted are considered historic if they were present during the period of significance and retain integrity.²

Spatial Organization and Land Patterns

The park is narrow and long, following Miller Creek as it cascades down a steep slope. The creek enters the park at West Skyline Parkway and runs in a southeasterly direction to the park’s terminus at West 3rd Street. North 24th and 25th Avenues West edge most of the park’s northeastern border. North 25th Avenue West also forms some of the park’s southwestern border along with Lincoln Park Drive, West 10th Street, Lincoln Parkway, and North 26th Avenue West. Some private property is on the park side of these roads, and private property directly abuts the park in other locations.

The northern two-thirds of the park is mostly wooded and has little development other than circulation features: Lincoln Park Drive, which meanders the length of the park near the creek, and footpaths running along the creek and connecting to the residential neighborhood surrounding the park. This part of the park is bisected by the substantial Lincoln Park Bridge at West 10th Street, which carries traffic above the park gorge. A short road near the bridge’s northwest end provides access from 10th Street to Lincoln Park Drive.

Another short spur connects Lincoln Park Drive and Lincoln Parkway between 6th and 7th Streets. South of this intersection, the drive crosses Miller Creek and passes a small parking area between the drive and the creek, entering an area that has exhibited a more active character since the park was formally dedicated in 1896. While the ponds, benches, and wood-frame pavilion that delighted early visitors are no longer extant, the area continues to hold recreational facilities, including a 1930s stone pavilion, and has a more open character than the park’s northern section. An elevated terrace northeast of Lincoln Park Drive between 5th and 6th Streets was rehabilitated in 2023. The terrace’s east side holds a picnic area, nature play area, and small basketball court. A soccer field on the west side is surrounded to the east, south, and west by chain-link fencing. A picket railing is along the terrace’s south edge. An asphalt-paved parking area is at the terrace’s south end and another parking area is below the terrace between 4th and 5th Streets. Across the

² Charles Birnbaum and Christine Capella Peters, ed., *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1996); *National Register Bulletin: Identifying, Evaluating, and Documenting Traditional Cultural Places* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2024), 92;

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road from the latter parking area, a pedestrian bridge provides access to a relatively level section on the west side of the creek that is bookended by a massive outcrop, Elephant Rock, to the north and the 1930s stone pavilion to the south. Steep slopes frame the park along Lincoln Drive and 26th Street. There is a small gap north of 5th Street, where the park's boundary jogs briefly to the west.

Southeast of 4th Street, Lincoln Park Drive runs in a narrow corridor between Miller Creek and 25th Avenue to the drive's terminus at 3rd Street. On the other side of the creek, private lots with houses extend into the park's southwestern corner.

Topography

Topography is one of the most striking features of the park, which descends a steep slope. The elevation drops from about 1,000 feet above sea level at Skyline Parkway to 650 feet at 3rd Street. A distinct change in elevation also defines much of the park's edges, with occasional sections near the grade of adjacent streets. Primary topographical features include:

- **Upper Slope:** The precipitous descent of the Miller Creek ravine from Skyline Parkway to about 6th Street. The edges of the park are generally defined by sharp gradients.
- **Plateau:** The relatively flat plateau between 6th Street and about 4th Street. This is flanked by higher ground at the east and west edges. There is a sharp slope on the west side; adjacent residential land and 26th Avenue are at a higher elevation. The difference in elevation on the east side lessens as 25th Avenue descends to the south. A historically built-up terrace (not natural) is between 5th and 6th Streets.
- **Lower Slope:** South of 4th Street, the land drops sharply again to a level below 3rd Street, allowing Miller Creek to flow beneath the road. A corridor edging 25th Avenue remains about the same height as the street.



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Vegetation

The park board planted two hundred trees in the park in 1894 and made energetic efforts to green the city in the following years, planting five thousand trees throughout Duluth in 1896. Some improvements in the park, including plantings, were occasionally damaged by the flooding of Miller Creek. The park is well endowed with a variety of trees both deciduous (including sugar maple, Northern red oak, basswood, river birch, and mountain ash) and coniferous (including balsam fir, white spruce, and white pine). Some have been intentionally planted by the city; others have appeared voluntarily. The age of individual trees has not been professionally assessed and is unknown, except for relatively recent plantings.

While there is little archival documentation of vegetation conditions over time, historic photographs support the assumption that the character of the vegetation today is similar to what it has been historically. Trees dominate the Upper Slope with a wild understory of a grasses, raspberry and other bushes, and other plants where the rocky soil allows (Photos 1-16). Trees are scattered throughout the flatter land of the Plateau as well, but the area is more closely managed and holds grassy lawns and recent native plantings (Photos 18-31). The Lower Slope descends into a marshy area and grassy field along Miller Creek, with heavier tree growth along the east and west sides (Photos 32- 36).

Several small, informal planting areas are scattered in the Plateau and Lower Slope. One on the west side of Lincoln Park Drive at the 3rd Street entry has been in place for some time, although it was modified and a new sign identifying the park was installed in 2023 (Photo 34). Many of the other planting areas date from 2023. Situated by the parking lots and sports fields and along the Plateau's west side, they hold native plantings and are designed for stormwater management (Photos 22-23, 25-26).

Circulation

When the board of park commissioners was established in 1888, Lincoln Park was one of its first priorities. Lincoln Park Drive was conceived as the western terminus of Terrace Parkway (now Skyline Parkway), which originally ran east as far as Chester Creek at 15th Avenue East. Initial improvements were completed in 1890-1891 for Lincoln Park Drive, which generally parallels Miller's Creek as it descends from the parkway to 3rd Street (Photos 3-4, 7, 10, 20-21, 33-34). The gravel-surfaced drive was shown running from 3rd to 14th Streets in a 1902 atlas, with the upper end terminating at 24th Avenue. In a 1909 atlas, the road splits south of 7th Street to run on both sides of Miller Creek between about 4th and 7th Streets. A pedestrian path now occupies the general alignment of the west road (Photos 25-26).³

Lincoln Park Drive, now paved with asphalt, remains the only north-south vehicular route through the park today. East-west traffic can pass over the park on the Lincoln Park Bridge at West 10th Street (Photos 8-9). Near the bridge's northwest end, a spur curves downhill to Lincoln Park Drive from the intersection of 10th Street and North 25th Avenue West (Photo 7). In the

³ Nancy S. Nelson and Tony Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks: Their First 160 Years* (Duluth: Zenith City Press, 2017), 51; Duluth Board of Park Commissioners (hereafter cited as DBPC), *Duluth's Parks* (Duluth: n.p., 1911), n.p.

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park, the bridge is a formidable visual barrier but is functionally permeable for vehicles, pedestrians, and the creek. A spur connects Lincoln Park Drive and Lincoln Parkway northwest of 6th Street (Photo 17).

Lincoln Park Drive is designed for motorized vehicles but is also used by bicycles and pedestrians. Bicycles can easily traverse some trails in the lower section of the park, but trails in the Upper Slope are narrow and steep and mostly used by pedestrians. In recent decades, two longer trails have been threaded through the Upper Slope. The pedestrian-only Superior Hiking Trail, built and maintained by a nonprofit association, extends over 300 miles along Lake Superior's north shore from the Wisconsin border to the trail's northern terminus overlooking the Pigeon River, the border between Minnesota and Canada (Photos 2, 4). The 42-mile Duluth Traverse Trail was specifically designed for mountain-biking by the city in consultation with nonprofit Cyclists of Gitchee Gumee Shores (COGGS) but is open to "all human-powered use"⁴ (Photo 4). It follows the ridgeline from the city's east end at Lester Park to the west end at Chambers Grove Park in Fond du Lac. Both the Superior and Traverse trails have a natural surface and are woven into the existing topography and vegetation.

Pedestrian paths wind throughout the park. While it is difficult to document their evolution, most that are in place today were probably in existence during the period of significance. Some paths in the Plateau are concrete and others are paved with asphalt, and a few were created or modified during a 2023 renovation to meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Most of the park's paths are informal and natural-surfaced. Some sections, especially along Miller Creek, are edged by solid stone parapets or chain-link fencing (Photos 6, 15, 25-26, 29, 31, 35).

Near the 8th Street Pedestrian Bridge (see below), the path paralleling the creek's west side has stone steps and parapets installed by National Youth Administration labor in 1940 (Photo 13). Near each end of the bridge and aligned with it, perpendicular to the creek, is a stone stairway topped with a pair of stone bollards (Photos 12-14). The western stairway ascends to Lincoln Park Drive. The purpose of the eastern stairway is less obvious, terminating in an informal path through a wooded area, but it once provided access to operational facilities—a house for the park's on-site foreman at 2415 West 9th Street, a tool house across the alley to the north, and a larger tool house and shops for the park department at 2416 West 9th Street. The late nineteenth-century house and its site are now in private hands. The large maintenance building on the south side of 9th Street, built in the early 1930s, was demolished in 1989.⁵

Stairs on slopes, particularly at the east and west perimeters, facilitate access to and through the park. They are made of a variety of materials including stone (historic), concrete (possibly

⁴ City of Duluth Parks and Recreation, "Duluth Traverse," accessed February 5, 2025, <https://duluthmn.gov/parks/parks-planning/progress-in-the-parks/duluth-traverse/>.

⁵ Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of Duluth, Minnesota*, vol. 1 (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1909, republished 1955), sheet 1, at Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn04287_012/; building permits for 2415 and 2416-2418 West 9th Street are at Construction Services and Inspections office at Duluth City Hall.

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historic in some cases), and wood timbers. Some have utilitarian pipe railings. Several stairs edging the Plateau were renovated in 2023.

Natural Features

Miller Creek the park's spine, enters from a culvert beneath Skyline Parkway and exits under a bridge on 3rd Street (Photos 5, 16, 19, 24, 32, 35-37). In a 1911 report, the board of park commissioners stated that "the ravine is so rich in beauty that little had to be done . . . in the way of formal treatment, except at the approaches at Third street and Twenty-fifth avenue west. Here the stream has been curbed by cement and an effect of breadth has been obtained by the arrangement of drives and paths."⁶

The creek's original alignment, which is visible in early maps, was modified by the city engineer's office in 1916 when a culvert or bridge was installed at 3rd Street. The creek has been modified at other times as well. A National Youth Administration (NYA) project sponsored by the park department in 1940

"clean[ed] 1300' creek bed" and five "cascades (stone and concrete) 6' base, 25' wide, 4" to 36" deep" in 1940. The waterway is temperamental, periodically escaping its banks and reworking its course. As part of stream repair funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency after a major flood in 2012, a narrow channel was installed in the Plateau, roughly parallel to Miller Creek, to divert water in times of high flow (Photo 26). The channel, usually dry, is obscured by grass and native plantings and has minimal visual impact. That area was once part of an artificial lake created shortly after the park was established by diverting water from Miller Creek.

One of the park's well-known natural features is Elephant Rock (Photo 18). The size and shape of the massive outcrop inspired its name. Elephant Rock is located near the west edge of the park between 6th Street and the spur connecting Lincoln Park Drive and Lincoln Parkway.

Structures, Furnishings, and Objects

Buildings



*Miller's Creek, ca. 1880.
(Duluth Public Library)*

⁶ DBPC, *Duluth's Parks*, n.p.; Duluth Park Department, *Annual Report, Park Department, City of Duluth, 1940* (hereafter cited as DPD, *Annual Report, [year]*), 35, typed carbon copy, at Duluth Parks and Recreation, Duluth City Hall (hereafter DPR-DCH).

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The park has one contributing building. Work on the stone pavilion (Photos 27, 29-31) was started in 1934 as a Civil Works Administration project. Slate was installed on the side gable roof the following year, and plumbing lines were extended to the building in 1936. Park department reports indicate that the project was not fully completed until 1939. More details about the history of the pavilion are in the significance section below.

The building is constructed of stone likely quarried in the park both the building and the quarry are considered contributing to the district. The rough-faced masonry units are trimmed into irregular shapes and sizes. Walls feature random range work. A stage, oriented roughly to the west, is recessed between two square towers with pyramidal roofs that rise from small, gable-roofed wings. Recesses in the front face and sides of the towers and wings once held windows but are now filled with stonework. A recess in the eastern wing holds a metal plaque memorializing Renee Kathy Van Nett, installed after her death in 2022 (Photo 30). Elected to the Duluth City in 2017, she was the first Indigenous woman to serve in that role. On the wall to the left of that recess, a bas-relief profile is the only trace of a plaque once affixed there honoring Samuel Snively, a businessman and park advocate who became mayor in 1921 at the age of 61. He held the office for four terms, the longest tenure of any of the city's mayors.

