



## Exhibition Driving in Saint Paul Parks

### Issue Overview

Exhibition driving — reckless vehicle behavior such as drag racing, burnouts, and high-speed maneuvers — has become an emerging issue within the Saint Paul's Parks System. While not constant, activity most often occurs during summer evenings in large parking areas.

Raspberry Island and Harriet Island are the most common sites, where the City and Saint Paul Police Department (SPPD) have coordinated responses. Other incidents include vehicles driving onto pathways or fields, creating serious safety risks. For example, one driver entered the fields at McMurray during active play, leading to new fencing and concrete block barriers to prevent recurrence.

### Public Safety Concerns

- **Hazards to Park Users:** Creates dangerous conditions for pedestrians, cyclists, and families.
- **Noise and Disorder:** Disrupts the Park atmosphere and nearby neighborhoods with excessive noise and gatherings.
- **Potential Escalation:** Attracts large groups, increasing the risk of disorderly conduct and placing a strain on police and park staff.

### Operational Challenges

- Offenders are mobile and disperse quickly when staff or officers respond.
- Activity shifts between parks, making it difficult to predict or deter consistently.
- Parks are designed to be open and accessible, limiting physical deterrents such as barriers.



## Community Impact

- Seasonal increase in complaints and calls for service during summer evenings and weekends.
- Diminishes the community's sense of safety and discourages positive park use.
- Undermines the City's investment in safe, welcoming public spaces.

## Potential Strategies

- **Environmental Design:** Add speed bumps, bollards, fencing, and improved lighting; expand surveillance in high-risk areas.
- **Targeted Enforcement:** Increase seasonal patrols, explore the use of traffic cameras, and coordinate evening/weekend enforcement.
- **Community Engagement:** Partner with neighborhood groups for rapid reporting; educate the public on risks and penalties.
- **Policy Review:** Ensure ordinances clearly prohibit exhibition driving and apply appropriate penalties

## Conclusion

Saint Paul's Park system is one of the City's most valuable community assets, relied upon for safe recreation and neighborhood vitality. Addressing exhibition driving will require a coordinated approach — combining enforcement, environmental design, and community partnerships — to protect both the safety and quality of life of park users.