

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Report

For the Community Development Committee meeting of October 19, 2020

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of October 28, 2020

Subject: Shingle Creek Regional Trail Master Plan, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Review File No. 50218-1

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Shingle Creek Regional Trail Master Plan, including the supplemental information provided in the "Clarification of Submittal of Shingle Creek Regional Trail Master Plan" letter dated September 2, 2020.
2. Require that Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, prior to initiating any new development of the regional trail corridor, send preliminary plans to the Environmental Services Assistant Manager at the Metropolitan Council's Environmental Services Division.

Summary of Committee Discussion/Questions

Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst, presented the staff report to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission at its meeting on October 1, 2020. Adam Arvidson, Director of Strategic Planning with Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, was also in attendance.

Commissioner Taylor asked whether additional wayfinding and signage would be added, especially on the northern end of the corridor. Arvidson responded yes and that other locations would be identified for placement of wayfinding, signage, and potentially trail mile markers.

Commissioner Harris noted that a number of the master plan amenities listed in the Sept. 2 clarification letter are "allowed and typical in regional parks," but the Commission is considering a regional trail master plan. Arvidson responded that the intent is "allowed and typical in the regional park system." Arvidson went on to say there are not always clear differences between regional parks and regional trails in Minneapolis, citing Minneapolis Chain of Lakes and Mississippi Gorge regional parks, and Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail as examples.

Commissioner Peichel said he was struggling to see the regional nature of some of the master plan amenities listed in the clarification letter, for example, the skate park. Arvidson responded that skate parks provide opportunities for youth and young adults who have aged out of play areas, but who have not yet embraced some of the more typical regional park or trail activities. In the context of Shingle Creek, the skate park is in a nature-based setting where teens can also explore the creek. Further, the regional trail provides a transportation corridor for them to travel there, which has multiple benefits.

Council Member Atlas-Ingebretson noted that providing many of the activities included in the clarification letter is a matter of equity as they directly reflect the diverse community's interests.

Commissioner Taylor noted that this discussion represents the continued evolution of the Regional Park System and that it must adapt and be flexible to appeal to a broader group of people who are not currently visiting.

Chair Yarusso reiterated the primary question the Commission was confronting: whether it is appropriate for certain master plan amenities referenced in the clarification letter to be considered regional.

Council Member Atlas-Ingebretson noted that such amenities would serve a hyper-underserved demographic in an area that has seen very little regional investment.

Commissioner Taylor noted the master plan amenities listed represent what the community believes will serve it.

Regional Parks Unit Manager Emmett Mullin noted that the context of the discussion is Shingle Creek Regional Trail specifically and approving certain activities or amenities there does not open the door to them being added in all regional parks or trails. The geographic and demographic context of this regional trail unit is key.

Commissioner Moeller noted the potential equity value of this master plan is outstanding and that overshadows his concerns that approving this master plan could set a precedent for approving such activities in all locations.

Council Member Atlas-Ingebretson noted that this conversation is no different from those the Commission and others have been having around bridging facilities, and that the system needs to evolve to better serve underrepresented populations.

With two abstentions, six Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commissioners voted in favor of recommending the proposed actions. No Commissioners voted to oppose the proposed actions.

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: October 1, 2020

For the Community Development Committee meeting of October 19, 2020

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of October 28, 2020

Subject: Shingle Creek Regional Trail Master Plan, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Review File No. 50218-1

MPOSC District, Member: District D, Lolita Davis Carter

Council District, Member: District 7, Robert Lilligren

Policy/Legal Reference: Minnesota Statutes § 473.313; *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, Chapter 5, Planning Strategy 1; Chapter 7, Recreation Activities and Facilities strategies 1-3

Staff Prepared/Presented: Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst (651-602-1361)

Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Shingle Creek Regional Trail Master Plan, including the supplemental information provided in the "Clarification of Submittal of Shingle Creek Regional Trail Master Plan" letter dated September 2, 2020.
2. Require that Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, prior to initiating any new development of the regional trail corridor, send preliminary plans to the Environmental Services Assistant Manager at the Metropolitan Council's Environmental Services Division.

Background

Shingle Creek Regional Trail runs approximately 2.5 miles through the northernmost neighborhoods of the City of Minneapolis. The regional trail connects to the Three Rivers Park District portion of the trail at the northern city limit and travels southeasterly along Shingle Creek to North Mississippi Regional Park and Victory Memorial Regional Trail at Webber Park. The trail corridor includes lands on both sides of Shingle Creek, which cuts at an angle across the city grid, and a paved multi-use trail that crosses and re-crosses the creek.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) first designated for acquisition about 70 acres of land in a 300-foot-wide strip along two miles of the creek in 1946. Tentative plans for the park were not introduced until 1951, when it was noted that the principal objective of the project was to drain stormwater and make what was once a low, swampy area dry enough for housing construction. It took seven more years before work on the creek began and MPRB initiated a process to lower the creek and grade the land around it. MPRB focused on the area between 50th and 52nd Avenue North where it had developed plans for a playground in a joint project with the school board.

