

CRANE LAKE PRESERVE

SMALL BUDGET / BIG IMPACT
MINNETONKA, MINNESOTA

ABSTRACT

The landscape architect designed a refined park shelter and landscape along a regional trail in the city of Minnetonka. The modern shelter - offers a new destination in the heart of the community – and overlooks Crane Lake Preserve.

A simple palette of burnished block, standing seam metal roofing, painted steel, and cedar achieve a minimalistic design. Staggered, cast-in-place concrete and crushed granite provide a unique and permeable foreground to the structure.

This low-budget project is drawing renewed attention to this lovely and previously hidden preserve in the heart of the community.

NARRATIVE

The park shelter at Crane Lake Preserve is truly a small-budget project making a big impact. Strategically positioned along a community trail and juxtaposed with a regional shopping mall, this shelter stands as a testament to meticulous planning by the landscape architect. It has evolved from extensive prior master planning endeavors, seamlessly blending into its surroundings to fulfill both practical and aesthetic purposes.

The planning process undertaken by the landscape architect involved a thorough assessment of Crane Lake's significance within Minnetonka's interconnected trails network. By engaging the community through various initiatives, the landscape architects gained valuable insights into residents' preferences. Notably, there was a strong desire for a shelter that promotes passive recreation, offers a serene respite along the trail, and provides an opportunity to admire the scenic beauty of the lake.

To optimize the budget – the city self-performed the removal of invasive buckthorn along the shore – allowing the landscape architect to strategically site the shelter with serene views of the preserve.

Permeable crushed granite paths link the regional trail to the shelter. Cast-in-place concrete pavers appear to stretch between the shelter and the regional trail – beckoning passers-by to stop, rest, and take in the view.

The landscape architect's design objective was to strike a balance between the intersection of nature and the built environment. The design sought to maintain the natural setting while providing a place of respite overlooking the preserve. The paths lead beyond the shelter to the shores of the preserve – inviting curious visitors to explore and climb over the fallen logs purposely left in place – as they explore this natural setting.

Recognizing the visibility this structure would have in the community, the landscape architects took great care to design and detail an elegant park shelter. The structure is asymmetrically divided into three spaces separated by dark gray burnished block walls that form the central portion and support the standing seam metal roof above with a tongue & groove cedar ceiling below. Large cedar tie beams span the walls and structurally hold the shelter together. Cedar 2x4's provide a simple yet effective screen wall to the front and rear of the structure. After dark – hidden lighting within the vaulted shelter – softly glows through the screen wall and advertises this park amenity to those passing by.

Two open-air spaces flank the central arrival zone of the shelter – shielded with a steel-framed cedar pergola for shade. By dividing the structure into three distinct zones – the shelter offers multiple groups concurrent access and privacy. Oversized and accessible picnic tables are joined by a row of Adirondack chairs aligned to overlook the preserve. In time the city plans to add interpretive graphics and

trail maps in the shelter's central arrival space.

Rainwater is captured in the roof's gutter system and the water's journey to the preserve is revealed and celebrated. The rainwater falls from the upper gutters down to troughs mounted on knee-high walls where it subsequently falls to the ground and completes its journey to Crane Lake Preserve. Ornamental landscaping yielded to a more natural-looking native seed mix - the city self-performed this restoration work to further stretch the small project budget.

The project is an example of thoughtful and purposeful restraint – a refined yet simple shelter that frames a stunning view of Crane Lake Preserve. The shelter creates a place – a destination in the landscape – that invites residents to visit, overlook, and appreciate the beauty of nature. The success of this project is apparent in its simplicity, refined detailing, and integration into the natural setting.