A shed roof trimmed with an ornamental wood fascia and a wood beadboard soffit rises above the stage. The stage projects beyond the pavilion's front facade into an open, grassy lawn. The stage was originally slightly elevated but at some point the grade was raised to the same level. Three doors on the stage provide access to the pavilion's interior. The center door leads into a multipurpose room, the pavilion's main interior space, which is also accessed from an exterior door centered on the rear (south) facade. The stage doors flanking the center door provide access to toilet rooms. The openings were slightly widened and the toilet facilities upgraded to meet ADA standards during the 2023 rehabilitation. That project also installed new exterior doors, modernized wiring and lighting, and improved ventilation. A door on the back of the east wing allows access to storage space in the wing. Several years earlier, the roof was reclad with asphalt shingles and some structural members were repaired after the building was damaged by an arsonist's fire.

Bridges

The need to cross Miller Creek produced a number of bridges throughout the length of the park. They are described below starting at Skyline Parkway and moving downstream (south). All are single-span structures with the exception of the Lincoln Park Bridge carrying West 10th Street over the park.

Miller Creek enters Lincoln Park after passing below the intersection of Skyline Parkway and North 24th Avenue West in a concrete box culvert, Bridge 8657. Minnesota Department of Transportation records indicate the structure was installed in 1938 and "all areas have been repaired" over time. Only the outlet is within the boundaries of the historic park.⁷ Because this structure is largely outside the boundary and small in size, it is not counted in the nomination.

⁷ Bridge inspection reports for Bridge 8657, Minnesota Department of Transportation, accessed February 7, 2025, <https://reports.dot.state.mn.us/bridgerptviewer/Viewer.aspx?rName=Bridge+Inspection+and+Inventory+Report&rF>

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A pony-truss bridge carries pedestrians, including those following the Superior Hiking Trail, across the creek around West 12th Street (12th Street Pedestrian Bridge, Photos 4-5). The top and bottom chords of the painted, steel structure are parallel with a noticeable camber. Steel bars attached to the outside of the truss serve as railings for the concrete deck. All connections were welded in the factory and the bridge was transported to the site on a flatbed truck. A bridge plate labels it a “Town and Country Bridge” and gives the fabricator as DeBourgh Manufacturing of Minneapolis. According to its website, the company was established there in 1909 by four brothers and was originally known as Berg Brothers. “We started as a small sheet metal fabrication shop specializing in poultry supplies, roofing, gutters, steel ceilings and light metal works. Over time the company grew in both its capabilities and expertise in steel fab to offer defense equipment, aviation parts, earth moving equipment and machinery, and incredibly sturdy pedestrian bridges that you can still find scattered across the country.” It sold the Town and Country Bridge division and moved to Colorado in 1990. The company remains under family ownership but now exclusively produces lockers for schools and other uses. The bridge plate does not provide an erection date, but the structure was installed before 1990, probably in the 1980s.⁸ Because it was erected after the period of significance the structure is considered non-contributing.

West 10th Street passes over the park on the Lincoln Park Bridge, also known as Bridge L-8744 and the West 10th Street Bridge (Photos 7-9). According to a 1987 inventory form, the bridge “was built in 1927 by A. A. Bodin and Sons after a design by W H. Cruikshank, under City Engineer John Wilson. The work was promoted by the Hillside Improvement Club.” The bridge “is a two-span, reinforced-concrete, filled-spandrel, barrel-arch bridge, with an overall length 197.7', maximum span length of 79.5' out-out width of 52', carrying a 24+' roadway, with no sidewalks. . . . The elevations and railings are veneered with uncoursed, rough-ashlar stone, harmonizing the structure with the rugged, rocky, park environment.” The creek and a footpath pass below the western span and Lincoln Park Drive runs under the eastern span. The bridge was rehabilitated in 2006 “to comply with MnDOT State Aid designs for horizontal and vertical alignment, land width, and railing heights,” according to a 2013 survey. The roadway was apparently narrowed and sidewalks added to the deck at this time. Damage from a flood in 2012 was repaired in 2015. The bridge has been recommended individually eligible for the National Register by the Minnesota SHPO.⁹ The bridge is considered a contributing resource.

ormat=p&Roadways=2&AgencyName=0&Selection+Criteria=Inspection+Period=6&BridgeInfoToggle=1&Sort+Order=1&RouteSystem=All&RouteNumber=All&BeginRefPoint=All&EndRefPoint=All&ShowOldElements=0&ShowNBEInspections=1&ShowTitlePage=0&inspBegDate=All&inspEndDate=All&rFormat=p&SingleBridge=8657&Select.

⁸ “Our Story,” DeBourgh, accessed February 7, 2025, <https://debourgh.com/about-us/our-story/>; “DeBourgh Manufacturing,” Zoominfo, accessed February 11, 2025, A serial number stamped on the bridge plate is somewhat obscured by deterioration but appears to be 71719S.

⁹ Robert Frame, “L8477,” Statewide Bridge Survey Inventory Form, prepared for the Minnesota Department of Transportation, 1987, at Minnesota SHPO, Saint Paul; Mead and Hunt, “Bridge L8477 (Lincoln Park Bridge),” Minnesota Architecture-History Inventory Form, Phase II of Local Historic Bridge Study, 2013, prepared for Minnesota Department of Transportation, at Minnesota SHPO.

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A pedestrian bridge connects footpaths on opposite sides of the creek around West 8th Street (8th Street Pedestrian Bridge, Photo 12). According to a plate on the structure, it was manufactured by Biltolast Products of Fort Payne, Alabama, in June 2004 and is part of the Steadfast Bridges line.¹⁰ The steel pony truss is a variation of a Pratt design with parallel top and bottom chords, vertical end posts, welded connections, and a concrete deck. The structure is slightly cambered. Lattice panels attached to the inside of the truss serve as railings and, like the truss members, have a painted finish. Because it was erected after the period of significance the structure is considered non-contributing.

Bridge 69679 carries Lincoln Park Drive over the creek at the alignment of 6th Street (Photos 19-20). In 2011, the bridge replaced Bridge L8476, which was constructed in the 1930s. The southeast end of the new structure, which was designed by LHB, was moved slightly south to improve the alignment of the road's southeast approach. The deck of the skewed, concrete-slab structure is 31 feet wide in section. Concrete headwalls rise above the deck to form railings and extend down to conceal the slab. The base of each headwall is a low arch trimmed with architectural concrete voussoirs, recalling the arched form of the earth-filled, concrete-arch structure that it replaced. The fascia and wingwalls are faced with stone salvaged from that structure. The project included raising the grade of Lincoln Park Drive near the bridge and installing a bituminous surface. The terminus of an 8-foot-wide pedestrian pathway on the west side of the creek, which was immediately north of the old bridge, was moved about 25 feet to the west. The new section of the path curves southeast to join the existing alignment. Several silver maples were removed from near the bridge and new Fall Fiesta sugar maples were planted.¹¹ The bridge is considered a contributing resource.

The 5th Street Pedestrian Bridge is not included in the Minnesota Department of Transportation's inventory and little information is available about the rustic stone-arch structure (Photos 24, 26). It was perhaps one of two "rock arch bridges" that were in place by 1926 according to an inventory prepared in the 1930s. Stone-arch bridges were popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and were considered particularly appropriate in picturesque landscape settings. The existing deck, railings, and wing walls are of coursed ashlar and concrete from a later period, probably the product of a depression-era federal relief project. In 1940, the NYA was working just across Lincoln Park Drive from this site on stone walls at the terrace. The park department's annual report from that year noted that the NYA built a 20-foot-long stone and concrete bridge at 5th Street with a 6-foot-wide deck and 3-foot-tall railings. The stonework was completed in 1941. Miller Creek runs in a narrow gorge just upstream from the bridge and the creek's flooding has been hard on the structure, which appears to have multiple repairs, including rehabilitation of the stone railings in 2023.¹² The bridge is considered a contributing resource.

¹⁰ The bridge plate is stamped with the number 031895, presumably the serial number.

¹¹ Record drawings for Bridge 69679, prepared for the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the City of Duluth, December 23, 2010, prepared by LHB, Joseph D. Litman, project engineer, at Duluth Public Works and Utilities, Duluth City Hall.

¹² DPD, *Annual Report*, 1940, 6, 7, 34-35; DPD, *Annual Report*, 1941, 14, 27, 30.

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A new wood stringer bridge was installed in 2023 to continue an accessible walkway over the creek overflow area west of the 5th Street pedestrian bridge (Photo 26). The bridge has simple wood railings with wood posts and rests on straight concrete abutments. Because of its insubstantial size and scale, this bridge is not counted.

Bridge 69650 crosses Miller Creek between the stone pavilion and the parking lot along Lincoln Park Drive (Photos 31-32). It replaced an earlier bridge in the same location in 2003. The skewed, 26-foot, steel-beam span has a 26-foot-wide concrete-slab deck edged by 40-inch-tall ornamental metal railings with stone end posts. Existing stone walls were partially removed, and the stone was used as a veneer for new concrete abutments. Landscape architects Sanders Wacker Bergly and Northland Consulting Engineers worked on plans for the prefabricated structure.¹³ Because it was erected after the period of significance the structure is considered non-contributing.

Bridge 88552, a concrete-arch structure carrying 3rd Street over the creek at the park's south end, was constructed in the early twentieth century, but records suggest various years including 1916, when Miller Creek was realigned, and 1925 (Photo 37). The stonework facing the elevations might date from the 1930s federal-relief era. The bridge is considered a contributing resource.

Furnishings

Directional, informational, and interpretive signage, benches, and trash receptacles are among the modern furnishings situated throughout the site, particularly on the Plateau. Their size and design are relatively inobtrusive. Roughly shaped boulders, green-painted wood posts, and modern metal bollards along Lincoln Park Drive stop vehicles from traveling beyond the roadway. Two-leaf gates located near Bridge 69679 and at the entrances from Lincoln Parkway and 10th Street make it possible to close Lincoln Park Drive for events or maintenance. Due to their insubstantial size, they are not individually counted.

The design of free-standing light fixtures in the vicinity of the stone pavilion is modeled after historic fixtures. Fixtures at the parking lots have cylindrical poles on a cylindrical concrete base with simple, cobra-head luminaires. Due to their insubstantial size, they are not individually counted.

A flagpole stands, as it has historically, northwest of the pavilion. On the other side of the lawn, north of the west picnic pavilion, a playground with earth-toned equipment was installed in 2023. A playground had previously been located in a more prominent site by the parking lot on Lincoln Park Drive. The playground is now at the edge of the park and its visibility is obscured by the picnic pavilion. A Section 106 review found this design and placement in line with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. However, the site is considered a non-contributing to the district because it post-dates the period of significance.

¹³ Construction plans for Minnesota State Project No. 118-090-10, prepared by Sanders Wacker Bergly and Northland Consulting Engineers, April 2003, at Engineering Division, Public Works and Utilities Department, Duluth City Hall.

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A disc golf course winds through the Plateau and Lower Section on both sides of the creek. The nine-hole course features DISCatcher targets and all holes are less than 300 feet in length. The Professional Disc Golf Association's website notes that the course, established in 2012, is "designed for the recreational player. Most tees [are] spray painted on asphalt."¹⁴ Because there is little modification to the landscape to support the course, it is not counted.

Structures

Stone walls were installed by federal relief crews during the depression at various locations in the park including northwest of the pavilion, on the Plateau terrace, and along Miller Creek. Stone was quarried from the park. An overgrown quarry site with visible drill marks is along Lincoln Park Drive in the vicinity of 9th Street (Photo 11). The largest wall produced during the depression era, edging the north and east sides of the sports-field terrace on the Plateau, was erected by NYA crews in 1940 (Photos 22-23, 28). The west and south slopes below the terrace were once supported by a stone wall as well, but the lower wall deteriorated and was failing by the early twenty-first century. During the 2023 rehabilitation, the wall was removed and the slope modified to hold an ADA-accessible walkway. Salvaged stones were reused elsewhere in the park, especially along the west side of the Plateau south of Elephant Rock (Photo 25). The walls throughout the district are counted as a single contributing structure.