The creek bed was relocated, lowered, and widened, and ball fields, a wading pool and tennis courts were built at what was later named Creekview Park. In 1977, MPRB completed a new recreation center at Creekview Park attached to Olson Junior High, which allowed both park and school use of facilities in both buildings. Extensive improvements were made to the playground at Creekview from 2005 to 2007. A skate park was built, a

baseball field was upgraded with a grant from the Minnesota Twins, and new playground equipment was installed.

In addition to Creekview Park, the regional trail facility has two other main use areas; the creek corridor itself and the Shingle Creek park area. Creekview and Shingle Creek parks feature more neighborhood-oriented facilities like playgrounds and baseball fields, but these areas are within the regional trail corridor boundary and are therefore included in the master plan. That said, the master plan acknowledges that the neighborhood recreation center within Creekview Park is “not a contributing nor allowable feature in the regional park.”

The Shingle Creek Regional Trail Master Plan was originally presented to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission in February 2020. At this meeting, the Commission requested additional information on some of the non-traditional facilities and activities included in the master plan, specifically as they relate to the “new activities” requirements language on pages 100-101 in Chapter 7, Recreation Activities and Facilities, *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. After this meeting, the MPRB requested the plan be withdrawn until which time additional supplemental information can be provided on these new proposed activities and facilities. On September 2, 2020, MPRB provided Council staff the “Clarification of Submittal of Shingle Creek Regional Trail Master Plan” letter (Attachment 1), which provides further justification to the amenities proposed for full inclusion in the regional parks system. It also lists those amenities identified in the master plan that would remain local.

Rationale

The Shingle Creek Regional Trail Master Plan is consistent with the requirements of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, particularly Planning Strategy 1; Recreation Activities and Facilities strategies 1-3; and other Council policies.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The Shingle Creek Regional Trail Master Plan advances the Thrive outcome of Livability by increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation, which enhances quality of life in the region. The master plan also advances the Thrive outcome of Equity by tying preferred development concepts to community engagement outcomes that are tailored to underrepresented groups.

Funding

The total cost to implement the regional trail is estimated at \$19,479,205 for development and \$57,500 annually for operations.

Known Support / Opposition

The Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board approved the Shingle Creek Regional Trail Master Plan as part of the North Service Area Master Plan at its February 6, 2019 meeting. Holly Jenkins, Wilderness in the City, expressed concerns at the February 2020 Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting that secondary recreation activities in the regional parks may impact the nature-based character of the Regional Parks System.

Figure 1: Regional Trails Open to the Public (2018) and Shingle Creek Regional Trail (MPRB) location

