

# Sister Lakes Association Park Vision 2023



# Introduction

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- **Sister Lakes** – a diverse and inclusive community with members of different educational attainment, economic resources, and life stages.
- **Sister Lakes Association (SLA)** – historically organized around environmental issues, the lakes, and other unique features of the area, including convincing the city not to sell Lakewood Elementary School after closure in 1985. Now it's up for expansion!
- **SLA today** – revived when a neighborhood aging-in-place support group recognized that a cohesive, organized community is not only critical to the elderly but also benefits everyone.

# Guiding Principles

Building Infrastructure to Connect Community  
And Protect and Preserve Natural Areas

The Sister Lakes Park Vision seeks to:

- Create and maintain a First Sister Lake Gathering Place that will build community resilience and city-wide appreciation of the unique Dolph natural area
- Provide a playground for children and families in the Westover area
- Contribute to the city's goals by preserving and building support for the wooded area that maintains carbon sequestration benefits in this area of the city
- Support aging in place and facilitate access across generations to our lakes and natural areas
- Support opportunities for children and schools to engage with and preserve this unique natural area

# A Vision for Our Parks



# Sister Lakes Park Vision Priorities

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- Build a First Sister Lake **gathering space** by the dock on Parklake Ave.
- Build a **playground** in the Westover Hills neighborhood
- Provide safe accessibility to Dolph Park with a **walkway** along Parklake Ave.
- **Future:** Acquire 3365 Jackson Rd. property for inclusion in Dolph Park
  - Borders a rare fen wetland environment

## A map of First Sister Lake illustrating:

- The green, mown space on the east side of First Sister, where a gathering space might be located
- The Westover Hills neighborhood on the west side of First Sister Lake
- The First Sister Lake frontage along Parklake, which lacks any sidewalk or walking path
- The 3.5-acre vacant space at 3365 Jackson Road





First Sister  
Lake....  
As a place to  
gather



# First Sister Lake Gathering Space

- **Dolph Nature Area is an underutilized city-wide resource.** Even a modest structure would make a big difference in wider usage and enjoyment: shade, protection from elements, seating area.
- **Currently there is no neighborhood meeting space** as we weave the community together through development of interest groups: gardening, book clubs, support network, young family playgroups, ice skaters. A pavilion would help build community and resiliency.
- **Our community is already invested in stewardship of natural areas**, which includes a desire to invite and educate others in the space.
  - Rare fen wetland, marshes, vernal pools, forested swamp, kettle lakes
- **The SLA has a history of activism and bringing the neighborhood together**, which suggests a willingness and ability to assist in fundraising for a structure.



# Westover Pocket Playground



# A Playground in Westover Hills

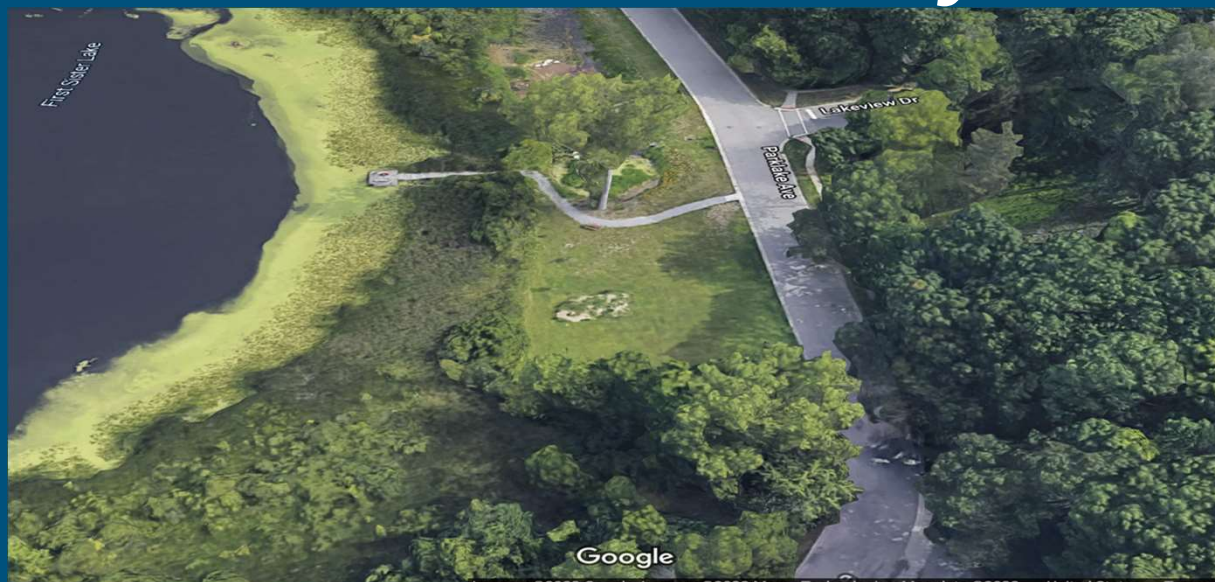
- **Westover Hills was annexed by the city** after dioxane contamination was discovered in their well water.
- **Westover Hills is a diverse neighborhood**, with Habitat for Humanity homes, households with young children, and an in-home childcare facility serving DHS-assisted families.
- **The neighborhood lacks amenities of other areas**, including a playground and continuous sidewalks.
- The nearest city park, Burr Oak Park, **is 1.3 miles, or a 27-minute walk, away.**
- Lakewood Elementary School playground, a similar distance away, has **limited hours of access.**
- **The need for a playground** was identified in the PROS plan of 2010.

## From a Westover Parent

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“We have lived here since my daughter was a baby. She is now 9. Our neighborhood has children of all ages who would benefit from a nearby playground. We also have many wonderful grandparents as neighbors who often have their grandchildren come to visit. Currently the closest playground is over a 20 minute walk away at Lakewood Elementary School. This is not accessible to the young toddler and preschooler families during the school day. A neighborhood public playground would be a great benefit. As a mom with an autoimmune disease in a one-vehicle family, I am not always physically capable of making the 40 minute round trip walk to Lakewood, much to the disappointment of my daughter over the years. Playground visits are still her favorite thing.” - Nicole Berg

# Accessibility





# Walkway Along Parklake

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- Parklake Ave. is the **eastern boundary and entry to Dolph Park**, yet lacks sidewalks or walkways for pedestrians.
- Increased accessibility through filling sidewalk gaps is **already a city priority**.
- **It's a safety issue**—this would provide safe passage for neighborhood pedestrians now sharing the road with cars, school traffic, delivery vehicles, etc.
- There may be several options for this walkway, not just paved sidewalk, and we look forward to working with the city and parks to **find the best solution**.



Thank you!