The park's two other structures are modern picnic shelters. Both are considered noncontributing to the district. The west picnic shelter (Photos 27-28) is on the north side of the lawn in front of the pavilion. Picnic tables are beneath the hexagonal, shingle-roofed, open-sided shelter, a standard design used in many of the city's parks. The shelter has been in place since 1986¹⁵ but the adjacent playground with a variety of earth-toned equipment was developed in 2023. The playground was previously on the other side of the creek and Lincoln Park Drive, a safety hazard for families using both the picnic shelter and the play equipment. The east picnic shelter (Photos 22-23, 28), similar in design but smaller and with only four sides, was installed at the north end of the Plateau's sports terrace in 2023. The adjacent nature play area dates from the same time and is considered a noncontributing site.

There have been other buildings in the park over time. It received one of the first two "comfort stations" in the park system in 1926, and this became a model for other parks. The park also contained a series of warming houses/recreation centers. The department's 1941 annual report noted, for example, that the NYA had built a "warming house." Later in the report, it mentioned the construction of a building measuring 20 feet by 60 feet in the park, but the structure was not further identified and no location was given. At some point, perhaps in the 1970s or 1980s, a concrete-block building was erected on the Plateau's terrace near 25th Avenue and 5th Street. Like the comfort station and most other structures that appeared in the park since the 1890s, the

¹⁴ "Lincoln Park Disc Golf Course," Professional Disc Golf Association, accessed February 10, 2025, <https://www.pdga.com/course-directory/course/lincoln-park-disc-golf-course>.

¹⁵ Robert Hurd, City of Duluth Parks and Recreation, email to author, March 9, 2021.

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concrete-block building has been demolished, leaving the only the historic stone pavilion and the newer picnic shelters in the park.¹⁶

A curved stone settee with a backrest of cylindrical stone bolsters is between Lincoln Park Drive and Miller Creek at the west end of the 8th Street Pedestrian Bridge (Photo 13). Joints between masonry units have been repaired poorly or not at all and the bench is in poor condition. The settee, along with other stonework in the area, was installed by the National Youth Administration in 1940. Due to its substantial size the settee is considered contributing.

Resource List:

	Resource	Count	Type	Status
1	Lincoln Park	1	Site	C
2	Stone Pavilion	1	Building	C
3	Playground	1	Site	NC
4	West Picnic Shelter	1	Structure	NC
5	East Picnic Shelter	1	Structure	NC
6	Stone Quarry	1	Site	C
7	Superior Hiking Trail Bridge	1	Structure	NC
8	Lincoln Park Bridge	1	Structure	C
9	8th Street Pedestrian Bridge	1	Structure	NC
10	Bridge 69679	1	Structure	C
11	5th Street Pedestrian Bridge	1	Structure	C
12	Bridge 69650	1	Structure	C
13	Stone Settee	1	Structure	C
14	NYA Walls	1	Structure	C

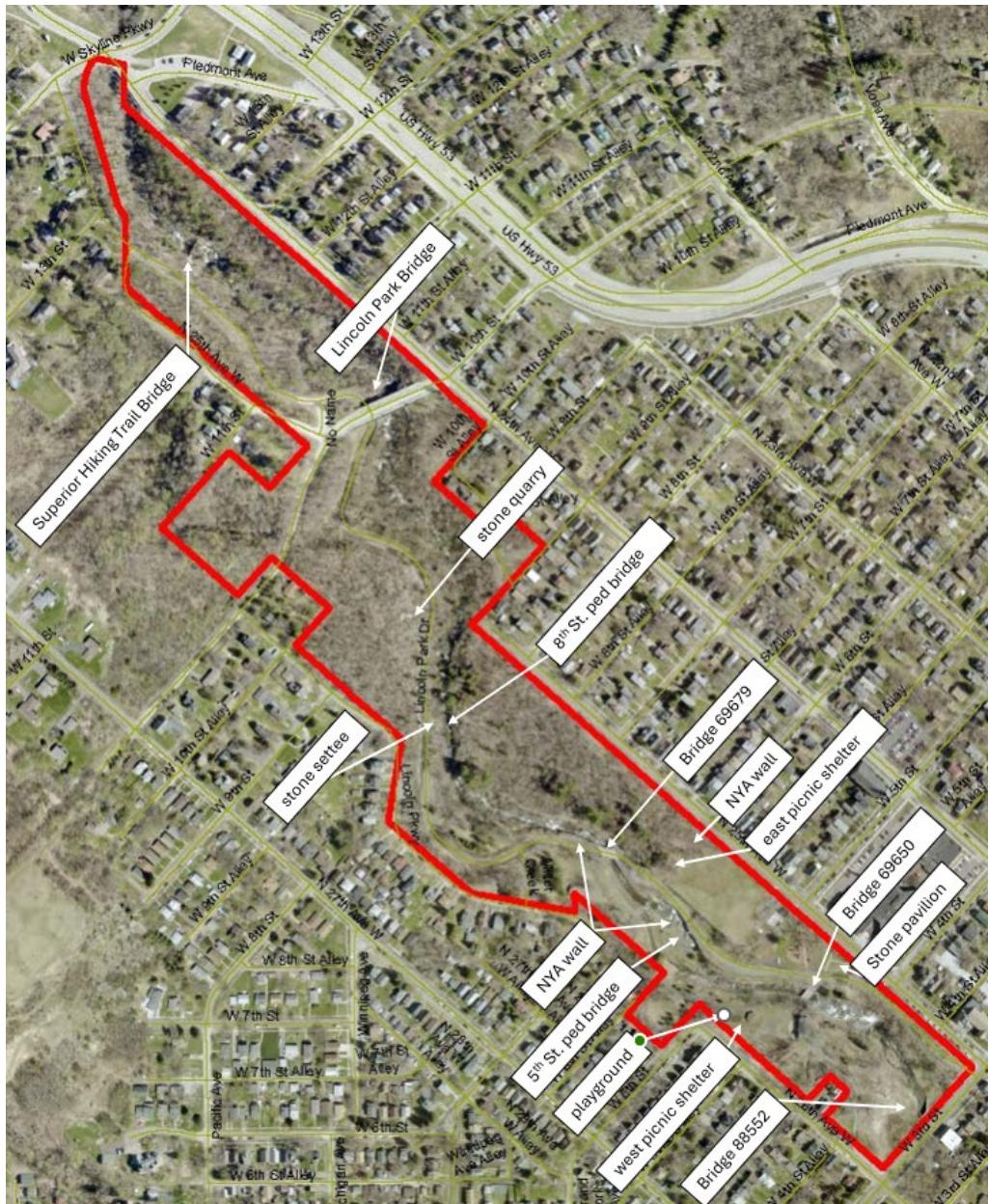
¹⁶ DPD, *Annual Report, 1941*, 1, 30; Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Duluth, 1909-1955*, 1:1, accessed March 10, 2021, https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn04287_012/.

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Location of counted resources within the Lincoln Park Historic District. Background map courtesy of Google maps, 2022. Because of recent changes to the park, the map is out of date. Arrows point to current locations of features even if they are not visible.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1889-1975

Significant Dates

1889

1896

1934

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Lincoln Park qualifies for the National Register individually under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation. It is one of the community's first major parks, situated in a late nineteenth-century neighborhood west of downtown Duluth. In a city split between the working-class west side and the middle- to upper-class east side, Lincoln Park provides an equitable balance to the east side's Chester Park. The two parks originally defined the ends of a scenic, bluff-edge boulevard, now Skyline Parkway, another early and key component of Duluth's impressive park system. Lincoln Park remains a vibrant element of that system today. The park's period of significance for Community Planning and Development runs from the city's initial acquisition of property in 1889 until 1896, when the park officially opened. For Entertainment/ Recreation, the period of significance starts with the park's opening in 1896 and ends in 1975. Because continues to be a local attraction the period of significance ends in conformance with the National Register's fifty-year guideline.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)**Establishing Lincoln Park, 1889–1925**

Parkland was set aside as Duluth was platted in the nineteenth century. In 1888, the city established a board of park commissioners to implement an ambitious plan for parks throughout the city that would be linked by a scenic parkway. With limited resources to carry out this vision, the board's efforts in the 1890s focused on Chester Park and Lincoln Park, among the city's first parks and the bookends for the ridgeline parkway.¹⁷

Assembling the land was the first challenge. The board began acquisitions for Lincoln Park in 1889, piecing together a patchwork of parcels ranging in size from small residential lots to a nearly ten-acre tract. The initial push targeted blocks 114, 120, 149, and 152 of Duluth Proper Second Addition, the area between 25th and 26th Avenues from 3rd to 7th Streets. Some sites already held development. An 1893 map shows buildings scattered along the west side of 25th Avenue. These were soon removed, but holdouts remain to this day on the east side of 26th Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets. Much of the land between 3rd and 12th Streets was under park board control by 1894 and the park, originally named Miller Creek Park, was rechristened Lincoln Park.¹⁸

¹⁷ Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*.

¹⁸ Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 51-52; "Lincoln Park Index," typescript, ca. 1934, at office of

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Wood-frame pavilion, ca. 1900.
(Duluth Parks and Recreation)

By the time Lincoln Park was formally dedicated in 1896, the park board had installed ponds, walkways, bridges, benches, and a small, wood-frame pavilion. A bow in the lower end of Miller Creek was somewhat straightened by realigning it to the east as it neared 3rd Street. Two years earlier, the board had made “a brave start” in planting two hundred trees in the park. By 1896, “the main difficulties in tree planting had been overcome” and the board planted five thousand trees throughout Duluth. This soon transformed the city’s landscape.

A 1911 park board report reflected: “We cannot imagine today the bleakness of the Duluth hillside, the desolate appearance of its stump sown streets, the dreariness of its sticky clays in a rainy season.”¹⁹

Miller Creek’s rampage in 1896 was the first of many times that natural causes would damage the park. After that flooding, the park board was quick to make repairs. The park was a popular destination from the start, drawing people from throughout the city to appreciate the natural beauty of the creek and its setting. They also enjoyed the city’s first public skating rink in 1896 and first official playground in 1908. The initial playground equipment was taken down for the winter and not reinstalled, but by 1911 the park board reported that the park’s playground equipment consisted of “swings, sand box, parallel bars, swimming hole.”²⁰

Duluth Parks and Recreation, Duluth City Hall (hereafter, DPR-DCH). Most of the individual parcels making up the park were acquired between 1889 and 1893 except for lots north of 12th Street, which was part of Harrison’s Brookdale Division. In the 1910s and 1920s, periodic efforts were made to clean up title from the numerous small acquisitions, with a final push in 1934.

¹⁹ Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth’s Historic Parks*, 51-52; DBPC, *Duluth’s Parks*, n.p.

²⁰ DBPC, *Duluth’s Parks*, n.p.; Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth’s Historic Parks*, 55-57.

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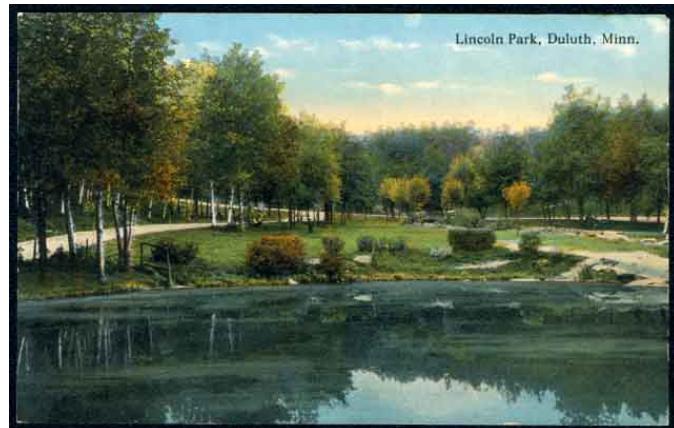
The “swimming hole” apparently referred to a short-lived lake and wading pool that had been introduced into the park. Water was siphoned from the creek in the early twentieth century to create a 100-foot by 150-foot artificial lake, and a wading pool was added near 6th Street. A local resident reminisced decades later about a fountain that “rose from the center of a pool, highlighted by colored lights situated in the bottom of the pool.” She noted that the fountain was “near the 6th Street level” but “the pool [is] long since overgrown with weeds.”²¹

The location of these water features was not shown on any known drawings, but two historic images indicate the lake’s approximate location on the west side of the creek between 5th and 6th Streets. A house visible in the background of one of the photographs still stands at the corner of 5th Street and 26th Avenue. Remnant landscape features—raised areas once part of the lake’s southeast and southwest edge—provide further confirmation of the location. To the east and north, Miller Creek’s flooding and efforts to address it have removed evidence of the lake’s other shores.