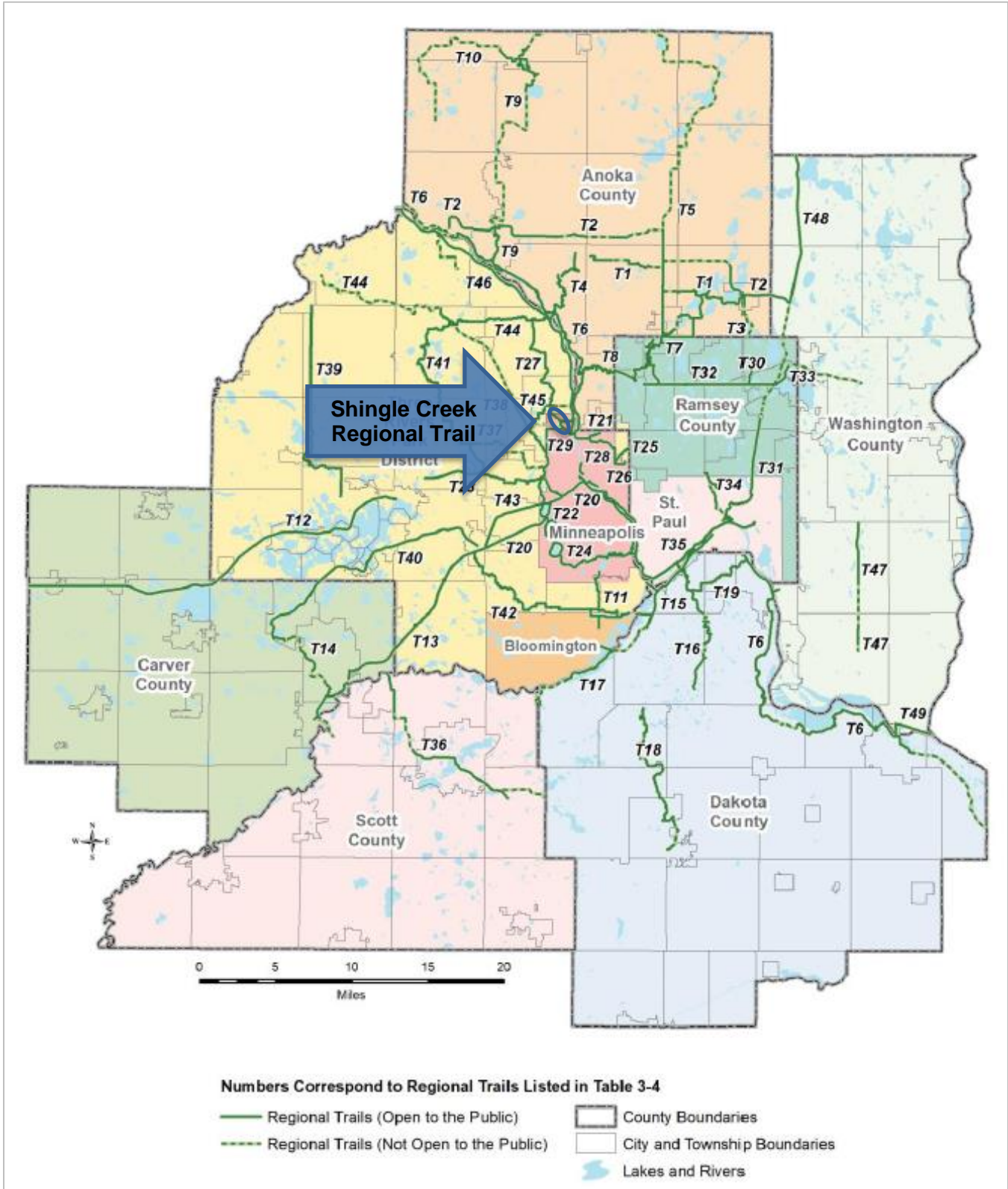
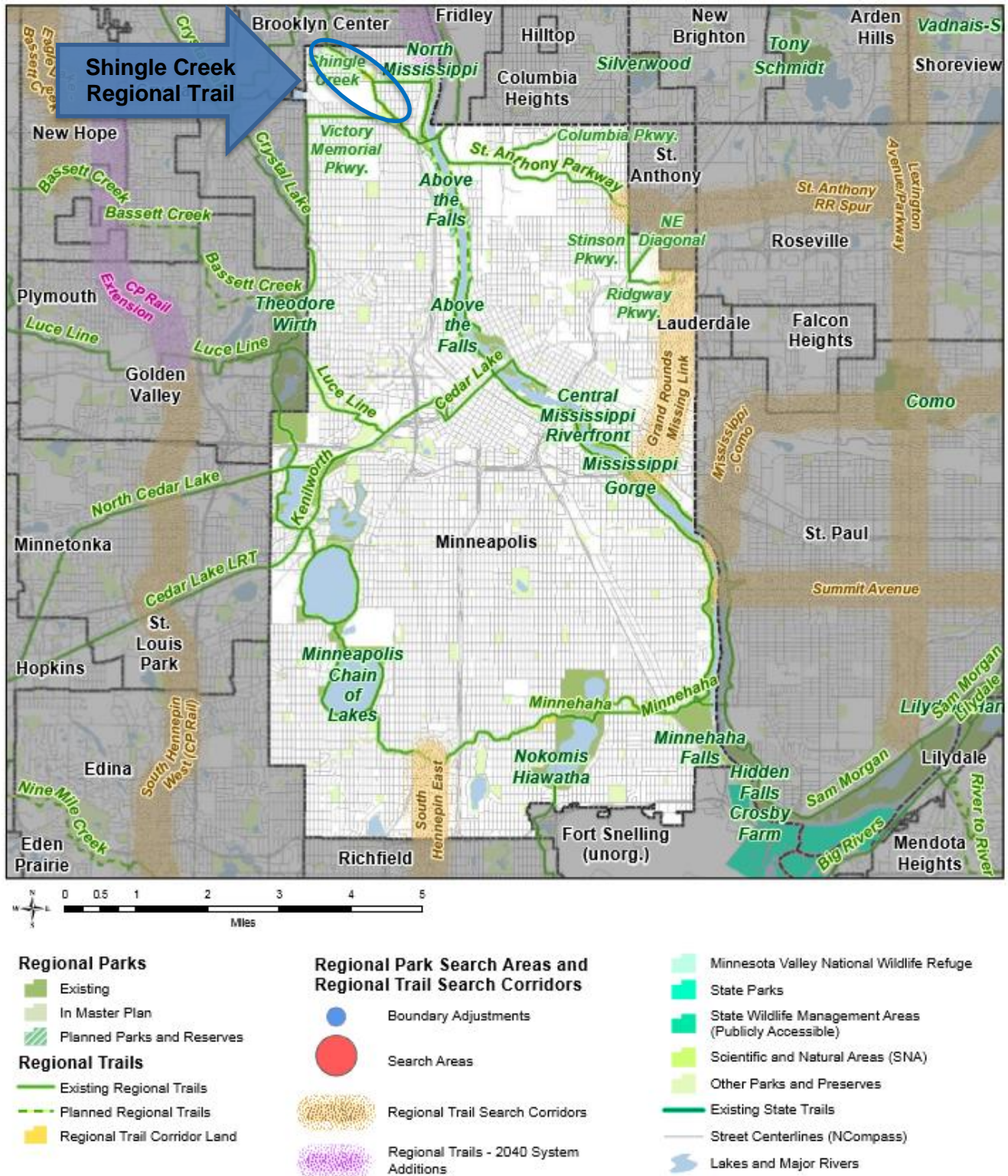


