Park & Recreation Commission Item

September 23, 2025

Item	Chanhassen Estates Mini Park Discussion
Item No:	G.1
Agenda Section	**GENERAL BUSINESS**
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SUGGESTED ACTION

Discussion

SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Chanhassen Estates mini park has been in our park system for more than 40 years, and became a park because of a remnant water and sewer utility parcel. It's classified as a neighborhood park and is located at 55 Lake Drive East. This 1.78-acre park is located in Chanhassen Estates south of McDonald's. The park contains an open field, playground, and a half-court basketball pad. This is one of the few parks we have within our park system that doesn't have a dedicated parking lot, and "No Parking" signs are posted along Lake Drive, making it illegal to park on the street. The current playground was installed in 1994 and was scheduled for replacement in 2019. The replacement has been postponed due to other more pressing priorities, and to step back and ask some questions and analyze the reinvestment back into the park.

Analysis:

- Condition of Facilities
- Playground equipment/border requires reinvestment
- Usage Trends: Park counts and observations indicate lower usage compared to nearby parks
- Proximity to Other Amenities: Rice Marsh Lake Park is 1/2 mile away and provides alternative recreational opportunities for residents
- Financial Considerations: Estimated renovation costs $80,000 - $100,000 new playground/concrete border

Discussion:

- Should the city continue to maintain Chan Estates Park despite replacement costs and limited use?
- Should the city explore partial or full decommissioning, including removal of aging amenities and transition to open green space?
- Should alternative long-term uses for the site be studied?
- What level of additional community engagement would the Park and Recreation Commission like staff to pursue before bringing back a recommendation?

DISCUSSION

At their August 26th Park and Recreation Commission meeting, the commission toured and discussed the parks history, amenities, resident use and general conditions. After a brief tour prior to the meeting many of the commissioners didn't know the park was there with it's limited visibility from Lake Drive and lack of a parking lot. The discussion centered around whether the city should reinvest with the park equipment and infrastructure since the park was challenging to access and lack of use. The commissioners engaged in discussion and potential uses of the park. Listed below are the discussion topics.

- Why was the Chan Estates Mini Park playground equipment delayed
- Can a parking lot be built and will access be granted on and off of Lake Drive
- Are their low cost alternatives for replacement of amenities
- Can a community garden be built at this location
- Can the city obtain easements from adjacent property owners to build a sidewalk and utilize street parking
- Is Chan Estates Mini Park within one half mile of another park with similar amenities
- The existing park was only appealing to smaller children
- Should the park equipment be removed and converted to a pollinator garden
- Could a dedicated crosswalk be built to have a safe place for residents to cross Lake Drive
- Are the trees present in the park ash trees? Should they be removed

Upon the conclusion of the discussion the commission would like to focus on the following:

- Low-cost alternatives
- They are not in favor of improvements without a parking lot
- Look at a pollinator garden and convert it a natural park instead of an active one
- Plant wild flowers and have a nature path throughout the nature area

RECOMMENDATION

Park and Recreation Commission continues to discuss park renovation and the best path going forward with the Chan Estates Mini Park

ATTACHMENTS