Artificial lake in Lincoln Park, looking southwest towards corner of 5th Street and 26th Avenue, ca. 1904 (above), and north, ca. 1914 (below).

(Minnesota Historical Society)



The independent board of commissioners was eliminated by a change in the city’s charter in 1913. Parks came under the city’s direct administration, an arrangement that continues to this day. The transition had little apparent effect on Lincoln Park although its history is sparsely documented for the next dozen years, a period marked by the First World War and a brief economic downturn when peace returned. By 1921, “Duluth’s park system . . . embrace[d] 700 acres and approximately twenty miles of completed boulevard drive,” a contemporary reported, including “about fifty parks, squares, triangles, boulevards, beaches and other cared-for open spaces.” Superintendent Henry Cleveland, who had been appointed to head the park system by the board of commissioners, was described as “not only . . . an able executive and organizer” but also “a skilled landscape architect and a true lover of nature.” He remained in that role through 1925, providing continuity during the switch in oversight from the board to the city.²²

²¹ Gerda Woelffer, “Remembering the West End and Lincoln Park,” n.d., 73, at DPR-DCH; DBPC, *Duluth’s Parks*, n.p.; Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth’s Historic Parks*, 55-57.

²² Walter Van Brunt, *Duluth and St. Louis County, Minnesota: Their Story and People* (Chicago and New York:

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A New Approach to Management, 1926–1930

In 1926, the park system experienced a significant transition in management after Cleveland retired and the city hired F. Rodney Paine to replace him. A thirty-seven-year-old native of Duluth, Paine had earned an undergraduate degree in literature from Princeton in 1912 and a master's degree in forestry from Yale in 1914. After graduating, he worked for the U.S. Forest Service in Montana and Idaho before returning to Minnesota in 1916 to become the first superintendent of Jay Cooke State Park. As the new superintendent of Duluth parks, he introduced a level of professionalism that, among other things, produced the first inventory of the system's facilities.²³

This effort took two years as the park department's 1927 annual report explained: "Work of organizing the office and establishing better records was continued this year and complete accounts were kept in the office for the first time in the history of the Park Department." In addition, "detailed plans have been made in practically every case prior to the carrying out of any improvement so that any work which is done should fit into a well-thought-out permanent plan and therefore be permanent in nature. The annual report in 1928 noted that "we are continuing our practice of keeping a permanent record of the activities of the Park Department through pictures. As far as possible we are carrying a series of pictures from the beginning of any given improvement to its completion."²⁴

Landscape architect Harry L. Staves was responsible for preparing project plans in his position as chief of the department's Division of Landscaping and Tree Culture. The division, which handled tree pruning, planting, and other landscaping, started a nursery in Fond du Lac in spring 1927. Trees and other plants stocked the following year included green ash, American elm, mountain ash, Russian olive, yellow dogwood, alpine currant, and various lilacs and vines. Prior to this time, the park department had maintained a small nursery just east of Lincoln Park on the lower side of West 9th Street, near a cluster of service buildings.²⁵

The inventory found that the entire system comprised 2,505 acres of parkland divided between seventy-eight properties. The department's 1928 annual report outlined a new approach to managing these holdings, dividing the city into six sections, west to east. "West of West Duluth" (District 1) went from 80th Avenue West to the western city limits. "West Duluth" (District 2) spanned from 80th to 33rd Avenues West and the "West End" (District 3) from 33rd to 9th Avenues West. Individual parks were categorized by size and function into six "classes": playgrounds, athletic fields or winter sports, small parks, special use areas (e.g., zoo, golf course), accessible larger parks, and inaccessible larger forest parks. Lincoln Park was in the West End division and was considered an "accessible larger park." This class was also called "Natural Scenic Parks—Rough Topography." "Almost without exception," the report observed,

American Historical Society, 1921), 1:271.

²³ Bernice White, ed., "Paine, Frederic Rodney," *Who's Who in Minnesota, 1958 Centennial Edition*, vol. 4 (Seattle: Hugh L. White, [1958]), 216.

²⁴ DPD, *Annual Report*, 1927, n.p.; DPD, *Annual Report*, 1928, 25.

²⁵ DPD, *Annual Reports*, 1927, 1928, 1931.

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parks in this class “are ravine parks or so rugged that they are not susceptible to playground or athletic development.” (Despite this statement, the report noted that Lincoln Park included a “small children’s playground” of one acre near 25th Avenue and 5th Street.”) In addition to Lincoln Park, the class included Central (Enger), Lower Chester, Congdon, Kitchi Gammi (Brighton Beach), Lester, and Oneota (Wheeler) parks.²⁶

A “Permanent Properties Record” for Lincoln Park has details about the many parcels that were acquired for the park including the acreage, legal description, previous owners, type of title, and cost. The first transactions were in 1889 and the last were in 1934. The record also contains construction dates for park improvements, but many cannot be verified. According to the record, a two-story pavilion, another pavilion, and a tool house were in place before 1926. In 1926, comfort stations for men and women were constructed, costing \$1,500 and \$2,000, respectively. This is corroborated by the department’s 1926 annual report, which noted that comfort stations were installed at Lincoln Park and Fairmount Park that year. The buildings were screened with “vines, shrubs and evergreens” and found to be “entirely satisfactory.” The design was subsequently adopted as a standard for other parks.²⁷

The property record also indicates that the following features were installed (or in place) in 1926: a dancing platform, warming house, guardrail and fence, stone steps and stairways, retaining walls (“388.8 cords”), two “rock arch bridges,” one concrete-slab bridge, one “rock arch foot bridge,” one 30-foot by 4-foot wood bridge, one 24-foot by 6-foot wood bridge, culverts and drains, 8,195 feet of stone gutter, a pipe culvert and catch basin, a stone culvert, 7,210 lineal feet of paths, 6,130 lineal feet of gravel road, a pool and fountain, water lines, two meter pits, and a playfield. Support facilities included a “barn, used for garage,” at 2408 West 9th Street; a tool house, garage, and office on the back of the lot at 2416 West 10th Street; and a two-story dwelling and garage at 2415 West 9th Street, where the park foreman resided. Like other larger parks, Lincoln had a full-time caretaker during the summer. The department also had a “house facing 26th Avenue West” but it was demolished in 1928 “due to the fact that it had become untenantable.”²⁸

This information provides insights into the park’s character during this period. The pool and fountain were still in existence, but the lake was apparently gone. Circulation systems were well-

²⁶ DPD, *Annual Report*, 1928, 1, 2, 4, 9–10, 17, 20, 21.

²⁷ “Permanent Properties Record” is at DPR-DCH and was apparently compiled in the 1930s, with entries added through 1942. See also DPD, *Annual Report*, 1926, n.p. None of these buildings stand today.

²⁸ “Permanent Properties Record”; DPD, *Annual Reports*, 1926–1930. The park department retained the house at 2415 West 9th Street until at least 1936 based on a building permit (#35563, July 17, 1936) at the Construction Services and Inspections office at Duluth City Hall, but it has been owned by a private party since the mid-twentieth century (#81270, April 26, 1965). A building permit for erecting a dwelling (#3238), dated July 18, 1899, was for a single-story, 26- by 26-foot structure. The style of the existing house suggests that the second story was built at this time as well, although several permits from the 1910s are for additions of a stairway, basement, and, in 1915, conversion of the property from a single-family to a two-family dwelling. An outbuilding behind the house might be one of the other structures noted in 1926. A building permit dated November 4, 1916, was for remodeling the barn/stable into a garage. A later permit (#7822, September 22, 1924) noted that the “old barn” had two stories. None of the other park buildings from this era remain in place.

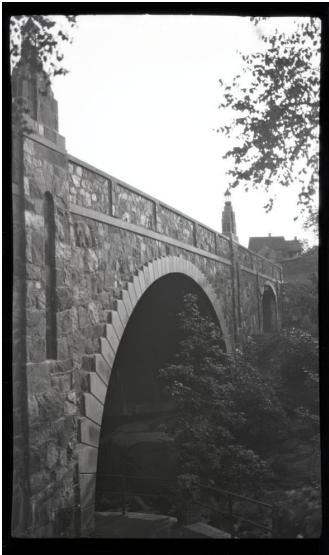
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established with an extensive network of paths, stairways, and bridges. The length given for the gravel road—6,130 lineal feet—roughly corresponds to the length of Lincoln Park Drive from 3rd Street to Skyline Parkway, including the loop on the west side of Miller Creek between 4th and 6th Streets. The substantial Lincoln Park Bridge carrying 10th Street across the park was completed in 1927, with a short spur (about 100 feet long) connecting the street to Lincoln Park Drive. The approximately 170-foot-long road linking Lincoln Park Drive and Lincoln Parkway between 6th and 7th Streets was apparently installed at a later date. Park department records usually list the drive's length as 1.25 miles, or 6,600 feet.²⁹



Lincoln Park Bridge carrying West 10th Street in 1929, two years after it opened (top right). Lincoln Park toboggan slide (top left) and ski jump (below) in 1931. (F. Rodney Payne, photographer; Archives and Special Collections, University of Minnesota Duluth)

Lincoln Park gained a toboggan slide in 1927, joining one in Chester Park that had been established earlier. Park staff erected the upper section of Lincoln Park's slide of wood and the community pitched in to form the lower section from snow. The department's annual report claimed it was "longer than any other slide in the city and the most exciting." Two years later, the annual report acknowledged that "the toboggan slides in Lincoln Park were again maintained largely through the efforts of some of the boys in the community. The Park Department cooperated with them in putting up a wooden scaffolding for the beginning of the slide and building up the curves." In December 1930, an additional winter sport option appeared: "The Park Department built a small ski slide in Lincoln Park just below Ninth Street which is suitable for boys learning how to jump."³⁰

For the less adventurous, the department hosted summer concerts in the park in the late 1920s and early 1930s, reinforcing Lincoln Park's popularity. While it came in a distant second to Leif Erikson Park in the three summer months of 1930—with Leif Erikson logging in 107,450 visitors

²⁹ Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 59; DPD, *Annual Report*, 1929, n.p.; DPD, *Annual Report*, 1936, n.p.

³⁰ DPD, *Annual Report*, 1927, n.p.; DPD, *Annual Report*, 1930, n.p..

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and Lincoln counting 47,005—it was far ahead of the third-most popular park, Chambers Grove, which recorded 30,775 visitors.³¹

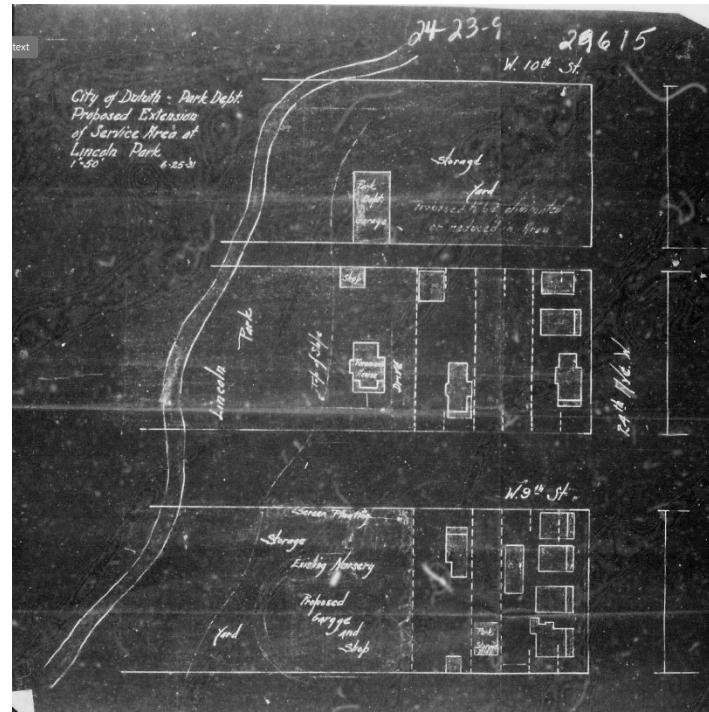
The department's campaign to upgrade and organize the park system included connecting various segments of the bluff-edge parkway, culminating in a public contest to come up with a single name for the unified route. The winner was Skyline Parkway, although references to Rogers Boulevard and other earlier names continued to appear for years thereafter.³²

Relief, 1931–1942

The park department began the 1930s by improving its maintenance facilities. It proposed to build an 80-foot by 70-foot building on the former nursery site on 9th Street to hold tools, shops, and a garage for cars and trucks. Its initial application for a building permit was denied by the city's Department of Buildings in July 1931 because the site was zoned residential.