Figure 2: Regional Parks System: City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County and Shingle Creek Regional Trail (MPRB) location



Analysis

Planning Strategy 1 of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that master plans for destination regional trails address 13 items: boundaries and acquisition costs, demand forecast, development concept, conflicts, public services, operations, partner engagement, public engagement and participation, public awareness, accessibility, stewardship plan, natural resources, and Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area. The following analyzes the master plan against those requirements.

Boundaries and Acquisition Costs

No additional land acquisition is proposed in the Shingle Creek Regional Trail Master Plan; therefore no additional costs are expected related to this item.

Demand Forecast

Shingle Creek Regional Trail sees approximately 148,605 visits per year, according to the 2019 Regional Parks System Use Estimate. This places Shingle Creek at the lower end of the spectrum among Minneapolis regional trails and the lowest use among destination trails.

Shingle Creek was originally envisioned as a northern version of Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail (1,536,713 visits in 2018), but it currently lacks some of the same natural resource amenities and interconnections. If these were improved according to the development concept in the master plan, MPRB expects use to increase, potentially three- or four-fold.

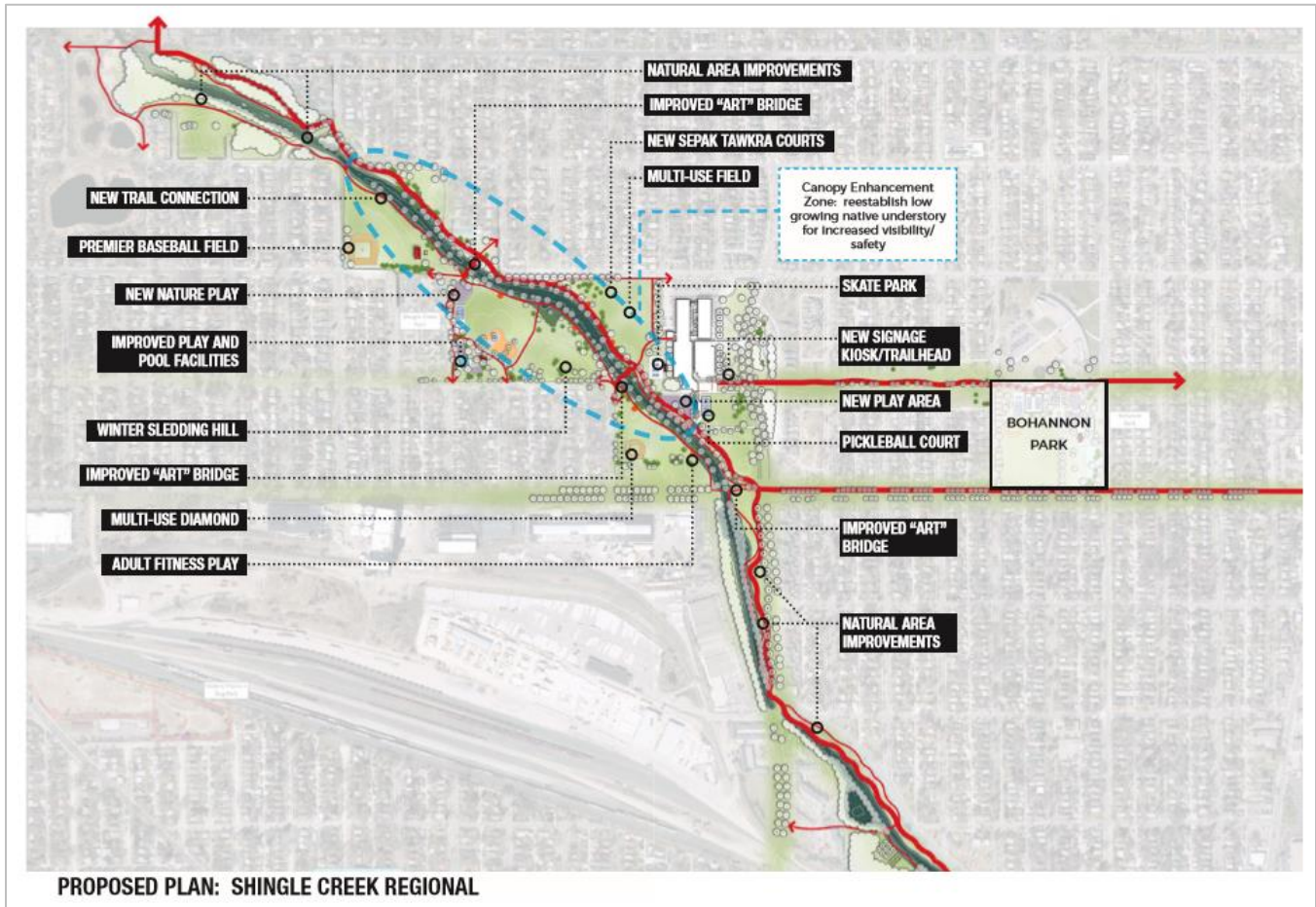
One of the likely reasons Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail sees almost ten times the visits as Shingle Creek is the former's connectivity to the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway on both ends. Shingle Creek has the potential for increased visitation as it connects to Victory (Wirth) Memorial Parkway and North Mississippi Regional Park at its southeastern terminus. As MPRB's trail and park network is extended southward through the gradual implementation of Above the Falls Regional Park, Shingle Creek Regional Trail should also achieve greater connectivity and therefore greater use. Planned natural resource enhancements should also draw additional interest and visits.