PARK + PUBLIC REALM PLAN



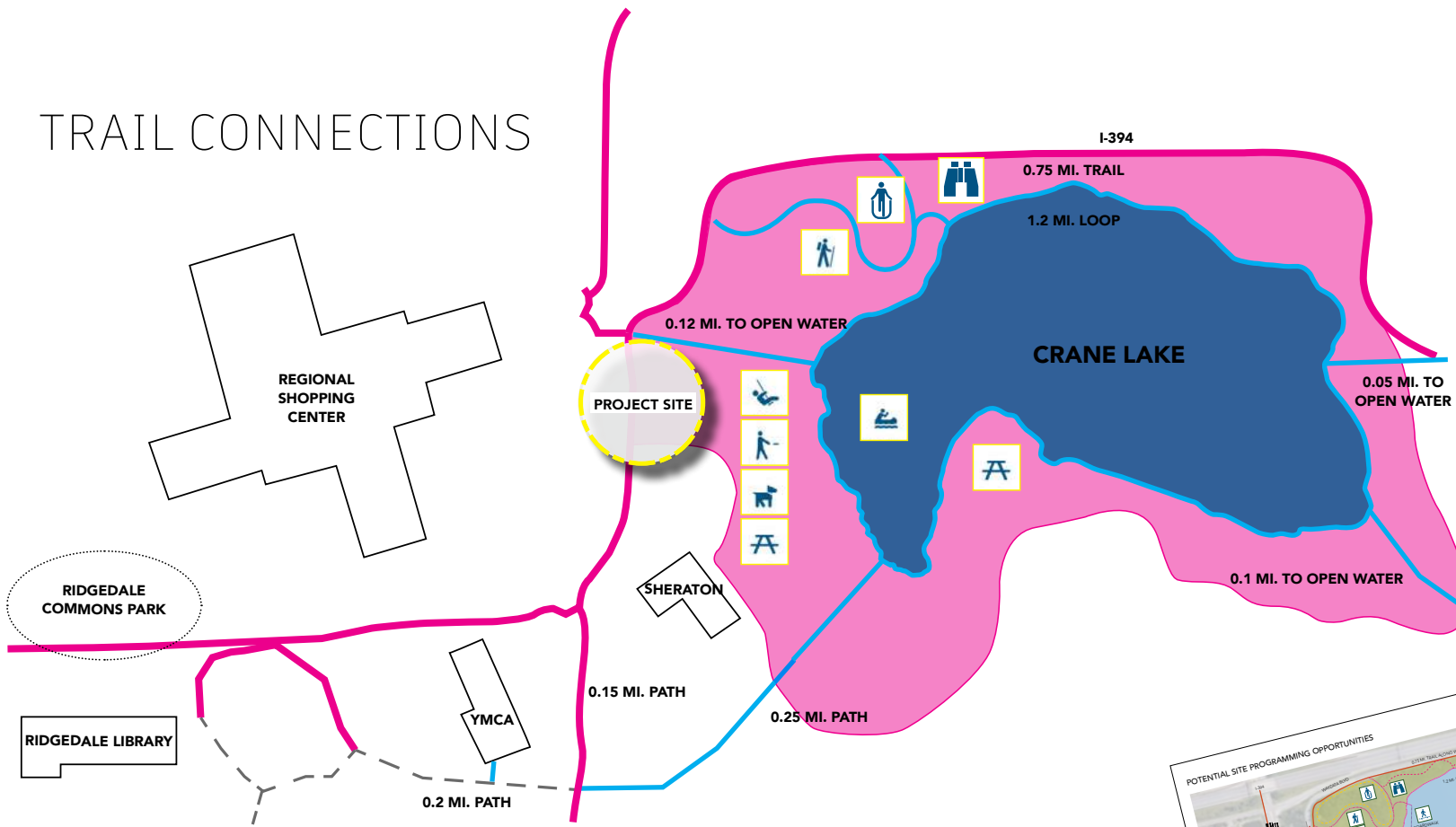
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CRANE
LAKE
PRESERVE

REGIONAL
SHOPPING
CENTER

PROJECT SITE

TRAIL CONNECTIONS



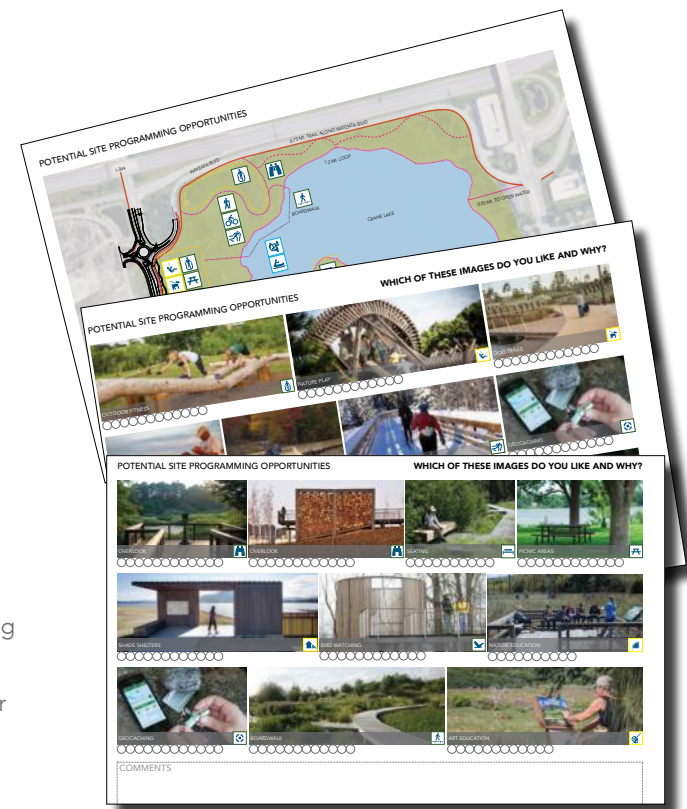
- 1. FUTURE/EXISTING TRAILS - CITY OF MINNETONKA 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
- 2. PROPOSED TRAILS - CRANE LAKE AREA
- 3. 2030 MASTER PLAN PROPOSED PLAN*
*Per development discussion with City Council, understand that these trails are not desired
- 4. AREA OF OPPORTUNITY FOR OTHER TRAILS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In the planning stages, community engagement helped to understand the desires of the local community for Crane Lake.