Superintendent Paine appealed the decision. In a public hearing the following month, the appeal was granted "but on such conditions as will result in the least detriment and objection to the surrounding private property." Conditions included minimum setbacks for the building from the street and adjacent residences, screening by trees and fencing, and a paint color "that will harmonize with the surroundings." In addition, the park department was required to store equipment and materials in the building rather than outside, as it had done previously. About half of the main level was a garage. The interior also held large carpenter and repair shops, a tool room, and a storage room, and had at least a partial basement. The city council did not approve the appeal until late October.³³

The 9th Street building served the entire park system. In the first years of the depression, Lincoln Park did not receive much attention. The park department's



Sketch from the park department's 1931 application for a variance to erect a garage and shop building on the site of its nursery south of 9th Street. North of 9th Street was the foreman's house and shop and, north of the alley,

a garage and a "Storage Yard—Proposed to be eliminated or reduced in area."

(Duluth Construction Services and Inspections)

³¹ DPD, *Annual Report*, 1929, n.p.; DPD, *Annual Report*, 1930, n.p.

³² DPD, *Annual Report*, 1929, n.p.

³³ Building permits from 1931 and a copy of the official proceedings of the August 1931 hearing, adopted and approved by the city council in October, are at the Construction Services and Inspections office at Duluth City Hall.

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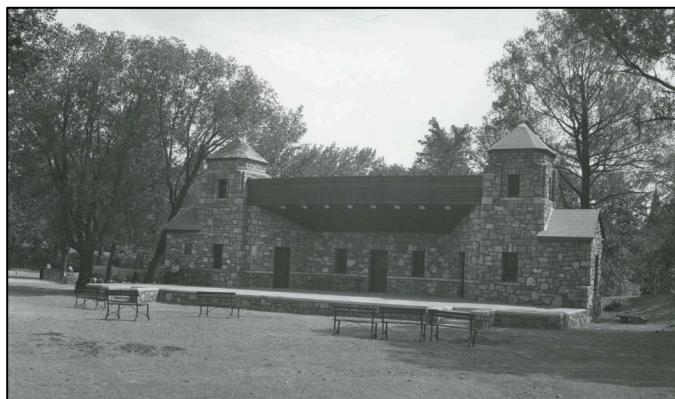
annual report for 1933 noted expenditures at Lincoln Park of \$1,500 for guardrails, walls, and graveling, along with \$500 for thinning and clearing in the upper part of the park.³⁴

The next year, though, saw the start of a major project, the construction of a stone pavilion in partnership with the Civil Works Administration (CWA). The department's annual report showed an expenditure of \$12,000 in that year on the project and observed: "All of the relief work . . . was done by the most primitive methods and with practically no equipment." The city paid \$2,000 to have the pavilion's slate roof installed in 1935 and another \$500 for "grading, top dressing, graveling and seeding in vicinity of band stand." Work on the plumbing was finally accomplished in fall 1936 but the department did not consider the project finished until 1939.³⁵

In addition to work on the pavilion, expenditures on the park included \$92.62 for a wall in 1934 and, in the following year, \$50 for a "backstop on playfield" and \$500 for "retaining wall." No more specific locations were given. By this time, the CWA program had been discontinued and the city was tapping into funds through the Works Progress

Administration (WPA) and other federal programs. This was a mixed blessing, as the department observed in 1936: "On account of the introduction of the use of WPA labor on maintenance, we were not able to accomplish a great deal and the older parks, such as Lincoln, Chester, Lester and Congdon, need a great deal of work on replacing walls, repairing paths, benches, etc. The Boulevard is not in good condition due to the fact that considerable sections of it were torn up on WPA work and money had not been available for hard surfacing."³⁶

The park department struggled to take advantage of the rapidly changing requirements of federal relief programs with severely reduced staff. As early as 1932, the department's civil service employees were forced to take layoffs of up to six months and a 10-percent cut in wages. The situation began to improve in 1935 when the department assembled a team to implement federal



Pavilion under construction in 1934 (above; F. Rodney Payne, photographer) and completed (below). (Archives and Special Collections, University of Minnesota Duluth)

³⁴ DPD, *Annual Report*, 1933, n.p.

³⁵ DPD, *Annual Report*, 1934, 18–19; *Annual Report*, 1935, 19; *Annual Report*, 1936, 19; *Annual Report*, 1938, 1.

³⁶ DPD, *Annual Report*, 1934, 18; *Annual Report*, 1935, 19; *Annual Report*, 1936, 5.

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relief projects: “The supervision and administration of the ERA and WPA work has been greatly facilitated by the addition to the office force of Mr. Walter Bartholdi, . . . Mr. [Harry P.] Steinbach, civil engineer, and Miss [Margherita] Tarr, landscape engineer.” The annual report also lauded “the splendid cooperation of Mr. Horwitz, City Planning Engineer, and his Department in the preparation of the WPA program.” By the following year, the team was gaining momentum. “Relief work in this Department up to 1936 was considerably handicapped by the lack of any regular engineering or landscaping engineers in this Department and the unfamiliarity with the work of those who were obtainable through the small amount of available funds,” according to the 1936 annual report. By that year, though, Steinbach, Tarr, Harlow, and others had gained experience and were able to streamline the process.³⁷

Their success in obtaining federal funding for park work was a double-edged sword, as the 1939 annual report observed: “Operation of Federal Projects severely tax the Park Department staff of fifty employees who, in addition to the regular park department functions, are handling much of the work associated with a program giving employment to over 1,000 WPA and NYA workers. We have had as many as twenty-two different project units operating at one time under the supervision of this office.” To support the increased activity from New Deal programs, the park department renovated the shops/tool house in Lincoln Park in 1934, adding plumbing, electricity, and partitions, and again in 1939 when an attic level was inserted above the garage area “for light storage.” The park department used the tool house for decades thereafter, finally demolishing it in 1989.³⁸

While much of the relief work involved construction, there were other types of projects too, including an update of the 1920s inventory of features in individual parks. This provided a snapshot of Lincoln Park as of September 1939, although information on the location of specific features is lacking. The inventory stated the park’s capacity to be 8,000 people, with “adequate” parking. It noted that “a permanent band stand of blue stone construction was completed during 1939 as part of the WPA program.” The park also had a second bandshell and four comfort stations, all in good condition. While provided with three stone and two concrete fireplaces, the park “needs more fireplaces and incinerators.” Furnishings included forty-five “stationary” benches, fifty-six iron benches with wood slats, ten stationary tables, and fifteen “table tops and horses stored in bandstand.” Most of these items were in good repair but two concrete benches were “broken.” The park also had two drinking fountains and a flagpole. Facilities for sports included one “diamond-ball field” and two “turning bars,” as well as a warming house in “fair” condition.³⁹

³⁷ DPD *Annual Report*, 1932, 1; *Annual Report*, 1935, 4; *Annual Report*, 1936, 1. Born and raised in Duluth, Margherita Tarr received a degree from the landscape architecture program at Iowa State College at a time when few women were in the field. After working for the park department in Duluth for a few years, she returned to Iowa for a long career with the school’s agricultural extension program. See Martha Ann Hunt, “Margherita Tarr: Her Work as an Extension Landscape Architect, 1939–1969,” MLA thesis, Iowa State University, January 1995, at Iowa State University Digital Repository, <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/18346>.

³⁸ DPD, *Annual Report*, 1939, 1; two sheets of plans dated January 1939, prepared by engineer H. P. Steinbach, and building permits from 1934, 1939, and the 1970s-1980s, including the demolition permit (#6774, March 14, 1989), are at the Construction Services and Inspections office at Duluth City Hall.

³⁹ “Lincoln Park,” two typed notecards, September 1939, at DPR-DCH.

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The grounds were in good shape with adequate drainage, but more lighting was recommended to supplement six “tree floodlights.” Circulation was aided by two footbridges, one concrete and one “iron,” and four vehicular bridges, three “stone” and one concrete. Of the “steps in park grounds,” eleven were stone and four were concrete. Retaining walls along the creek were considered in good repair, but an iron guardrail around the creek was “dangerous”—“warning signs should be placed in park along creek on high retaining walls.” One of the park’s thirty-two trails was labeled “very dangerous.”⁴⁰

The inventory noted that in the coming winter, the park department planned to use National Youth Administration (NYA) labor to erect stone retaining walls and “completely eliminate the iron guardrails now in use with walls of stone.” A major upgrade was implemented during the next few years under the supervision of park department staff. Improvements in 1939 “consisted of the construction of retaining walls, paths, foot bridges, fireplaces, and picnic tables, the installation of guardrails, widening the roadway, and the clearing and grading of a picnic area.” The budget for NYA labor that year totaled \$11,959 and the city chipped in \$5,494 for materials and other non-labor expenses. Ten stone picnic tables, three stone fireplaces, and 200 feet of stone retaining walls were installed. Other work included “remodeling [the] 6th St. bridge,” installing a “steel and concrete foot bridge with pipe railing” at 8th Street, and placing 380 feet of gas and water lines to the pavilion and a 6-foot sewer line from the pavilion to 26th Avenue at the 4th Street alley. The inventory form also mentioned renovation of the service buildings at 9th and 10th Streets.⁴¹

The park department’s report for 1940 provided dimensions for the masonry walls constructed that year and gave some indication of where there were located: “330' west side, 9' to 28' high, 10'-8" to 4' wide; 300' 6th St. side, 9' to 22' high, 9'-8" to 4' wide; 120' 5th St., 16' to 27'-8" high, 10'-8" to 6' wide; 200' 25th Ave. W., 6' high, 9' to 4' wide (footing) (2720 cu. yds.).” These were apparently the walls around the terrace along 25th Avenue between 5th and 6th Streets and might have been related to an item added to the scope in 1940, “the enlargement of a play area.” Crews also completed 3,000 cubic yards of grading and excavating, cleaned 1,300 feet of creek bed, and installed five stone and concrete “cascades”—described as “6' base, 25' wide, 4" to 36" deep.” They planted shrubs and erected two stone fireplaces. Other construction included a stone and concrete bridge at 5th Street measuring 6 feet wide by 20 feet long with a 3-foot guardrail. The area around 8th Street received particular attention with the installation of a stone settee, 35 granite and concrete steps, a 350-foot-long stone guardrail measuring 3 feet high and 18 inches deep, and 350 feet of gravel, stone and concrete walkways and steps. By the end of the year, the NYA had spent \$24,663 on labor for work in the park.⁴²

Lincoln Park received this attention just in time. Soon, the economy was reviving and the war effort diverted attention from parks. Funding for federal relief programs dropped substantially in 1941 as the department reported that year. The availability of WPA funding was uncertain and

⁴⁰ “Lincoln Park,” two typed notecards, September 1939, at DPR-DCH.

⁴¹ “Lincoln Park,” two typed notecards, September 1939, at DPR-DCH; DPD, *Annual Report, 1939*, n.p.

⁴² DPD, *Annual Report, 1940*, 6, 7, 34-35; DPD, *Annual Report, 1941*, 14, 27.