Development Concept

The overall concept for the Shingle Creek Regional Trail makes some targeted changes in the three primary use areas without fundamentally changing the character of the trail corridor or adjacent park spaces (see Figure 3). However, the master plan acknowledges that "some of the proposed elements may not be typical within regional facilities," but given the trail corridor is "a bit of a hybrid between a regional and a neighborhood facility," the recommendations are context appropriate. Further, the development plan was vetted in a series of Community Advisory Committee meetings in June and July of 2018, which resulted in a recommendation by the CAC to support the development concept.

It should also be noted the development concept articulated in the master plan includes "all development proposed by MPRB, "whether or not certain items would be allowable under regional or state funding." Please see Attachment 1 for further justification of the amenities proposed for full inclusion in the regional parks system. The development concepts for the regional trail's three main use areas are described separately below.

Figure 3: Overall Regional Trail Development Concept



Creek Corridor

The design for the creek corridor focuses on improvements to three primary areas: trails, bridges, and creek/vegetation (see Figure 4).

Trail recommendations include:

- A new continuous pedestrian trail along the western side of the creek, from the city storm ponds to 49th Avenue.
- A new continuous pedestrian trail along the western side of the creek from 46th Avenue to 45th Avenue and Webber Park.
- Improvement of bicycle trail pinch points at the northern city limits, 51st Avenue and 52nd Avenue.
- Improvement of trail crossings at 52nd Avenue near the northern city limit, 49th Avenue, and 45th Avenue near Webber Park.
- Improved wayfinding signage throughout the trail corridor, especially at trail intersection nodes at the northern city limit, at Creekview Park/49th, and at Webber Park.
- Addition of trail mileage markers along the bicycle trail.
- Addition of a fitness circuit in the regional trail corridor near Creekview and Shingle Creek.

