

II. Site Master Plan Purpose and Guiding Principles

Purpose

Rolling Hills Park is envisioned as a place that provides a wide range of recreational amenities and activities in a beautiful setting that offers an authentic, sustainable, healthy, safe, and fun experience for Washtenaw County residents of all ages and interests. The Site Master Plan for Rolling Hills Park is to serve as a tool to communicate this vision and guide the on-going development and stewardship of the park. It is a long-range plan to guide the growth of the park and to prioritize and maximize the value of all capital expenditures, and improve operation effectiveness over time. It is anticipated that the plan will be implemented in phases over a period of 10 to 20 years or more, depending upon a variety of factors.

Guiding Principles

Rolling Hills Park will grow to become a recreation destination for families, individuals, and groups, who will be drawn to the park for a particular activity or event and be enticed to stay all day to enjoy the bounty of unique opportunities available in close proximity to each other. Some will come for the diverse array of fun activities and programs, which will include opportunities to both participate in and learn to play active sports with excellent teaching facilities for activities including mountain biking, cross country skiing, fishing, disc golf, baseball, soccer, and golf. Others will seek out the park to walk the nature trails, improve their personal fitness, or picnic in a variety of restored natural settings.

The following six principles are the foundation for the master plan. These principles, or qualities, together describe the overall vision for Rolling Hills Park. These qualities already exist to some degree in the park, and will continue to emerge and become more prevalent through the detailed planning, design and development of each new phase of improvements according to the plan.

1. A Park in Balance with Nature

The existing natural and cultural features and landscape of the Rolling Hills Park site provide the framework for the layout of the park master site plan. The topography, trees and ground plane vegetation, water movement, and other elements are thought of as an ecological system, which will be reinforced and restored through the continued development of the park.

Rolling Hills Park will provide a balanced array of active and passive recreational facilities and programs set into the context of lush, vigorous, diverse native landscapes- woodlands, wetlands, and prairies.

2. A Place for Children

Rolling Hills Park will be a place of wonder, joy, excitement, and learning for children of all ages. Children will be encouraged to explore and enjoy the park's bounty of natural and cultural experiences, in addition to a range of structured and unstructured play. New kinds of play experiences are incorporated into the plan.

3. A Unique Facility for a Variety of Activities

Activities for all ages will make Rolling Hills Park a destination for families, groups and individuals. The park is meant to provide four-season recreation/play opportunities for a broad audience, and will thus have widespread appeal. Many will visit for specific active programs; others will come to simply enjoy the scenery and be outdoors, explore, and learn.

4. Recreation Opportunities that are Accessible to All

Rolling Hills Park will serve every resident of the County, and be designed and managed to include people of all ages and abilities. Accessibility will be integrated seamlessly into park elements with universal design practices. Rolling Hills Park will also lead the region in providing active play spaces designed and operated specifically for people with special needs.

5. A Place to Have Fun with Water

Water is a primary theme of the park, and is expressed in a variety of ways. Natural water experiences will grow beyond Spring Pond and MacCarthy Creek to other areas of the park. Active water play will be expanded with a larger, improved water park, and fun and engaging water experiences will be incorporated into other areas of the park.

6. A Sustainable Place

Rolling Hills Park will be developed in harmony with ecological processes using conservation practices wholly integrated into the built elements and facilities. An integrated, multidisciplinary process will be used for each phase of the project to determine which high-performance, green building and site development strategies and materials will be most suitable to provide the intent of the element within cost and long-term maintenance expectations. These practices are more energy efficient, conserve water and other valuable resources, and provide more durable facilities that are less costly to maintain over time. The incorporation of green practices into each element of the park infrastructure will achieve multiple benefits with each dollar spent. Additionally, green technologies can provide interpretative learning opportunities for sustainable practices.

Ultimately, the most sustainable places are those that have an innate, authentic beauty. As Rolling Hills Park becomes increasingly beautiful and used throughout the seasons, it will become more cherished, and therefore sustained.