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the “NYA is already out of the picture, which means any further work at the Lincoln Playfield in cleaning up the remainder of the project will have to be done with city funds.” The “Revised Lincoln Park Playground” was one of some two dozen “additions . . . made to the Park Department during the past ten years,” according to its 1941 annual report, and the playground was one of a few “major projects” that the department concentrated on that year. The city built a warming house, installed a fence, and began grading the playground in 1941 and spent another \$231 the next year to complete the grading.⁴³

World War II to Today

After the war, records on the park’s physical evolution became even more limited as the department’s annual reports focused on recreational activities. This was presaged in 1943 by Superintendent John Hoene, who wrote that “recreation, a word which was unheard of a few years ago, has become a very important activity or phase of a person’s life. It should be pointed out at this point that all of the activities carried on by the Park Department are recreational.” In 1957, the office was renamed the Department of Public Recreation.⁴⁴

Despite this emphasis, the Lincoln Park toboggan slide was apparently not revived after the war. The park did offer two skating rinks most winters, though, one for general use and one specifically for hockey. To keep children active in the summer, the department and the Duluth Board of Education jointly initiated a program at eleven playgrounds. Over 50,000 children enrolled in 1949 including 9,640 at Lincoln Park, which claimed the largest attendance. Programming was expanded for teens in the 1950s and adults by the following decade.⁴⁵

An undated assessment of the park describing infrastructure, amenities, and condition is perhaps from the 1950s or 1960s. At the time, the park had both a skating rink and a hockey rink, with a warming house that needed painting. The “orchestra shell” exhibited “much damage” and the park was “subject to vandalism.” A shed was in poor condition with “much debris.” While a flowerbed looked good, the landscape was generally “untrimmed.” The survey recommended that the safety of the park’s three bridges should be checked. The survey estimated the value of the park’s five buildings: warming house, \$250; tool house, \$7,900; “field house,” \$20,000; comfort station, \$3,500; and dwelling, \$5,000. It is not known when the warming house and comfort stations were demolished. The “field house” apparently denotes the pavilion.⁴⁶

In 1970, the pavilion was upgraded for use as a warming house and playground shelter. In the following year, trees were removed in front of the building and the land was regraded for a skating rink. A park department crew also “cleared all brush, dead trees etc., in the area from Third Street up to the pavilion,” with plans for more clearing “further up the Park” the next summer. Despite this effort, though, “much other work remains to be done, such as repair of retaining walls and barricades along paths, cleaning and repair of stairways and paths, etc.”⁴⁷

⁴³ DPD, *Annual Report*, 1941, 1, 5, 27; DPD, *Annual Report*, 1942, 32.

⁴⁴ DPD, *Annual Report*, 1943, 1.

⁴⁵ DPD, *Annual Report*, 1948, 15; DPD, *Annual Report*, 1949, 15.

⁴⁶ The undated “General Analysis of Duluth Park and Recreation Properties” is at DPR-DCH.

⁴⁷ DPD, *Annual Report*, 1970, cover letter by Harry Nash; DPD, *Annual Report*, 1971, 7.

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The pavilion's tenure as a public shelter was apparently short-lived: photographs taken in 1976 show its windows boarded. City records note that the original entries to the restrooms were blocked in 1981, and new openings were cut.⁴⁸

The park continued to be the scene of activity throughout the year. According to the 1986 annual report, "the Lincoln Recreation Center was open in the winter and summer for 126 days, a total of 756 hours, for an average of 6 hours a day in 1986." The report explained that the facility "is used for pleasure skating, boot hockey, and drop-in recreation in the winter and is programmed for summer recreation." The "center" might have been in the pavilion or in the concrete-block structure that replaced the old warming house on the terrace at 25th Avenue and 5th Street. The 1990 annual report noted that a building at the park was "painted inside and out," presumably referring to the concrete-block structure, and a new hockey rink was installed. The concrete-block structure was demolished in 2019.⁴⁹

By the turn of the twenty-first century, the historical significance of Lincoln Park was being recognized. The Duluth Heritage Preservation Commission hired historian Patrick Nunnally in 1995 to study the history of Skyline Parkway and evaluate its significance, resulting in a report two years later titled "Jewel of the North: Duluth's Parkway System." In 1998, RLK-Kuusisto and Sanders Wacker Bergly prepared a "Lincoln Park Restoration and Rehabilitation Plan."⁵⁰ Historian Will Stark completed a cultural resources inventory of Skyline Parkway in 2011 that described some of Lincoln Park's historic and non-historic features. He concluded that "as one of Duluth's oldest city parks, Lincoln Park has undergone numerous changes [over] the years. Although the park includes modern playground features, picnic shelters, and bridges, many of the historic elements and minor features remain intact. The park serves its same purpose and its use of stone material in its amenities . . . remains part of its character. It is unclear what features might have been removed over the years."⁵¹

By this time, the park's popularity and the ravages of nature were causing deterioration of the older facilities. The bridge over Miller Creek between Lincoln Park Drive and the pavilion was replaced in 2003 (Bridge 69650), and the bridge carrying the road at 6th Street was replaced in 2011–2012 (Bridge 69679). An arsonist torched the pavilion in 2014, damaging the roof structure. A devastating flood in 2012 led to a substantial shoreline project for Miller Creek several years later funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.⁵²

⁴⁸ Lisa Luokkala, Duluth Parks and Recreation, to Sarah Beimers, Minnesota SHPO, letter, February 13, 2019.

⁴⁹ DPD, *Annual Report*, 1986, n.p.; DPD, *Annual Report*, 1990, 60.

⁵⁰ RLK-Kuusisto and Sanders Wacker Bergly, "Lincoln Park Restoration and Rehabilitation Plan, City of Duluth, Minnesota," November 10, 1998, prepared for the City of Duluth and available at DPR-DCH. The copy referenced is labeled "draft."

⁵¹ William Stark, "Garfield Park/Lincoln Park" (SL-DUL-2440), Minnesota Architecture-History Inventory Form, 2011, prepared by Stark Preservation Planning as part of the Skyline Parkway Cultural Resources Inventory, at Minnesota SHPO.

⁵² Luokkala, to Beimers, February 13, 2019; correspondence related to the FEMA project (DR-4069-MN, PW 856/SHPO File Number 2016-0267) is in the files of the Minnesota SHPO.

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In February 2016, the park department completed a mini-master plan for improvements on the Plateau section and subsequently obtained funding from the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the project. The federal funding required an assessment of the park's cultural resources and a review of the project's effects under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The assessment concluded that the park qualified for the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation and under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture. The period of significance was initially established as 1889-1942, an end date reflecting the conclusion of federal-relief improvements.⁵³ The project scope met the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, specifically the Standards for Rehabilitation, with one exception. The stone wall supporting the base of the sports-field terrace was failing and had to be removed. Rather than reconstructing the wall, the slope was modified to accommodate an accessible trail into the park from 25th Avenue. As mitigation for this adverse effect, the park department documented Lincoln Park for the Minnesota Historic Property Record, installed six panels interpreting the park's history, and prepared this National Register nomination.

Lincoln Park's Significance

Community Planning and Development

Duluth stretches for about 26 miles along the western shore of the Saint Louis River and Lake Superior. It attained this sprawling size by annexing adjacent communities in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth century. The city's downtown overlooks Superior Bay at the river's mouth, separated from the lake by the long sandbars of Minnesota and Wisconsin Points. While the city's long axis is generally oriented northeast-southwest, the areas flanking downtown are known as west (along the Saint Louis River) and east (along Lake Superior). Both hold residential and commercial development but evolved differently, producing unique characteristics that remain evident today. The city's middle and upper classes generally lived on the east side. The west side had a more industrial character. Massive ore docks rose along the riverfront, served by a network of rail lines transporting ore from Minnesota's iron ranges. Residents were mostly working class, including a high proportion of recent immigrants from Scandinavia, Italy, and Slavic countries.

The deep rivalry between east and west was a formative influence in Duluth's history. Park administrators sought from the outset to develop comparable facilities on each side. Historians Nelson and Dierckins observed that "the Duluth Board of Park Commissioners spent thousands of dollars in the 1890s purchasing land and developing Lincoln Park in the West End and Chester Park in the eastern part of the heavily populated city center." This balancing act continued as the park system expanded. When Duluth annexed the area with Lester Park in 1893, for example, residents of the "West Side" (west of Lincoln Park) felt left out. In response, the board began planning Fairmont Park, purchasing 40 acres along Kingsbury Creek near Grand

⁵³ The preparer and the SHPO ultimately decided that Criteria C in the Area of Landscape Architecture was not applicable when completing the National Register's nomination.

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Avenue and 71st Avenue West in 1901. Historian Van Brunt, writing in 1921, called Duluth's park system "one of the most creditable results of worthy town-planning."⁵⁴

Guidance from the National Park Service distinguishes between community "planning" ("a deliberate activity intended by design or intent to direct and manage growth or use") and community "development" ("change to the physical environment through activities such as the subdivision of land or construction of buildings and infrastructure"). In the case of Lincoln Park, both definitions apply under Criterion A. In the area of Planning and Community Development, the period of significance begins in 1889 when the board of park commissioners purchased the first land for Lincoln Park and ends in 1896, the year of the park's official opening.⁵⁵

Entertainment/Recreation

When conducting the first inventory of its holdings, the park department placed Lincoln Park in the category "Natural Scenic Parks—Rough Topography." The classification also included parts of Central/Enger and Oneota/Wheeler Parks on the west side and Chester, Congdon, Brighton Beach/Kitchi Gammi, and Lester Parks on the east side.

Each had a unique history and its own character:

- When land a short distance west of downtown Duluth was platted in 1870, about 30 acres were set aside for Central Park. The steep, rocky site was unimproved until the 1920s when the city acquired a large parcel above it, known as Grand View Mountain, and established Enger Park there. Central Park was incorporated into—and overshadowed by—that development, which included a golf course and, by the 1930s, an iconic observation tower. Criss-crossed by a few roads and trails, the challenging Central Park slope was otherwise left in its natural state.⁵⁶
- The Wheeler Athletic Complex, associated with the undeveloped Oneota Park, adopted the family name of the former estate it occupied. Henry Wheeler's property became the site of the Saint Louis County fair in 1876. The fair's horseracing track remained in use for several years after the fair relocated in 1911. The city installed baseball diamonds on the property in 1919 and acquired it seven years later.⁵⁷
- In 1888, Duluth's only parkland was Portland Square on 4th Street East. That year, according to historian Walter Van Brunt, "the city council and the chamber of commerce 'came to an agreement as to the city parks,'" proposing to establish Chester Park along with Lincoln Park and Cascade Park (up the hill from downtown Duluth). Both Lincoln and Chester Parks were centered on creeks plunging through dramatic ravines, with Chester Creek giving that park its name. "The Board of Public Works was instructed to lay out [these] tracts, to be conserved as parks." A year later, the newly formed board of park commissioners became responsible for developing the parks. In 1920, Chester Park's original size was expanded when the city purchased a 51-acre parcel directly upstream. The course of the creek in "Upper Chester," also known as Chester Bowl,

⁵⁴ Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 89; Van Brunt, *Duluth and Saint Louis County*, I:273.

⁵⁵ "Area of Significance: Community Planning and Development," *Best Practices Review* 10 (January 2025): 2.

⁵⁶ Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 127-136.

⁵⁷ Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth's Historic Parks*, 212-213.