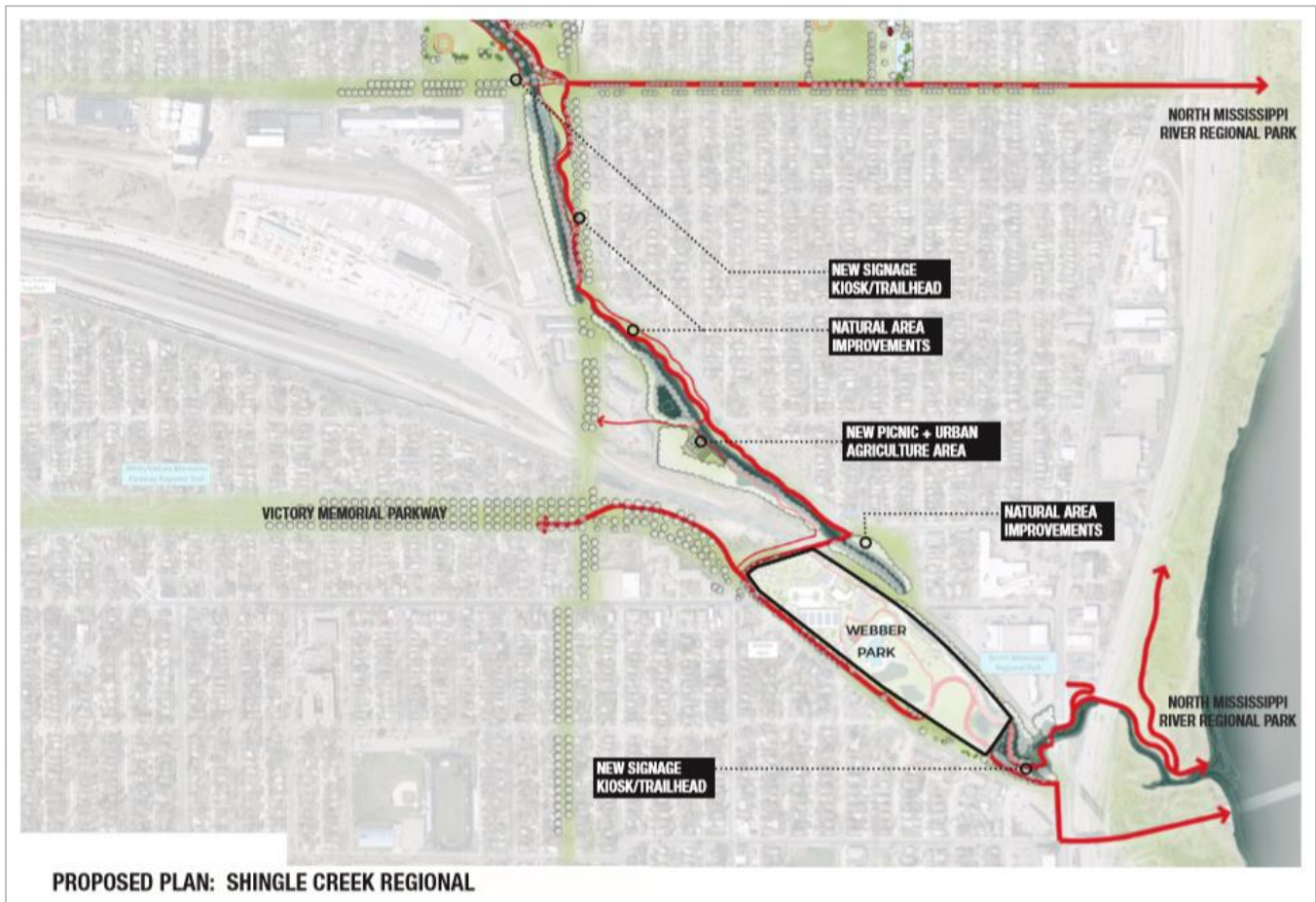
Bridge recommendations include:

- Reconstruction of existing bridges, especially those near the Creekview and Shingle Creek Park areas, as artistically inspired and designed bridges.
- A new creek crossing at the northern end of Penn Avenue.

Creek and vegetation recommendations include:

- Continued collaboration with partners on water quality improvements throughout the watershed.
- Addition of in-creek water quality and aesthetic improvements, such as riffles and pools, especially in the vicinity of Creekview and Shingle Creek parks.
- A canopy enhancement zone stretching from 52nd Avenue to 49th Avenue, where the MPRB will remove invasive species and would be replant the area with low growing native understory in order to increase visibility to and across the creek for both aesthetic and safety reasons.
- New opportunities to access the water's edge which may consist of stepping stones, accessible ramps, or other interventions to allow more direct access to the water.

Figure 4: Creek Corridor Development Concept



Creekview Park Area

The Creekview area of Shingle Creek Regional Trail will remain organized mainly as it is today with the addition of a few specialized facilities meant to draw new users of underserved demographics to the park (see Figure 5).

- The play area remains in its existing location.

- The skate park is relocated behind the recreation center and middle school and is expanded and improved. The facility would exist partly on regional trail property and partly on school property.
- The multi-use diamond is removed in favor of four pickle-ball courts. This sport is growing significantly in popularity among seniors and this would be the first dedicated pickleball courts in the Minneapolis system. Their location at a regional trail hub will also encourage use from outside the city by people visiting by bicycle.
- A small open-air shelter provides relaxation space for those using or watching both the play area and the courts.
- Near 51st Avenue, within the regional trail corridor, four new sepak tawkra (a sport native to southeast Asia) courts will invite a new user group into the regional facility. Minneapolis has no dedicated courts yet and the neighborhood in which this park area sits has expressed a strong desire to have them.
- A possible expansion of the recreation center to create more community space and potentially offer food and beverages. According to the master plan, a café or food venture could be successful here due to the absence of any commercial uses in the northern tier of the city and because the Creekview Park area sits at a hub of trails on which bicyclists make large interconnected loops. As noted previously in this staff report and acknowledged in the regional trail master plan, this recreation center is “not a contributing nor allowable feature in the regional park.” Further, MPRB acknowledges that an expansion potentially reaches beyond the funding ability of the agency and that “assistance with funding from community and/or private sources” may be needed.