BENEFITS OF PROVIDING AMENITIES AT CRANE LAKE

- Improve interconnected trails network within the City of Minnetonka.
- Enhance passive recreation options along the trails.
- Create accessible recreational areas near residential areas and Ridgedale Center.



Crane Lake community engagement boards

CRANE LAKE PRESERVE

COMMUNITY TRAIL

PROJECT SITE

REGIONAL SHOPPING
MALL ENTRANCE

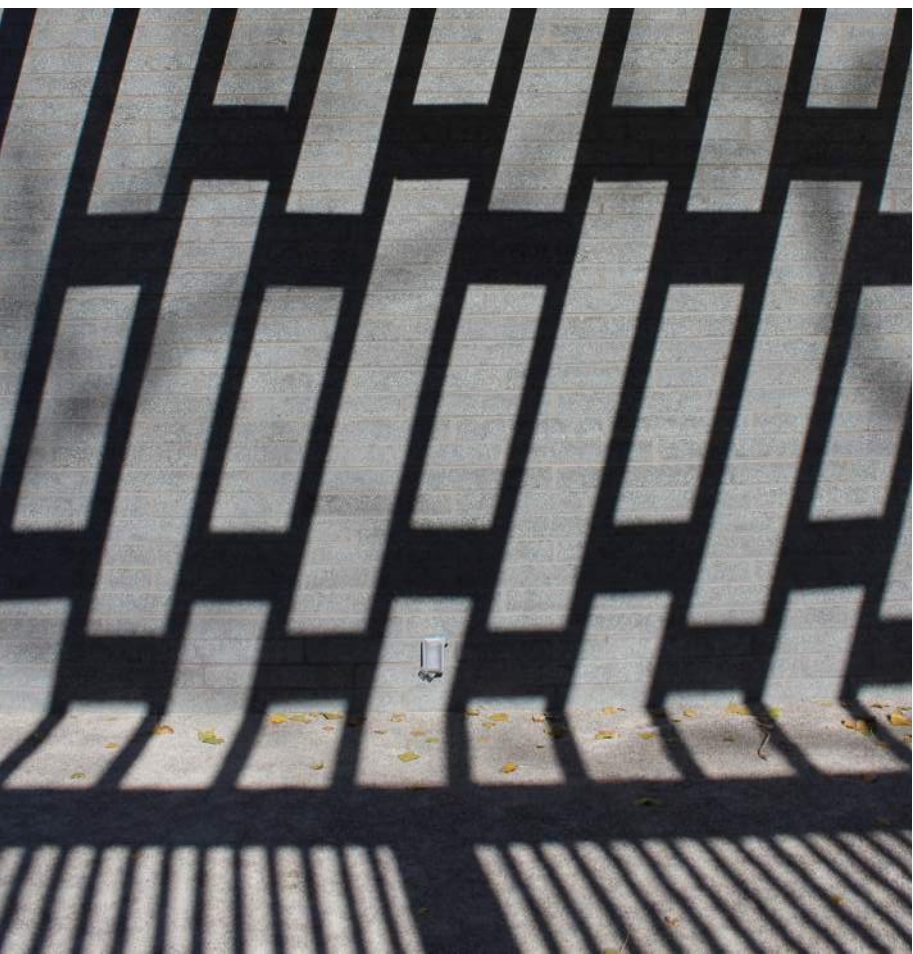








PAINE LAKE
RESERVE





CRANE LAKE
PRESERVE



CRAN
PRE







CRANE LAKE
PRESERVE