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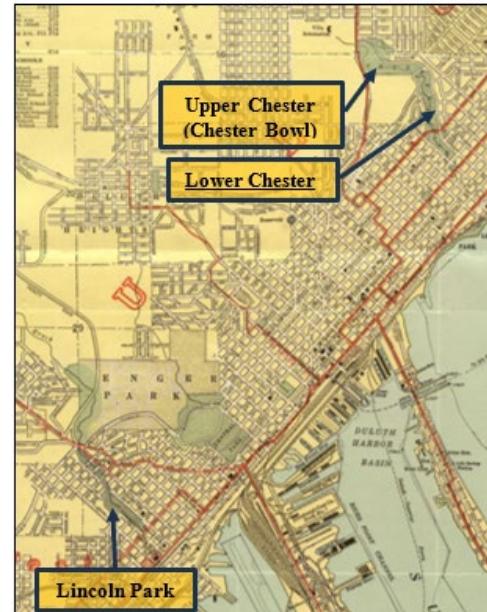
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meandered through a relatively flat valley edged by steep hills, a marked contrast with its steep descent in “Lower Chester.”⁵⁸

- Chester Congdon began lobbying the city to create a park along Tischer Creek upstream from his estate, Glensheen, in 1905. In addition to donating some land for Congdon Park, he paid to have a design prepared by New York landscape architect Charles Leavitt, who was laying out Glensheen’s grounds at the time. A footpath and bridle trail were installed following Leavitt’s plans but more elaborate improvements, including a botanical garden and Swiss chalet, were never implemented and the park remained relatively undeveloped.⁵⁹
- Kitchi Gammi Park was not established until 1922, initially holding the Brighton Beach Tourist Camp on the east side of the Lester River. It became more accessible a few years later when a bridge opened near the river’s mouth.⁶⁰
- Lester Park was first envisioned by a late nineteenth-century investor who platted a neighborhood by the same name along the Lester River. The land was beyond Duluth’s border until 1893, when it was annexed by the city. By that time, a 20-acre park edged the river at its intersection with Amity Creek. The park’s elaborate pavilions, unique bridges, and rustic trails made it a popular exurban destination.⁶¹

Of this group, only Chester Park seems comparable to Lincoln Park. The others were initially developed in different eras (Oneota/Wheeler, Kitchi Gammi/Brighton Beach), offered different types of facilities (Oneota/Wheeler, Central/Enger, and Kitchi Gammi/Brighton Beach), and/or had few improvements (Central and Congdon). Although Lester Park was a contemporary of Lincoln Park and part of the city by 1893, it “was separated from Duluth by many blocks of undeveloped land,” according to historians Nelson and Dierckins. They quote a late nineteenth-century newspaper describing the journey from the city center to Lester Park in a streetcar: “For the simple pleasure of the view as seen from the car window the [person] taking this six-mile ride is well repaid.”⁶²

Chester Park, on the other hand, offered facilities and activities on the east side paralleling what Lincoln Park provided on the west side, maintaining the requisite



A detail of a 1935 map with Lincoln and Chester Parks highlighted (McGill-Warner Company)

⁵⁸ Van Brunt, *Duluth and Saint Louis County*, I:271; “Addition to Park Will be Popular, Says Cleveland,” *Duluth News Tribune*, June 28, 1920; “Three-Day Fete to Mark Dedication of Skyline Parkway, Chester Bowl,” *Duluth News Tribune*, July 26, 1929.

⁵⁹ Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth’s Historic Parks*, 117-119.

⁶⁰ Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth’s Historic Parks*, 123-126.

⁶¹ Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth’s Historic Parks*, 78-88.

⁶² Nelson and Dierckins, *Duluth’s Historic Parks*, 78.

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balance between the city's halves (see Community Planning and Development above). The original Lower Chester is a long, narrow parcel edging Chester Creek between Skyline Parkway and Fourth Street. Except for a small terrace with a sports field at the corner of 5th Street and 15th Avenue East—similar to Lincoln Park's sports terrace along 25th Avenue—the land descends dramatically from Skyline Parkway and is rocky and heavily wooded, much like the upper ravine at Lincoln Park. Historian Van Brunt explained the park's namesake, Charles Chester, settled in the fledgling village of Duluth in the 1850s, and seven decades later "much of [the park] is still as it was then—a place where nature is permitted to hold to natural dress." The same can be said a century after Van Brunt's book was published.⁶³

In the early twentieth century, winter sports enthusiasts acquired land above Chester Park and created ski jumps and toboggan runs on the hillside. By 1920, however, the ski club was unable to maintain the property and sold it to the city, which installed tennis courts, sports fields, and other facilities. Chester Park Drive was extended to terminate at Chester Bowl, which became a popular site for concerts and festivals. A three-day celebration in 1929 marked the official completion of the "Chester Park recreational bowl" and the segment of Skyline Parkway connecting Duluth and Jay Cooke State Park.⁶⁴

With the expansion, Chester Park became larger than Lincoln Park and its amenities were more developed. The Chester Bowl and Lower Chester together, though, are quite comparable to Lincoln Park historically and today. Both offer challenging hiking trails along streams whose rushing water blocks urban noise, offering wilderness-like experiences in the midst of long-established neighborhoods. Both have historically accommodated a broad range of summer and winter sports as well as concerts, picnics, and other activities. Events scheduled for the city's parks in 1929, for example, included picnics for the Norwegian Lutheran Church, Trinity English Lutheran Church, and Grand United Order of Odd Fellows in Chester Park and a Salvation Army band concert and Swedish religious gathering in Lincoln Park. The Kiwanis Club sponsored a series of concerts at Chester Park in 1920 and the first program drew an audience of 2,000 to hear the American Legion Band. With a high percentage of Scandinavian immigrants and their families in the neighborhood surrounding Lincoln Park, it was a logical place for midsummer festivals hosted by Swedish-American groups and, not to be outdone, Finnish-Americans. Likewise, the area's working-class population organized Socialist and union rallies there.⁶⁵

Lincoln Park's long legacy as a locally significant destination for Entertainment/Recreation qualifies the property for the National Register under Criterion A. It was immediately popular at the time it was established and remains a beloved, well-used public resource on Duluth's west side in the twenty-first century. In addition to providing parity with Chester Park and serving as

⁶³ *Duluth-Superior "Twin Ports"* (Saint Paul: McGill-Warner Company, 1935), at Archives and Special Collections, University of Minnesota Duluth, accessed July 23, 2025, <https://collection.mndigital.org/catalog/nemhc>; Van Brunt, *Duluth and Saint Louis County*, I:128.

⁶⁴ "Addition to Park Will be Popular, Says Cleveland," *Duluth News Tribune*, June 28, 1920; "Three-day Fete to Mark Dedication of Skyline Parkway, Chester Bowl," *Duluth News Tribune*, July 26, 1929.

⁶⁵ "750 Hear City Band at Chester Park," *Duluth News Tribune*, August 11, 1924; "2,000 Hear First Open-Air Concert by Legion Band," *Duluth News Tribune*, June 7, 1920.

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an amenity for Duluth's Lincoln Park neighborhood, it has historically accommodated unique events attracting participants from throughout the city and beyond. The period of significance begins in 1896 when the park officially opened and ends in 1975 in conformance with the National Register's fifty-year guidelines. The park continues to be a primary venue for entertainment and recreation for the local community.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency

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Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: Duluth Parks and Recreation, Duluth City Hall; Archives and Special Collections, Kathryn A. Martin Library, University of Minnesota Duluth

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): SL-DUL-02440

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx. 43.3 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

2. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

3. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

4. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

Or

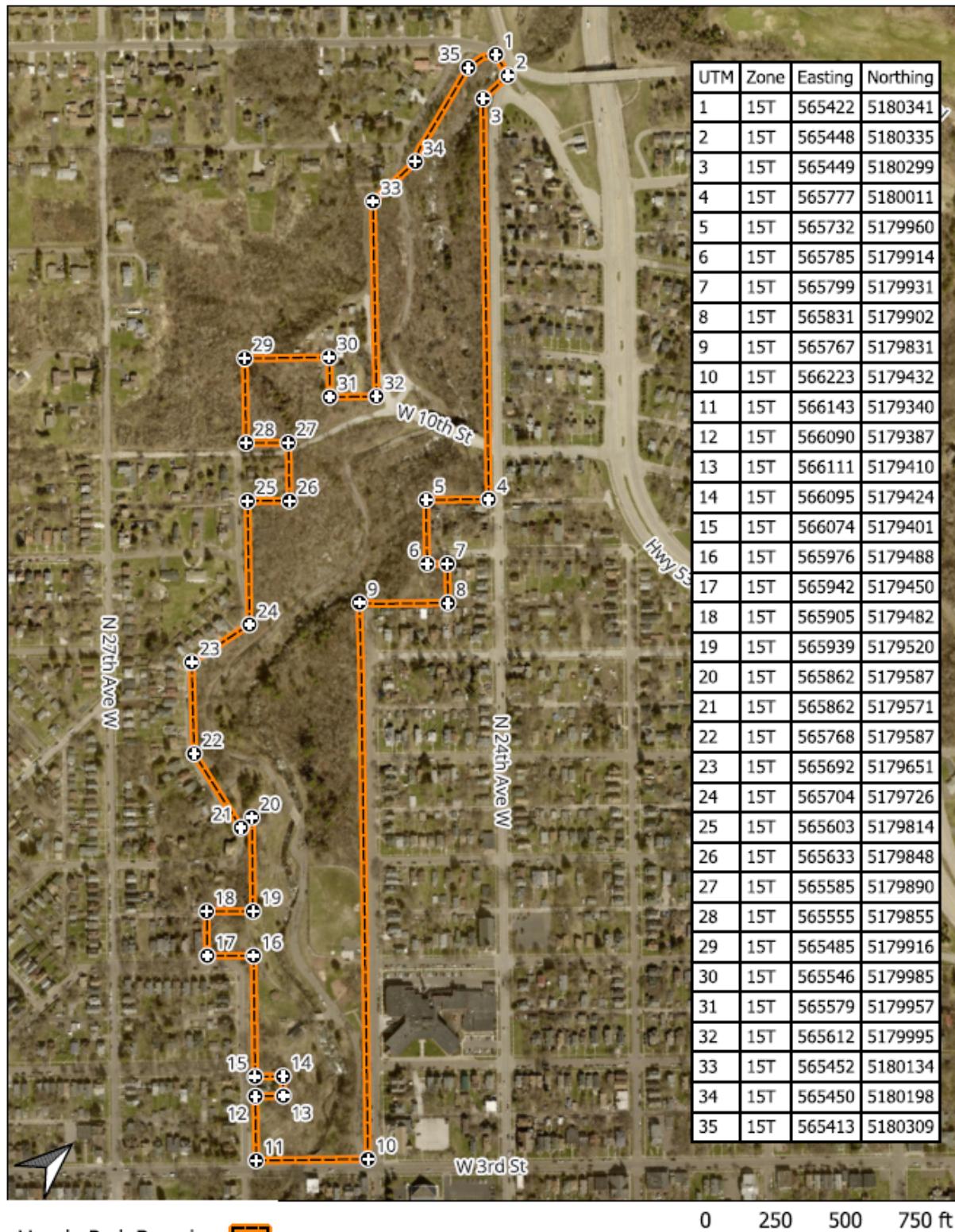
UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

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Lincoln Park Boundary 

0 250 500 750 ft


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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lincoln Park comprises the following described real property located in St. Louis County, Minnesota:

Lots 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413 and 415, Block 114,
DULUTH PROPER SECOND DIVISION

Southerly Seventy feet (70') of Lots 414 and 416, Block 114, DULUTH PROPER
SECOND DIVISION

Lots 401-416, inclusive, Block 120, DULUTH PROPER SECOND DIVISION

Lots 401-416, inclusive, Block 149, DULUTH PROPER SECOND DIVISION

Lots 417 and 419, Block 150, DULUTH PROPER SECOND DIVISION

Lots 401-416, inclusive, Block 152, DULUTH PROPER SECOND DIVISION

All that part of the Northeast Quarter of Southwest Quarter of Southeast Quarter (NE ¼
of SW ¼ of SE ¼) of Section 32, Township 50 North, Range 14 West of the
Fourth Principal Meridian, according to the government survey thereof, described
as follows: Beginning at a point on the east line of said Southwest Quarter of the
Southeast Quarter (SW 1/4 of SE 1/4) seven hundred sixty-five feet (765') north
of the southeast corner thereof; thence along the said east line to the northeast
corner; thence west along the north line thereof five hundred ten feet (510');
thence south ten degrees west (10° W) two hundred forty-seven feet (247');
thence south forty-eight degrees and thirty minutes east (S 48° 30' E) three
hundred thirty-five feet (335'); thence south seventy-seven degrees thirty minutes
east (S 77° 30' E) to the point of beginning; EXCEPT for those portions used for
street and utility purposes in connection with Lincoln Parkway

Lots 401, 403 and 405, Block 171, DULUTH PROPER SECOND DIVISION

Lots 1-16, inclusive, Block 9, SPALDING'S ADDITION TO DULUTH

Lots 1-32, inclusive, Block 10, SPALDING'S ADDITION TO DULUTH, EXCEPT for
those portions of Lots 15-18 in said Block 10 used for street and utility purposes
in connection with N. Twenty-Sixth Ave. W.