Figure 5: Creekview Park Area Development Concept

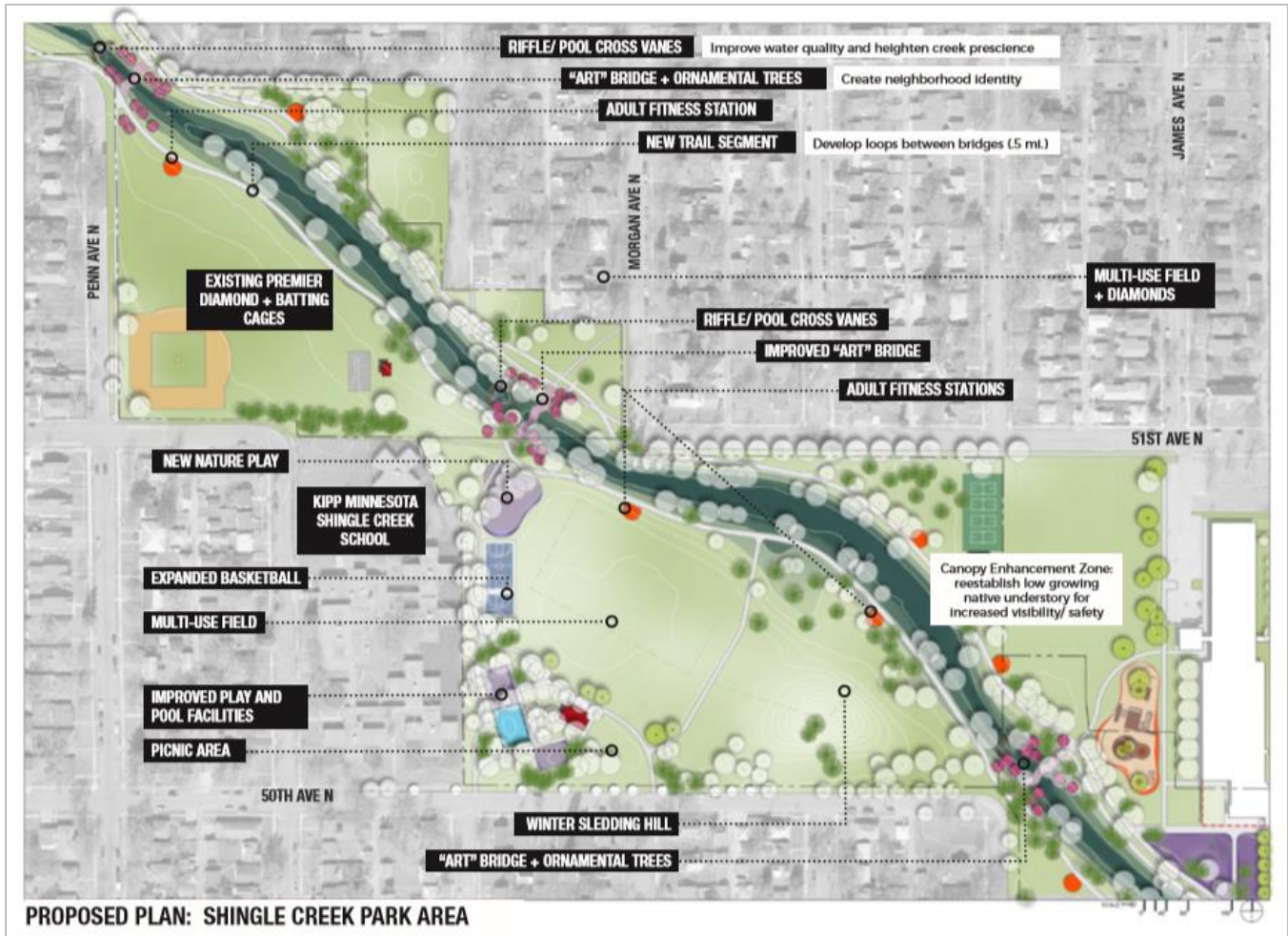


Shingle Creek Park Area

The Shingle Creek area will see minimal change under the proposed design, largely investing in the existing facilities to ensure they provide a high-quality recreation experience (see Figure 6).

- Both the northern and southern ball diamonds remain.
- The wading pool, play area and restroom building are refurbished in their current locations.
- The basketball court is expanded to include a half-court facility to allow multiple games and use by varying ages.
- A nature play area is added near the creek north of the basketball court.
- The winter sledding hill is unchanged.
- The two multi-use diamonds near the play areas are decommissioned in favor of simple open multi-use field space.

Figure 6: Shingle Creek Park Area Development Concept



Conflicts

There are no known conflicts with other projects in the Shingle Creek Regional Trail area.

Public Services

Shingle Creek is located in a developed urban area with extensive public services. No additional public services are necessary for the implementation of the development concept.

Operations

As an existing part of the well-established Minneapolis park system, Shingle Creek Regional Trail is already being maintained as part of MPRB's overall budget. This will continue under the new development concept.

Due to some changes in the mix of amenities in the regional trail area – most notably the reduction of multi-use diamonds – it is expected that the overall maintenance cost will decrease as the development concept is implemented. However, the community has expressed significant desire for enhanced general maintenance and natural resource maintenance along the corridor, which is supported by the natural resource elements of the development concept. Should that enhanced maintenance occur, it will be funded through MPRB's annual budgeting process and departmental budgets, with appropriate reimbursement through MPRB's share of state Operations and Maintenance funding.