Lots 1-16, inclusive, and Lots 23-32, inclusive, Block 11, SPALDING'S ADDITION TO
DULUTH

Lots 1-28, inclusive, Block 12, SPALDING'S ADDITION TO DULUTH, EXCEPT for
those portions of said Block used for street and utility purposes

Lots 16-25, inclusive, Block 7, SPALDING'S ADDITION TO DULUTH A-2

Lots 10-32, inclusive, Block 6, SPALDING'S ADDITION TO DULUTH

Lots 1-32, Block 5, SPALDING'S ADDITION TO DULUTH, EXCEPT for those
portions of said Block used for street and utility purposes

Lots 1-5, inclusive, Block 4, SPALDING'S ADDITION TO DULUTH—need
cancellation of forfeiture

Lots 6-25, inclusive, Block 4, SPALDING'S ADDITION TO DULUTH, EXCEPT for
those portions of Lots 15-18 in said Block 4 used for street and utility purposes

Lots 15 and 16, Block 14, SPALDING'S ADDITION TO DULUTH

Lots 1-6, inclusive, Block 59, HARRISON'S BROOKDALE DIVISION OF DULUTH

Lots 1-11, inclusive, Block 48, HARRISON'S BROOKDALE DIVISION OF DULUTH

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Lots 1-13, inclusive, Block 38, HARRISON'S BROOKDALE DIVISION OF DULUTH

Lots 1-20, inclusive, Block 39, HARRISON'S BROOKDALE DIVISION OF DULUTH

That piece or parcel of land lying between the Boulevard as now laid out and used, and

the West line of Harrison's Brookdale Division of Duluth, according to the recorded plat thereof, being a part of the S1/2 of S1/2 of E1/2 of NW1/4 and of S1/2 of S1/2 of N1/2 of S1/2 of E1/2 of NW1/4 of Section 32, Township 50 North, Range 14 West of the Fourth Principal Meridian, EXCEPT for that portion used for street and utility purposes

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary encompasses the historic property associated with Lincoln Park. A restrictive covenant requires the City of Duluth to permanently manage and maintain this property for public outdoor recreation use.

11. Form Prepared Byname/title: Charlene Roise, Historianorganization: Hess, Roise and Companystreet & number: 100 North First Streetcity or town: Minneapolis state: MN zip code: 55401e-mail: roise@hessroise.comtelephone: 612-338-1987date: October 2025

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property:	Lincoln Park
City or Vicinity:	Duluth
County:	Saint Louis
State:	MN
Photographer:	Charlene Roise
Location of Original Digital Files:	Hess, Roise and Company
100 North First Street, Minneapolis MN 55401	
Number of Photographs:	37

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0001

Date Photographed: December 2024

North end of Lincoln Park at Skyline Parkway. Looking southeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0002

Date Photographed: December 2024

Footpath into park, part of the Superior Hiking Trail, at the northeast corner of Lincoln Park. 24th Avenue is to the left and the Saint Louis River is in the distance. Looking south-southwest.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0003

Date Photographed: December 2024

Lincoln Park Drive at 25th Avenue. Miller Creek is visible through trees along the left side of the road. The John R. Blatnik (I-535) Bridge, Saint Louis River, and Superior Bay are in the distance. Looking south.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0004

Date Photographed: December 2024

Lincoln Park Drive is to the left. The Duluth Traverse Trail is in the center. The Lake Superior Hiking Trail is to the right, marked by a blue blaze on a boulder. It heads to the 12th Street Pedestrian Bridge over Miller Creek in the background. Looking northeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0005

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Date Photographed: December 2024

The south elevation of the 12th Street Pedestrian Bridge over Miller Creek. Looking northwest.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0006

Date Photographed: December 2024

Typical trail along the east side of Miller Creek. This segment is between 10th and 12th Streets. Looking north.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0007

Date Photographed: December 2024

Lincoln Park Drive approaching the Lincoln Park Bridge from the north. The road goes beneath the bridge's western span; Miller Creek and a trail run under the eastern span. A spur connects Lincoln Park Drive and 10th Street. Looking southeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0008

Date Photographed: December 2024

East approach to the Lincoln Park Bridge, which carries 10th Street over the Miller Creek ravine. The road angling to the right at the west end of the bridge is 25th Avenue. The spur connecting 10th Street to Lincoln Park Drive is at the base of 25th Avenue. Looking northwest.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0009

Date Photographed: December 2024

South elevation of Lincoln Avenue Bridge. A stone retaining wall along Lincoln Park Drive extends from the western span. Looking northwest.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0010

Date Photographed: December 2024

View from Lincoln Park Bridge with Lincoln Park Drive to the right, Miller Creek in the center, and the Saint Louis River in the distance. Looking south.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0011

Date Photographed: December 2024

Former quarry site on west side of Lincoln Park Drive. Looking northwest.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0012

Date Photographed: December 2024

8th Street Pedestrian Bridge over Miller Creek. Looking east.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0013

Date Photographed: December 2024

Stairway and stone settee at west end of 8th Street Pedestrian Bridge. Looking west.

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MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0014

Date Photographed: December 2024

Trail along Miller Creek and stairway at east end of 8th Street Pedestrian Bridge. Looking northeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0015

Date Photographed: December 2024

Trail on east side of Miller Creek south of 8th Street Pedestrian Bridge. Looking south.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0016

Date Photographed: December 2024

Miller Creek downstream (south) from 8th Street Pedestrian Bridge. Looking north.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0017

Date Photographed: December 2024

Entrance to Lincoln Park from Lincoln Parkway north of 6th Street. Looking southeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0018

Date Photographed: December 2024

Elephant Rock. Looking southeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0019

Date Photographed: December 2024

Bridge 69679 carries Lincoln Park Drive over Miller Creek around 6th Street. Elephant Rock is visible at the left edge of the photo. Looking north.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0020

Date Photographed: December 2024

Lincoln Park Drive approaching northern end of Bridge 69679. Chain-link fencing around the terrace is in the distance. Looking southeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0021

Date Photographed: December 2024

Lincoln Park Drive. The terrace is to the left. Miller Creek and the 5th Street Pedestrian Bridge are to the right. Looking south.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0022

Date Photographed: December 2024

The terrace east of Lincoln Park Drive. The New Deal stone wall wraps around the north and east sides. The houses in the background are on 25th Avenue. Looking southeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0023

Date Photographed: December 2024

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The terrace east of Lincoln Park Drive. The sports facilities and parking lot were renovated and the picnic shelter and nature play area were added in 2023. Looking northwest.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0024

Date Photographed: December 2024

Miller Creek and the 5th Street Pedestrian Bridge on the west side of Lincoln Park Drive.

The houses in the background are along 26th Avenue and 5th Street. Looking south-southwest.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_025

Date Photographed: December 2024

Dry-laid ashlar walls, individual ashlar blocks, irregular stones, native plants, and swales were integrated into the landscape on the west side of the Plateau during the 2023 renovation to address erosion and improve drainage. The ashlar was salvaged from the failing wall below the terrace on the Plateau's east side that had to be removed. The black pipe railing of a stairway into the park from the corner of Lincoln Parkway and 6th Street is visible at the top of the slope. Looking northwest.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0026

Date Photographed: December 2024

The asphalt trail in the foreground generally reflects the alignment of a loop from Lincoln Park Drive that once came through this area. A trail extending perpendicularly to the east passes over a wood-stringer bridge near the center of the photo and a historic arch bridge over Miller Creek to the right. The wood bridge was installed in 2023 to make this path accessible and allow passage of water when the creek overtops its banks. Looking northeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0027

Date Photographed: December 2024

Stone pavilion, picnic shelter, and playground, from 26th Avenue. Looking southeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0028

Date Photographed: December 2024

View from 26th Avenue with picnic shelter and playground in foreground, Miller Creek, Lincoln Park Drive, and terrace beyond. Looking northeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0029

Date Photographed: December 2024

Stone pavilion and stone wall from the 1930s. Looking southeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0030

Date Photographed: December 2024

Front (northwest) and northeast facades of stone pavilion. A flagpole is near northwest corner of projecting stage. A plaque honoring Councilmember Renee Kathy Van Nett and a bas-

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relief remnant of plaque for Samuel Snively are on the left end of the front facade. Looking southwest.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0031

Date Photographed: December 2024

Southwest side and rear of stone pavilion. The stone-lined channel of Miller Creek is to the right. Bridge 69650 carries pedestrians over the creek between the pavilion and Lincoln Park Drive. Looking northeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0032

Date Photographed: December 2024

A view down Miller Creek from the west end of Bridge 69650. The design of the iron railing and stone end posts was based on an earlier bridge at this location, which was replaced in 2003. Looking southeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0033

Date Photographed: December 2024

Lincoln Park Drive just north of the entrance at 3rd Street. 25th Avenue is above the slope to the left. Looking southeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0034

Date Photographed: December 2024

Lincoln Park Drive at 3rd Street entrance to park. A sign and planting area are at the intersection's northwest corner. Looking north.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0035

Date Photographed: December 2024

View of Miller Creek and southeast corner of Lincoln Park from Bridge 88552 on 3rd Street. Looking northeast.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0036

Date Photographed: December 2024

View of Miller Creek and southwest corner of Lincoln Park from Bridge 88552 on 3rd Street. Two houses on elevated site to left are east of 26th Avenue. Looking north.

MN_Saint Louis County_Lincoln Park_0037

Date Photographed: December 2024

Bridge 88552 carrying 3rd Street over Miller Creek. Looking southwest.

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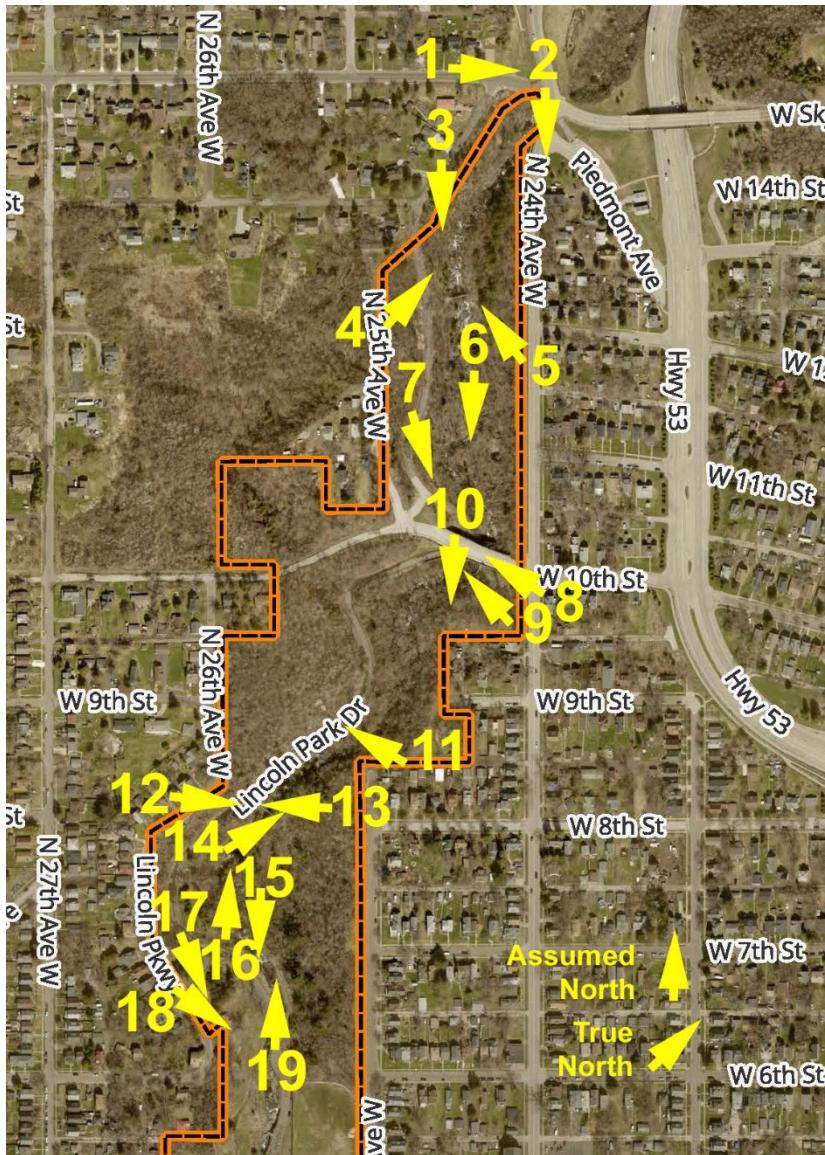


Photo key of upper park

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Photo key of lower park

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.