All of MPRB's ordinances will apply within the regional trail corridor as they do today.

Partner Engagement

Partner agencies were consulted throughout the planning process and comments were incorporated into the development concept as it evolved over 18 months. Specifically, MPRB consulted with the City of Minneapolis (multiple departments including transportation, planning and economic development), Shingle Creek Watershed Management Commission, and Three Rivers Park District.

Public Engagement and Participation

Extensive community engagement took place as part of the North Service Area Master Plan (NSAMP), the MPRB planning effort of which Shingle Creek Regional Trail was a part. The engagement process unfolded over more than 18 months and involved a wide variety of initiatives, more than 100 direct engagement events, and personal contacts with thousands of park users and area residents.

The NSAMP as a whole has equity – specifically racial equity – at its core. The overall plan includes guiding principles meant to ensure disparities are eliminated rather than reinforced, and extensive efforts were made to include under-represented communities in the planning process.

Shingle Creek Regional Trail is the primary “park” amenity in the northernmost section of Minneapolis. This area is unique in skewing demographically older than other north side neighborhoods and having a higher than average population of people of Asian descent. The specific equity considerations in the development concept address these two underserved groups, mainly through the introduction of new court facilities.

Another overarching equity consideration is to provide like facilities in different parts of the MPRB system, regardless of income levels near these facilities. Parallels are easily made between Minnehaha Parkway and Shingle Creek regional trails. However, the connectivity of trails, number of bridges, quality of natural environment, and other park amenities are not as pronounced within the Shingle Creek corridor as they are within the Minnehaha Parkway corridor. By augmenting the amenities at Shingle Creek as called for in the development concept, MPRB can move toward more equitable levels of service across its system.

Within the overall NSAMP process, Shingle Creek constituted one of the targeted work groups. The Shingle Creek Work Group convened multiple times to help envision and design the entire trail corridor area. The community had direct involvement with the project throughout the design process.

The development plan was vetted in a series of public Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings in June and July of 2018, which resulted in a recommendation by the CAC to support the development concept.

Public Awareness

MPRB will make the public aware of improvements to Shingle Creek Regional Trail over time through e-notifications, press releases, direct communication with community engagement partners, and on-site signage. MPRB has a robust standard notification process and will apply this notification infrastructure to Shingle Creek.

Accessibility

All facilities within this proposed regional trail will be developed in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

MPRB updated its ADA Action Plan in 2018 and has committed to the following which will inform the development, design, and ongoing operations of the regional trail:

- Recreation is for everyone: MPRB is committed to the spirit and intent of the ADA. In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the ADA, the MPRB will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities.
- Employment: People with disabilities are encouraged to apply for seasonal employment, full-time and volunteer opportunities. The MPRB does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all regulations promulgated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under title I of the ADA.
- Effective Communication: The MPRB will, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in MPRB programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.
- Modifications to Policies and Procedures: The MPRB will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services, and activities. For example, individuals with service animals are welcomed in all MPRB facilities, even where pets are prohibited.

The MPRB will not place a surcharge on a particular individual with a disability or any group of individuals with disabilities to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids/services or reasonable modifications of policy, such as retrieving items from locations that are open to the public but are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.

MPRB is committed to ensuring that its programs, policies, services and facilities are accessible to everyone who lives, works and plays in Minneapolis. This commitment is inherent in their mission—to provide places and recreation opportunities for all people to gather, celebrate, contemplate and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community and the environment.

Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area

No part of the Shingle Creek Regional Trail boundary lies within the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area; therefore these requirements do not apply.

Stewardship Plan

The natural resources within the boundary of Shingle Creek Regional Trail are, and will continue to be, managed by MPRB's environmental management, asset management, and forestry staff. Stewardship activities may occur in collaboration with partners including the City of Minneapolis and the Shingle Creek Watershed Management Commission and may also use MPRB's youth programs such as the Green Team.

The Ecological System Plan and Natural Areas Inventory and Management Plan will also provide additional guidance for stewarding natural resources at Shingle Creek and throughout the system.

The master plan's development concept specifically calls for a "canopy enhancement zone" in the Shingle Creek Regional Trail corridor, which is both a restoration and safety effort. This area would see an opening of the creekside forest for visibility and reestablishment of a lower-growing native understory.

Natural Resources

Vegetation within the Shingle Creek Regional Trail corridor will be managed as described in the Stewardship Plan section with areas of invasive species removal and replanting with native vegetation. Water resources are a joint effort between MPRB, Shingle Creek Watershed District Management Commission, and the City of Minneapolis.

The master plan's development concept specifically calls for the implementation of riffles and pools in the Minneapolis portion of the creek. These stream ecosystem improvements would provide habitat for many diverse aquatic organisms and plants.

Several stormwater management ponds flank the creek and are operated by the City of Minneapolis. These "wetlands" help improve water quality in the creek. Other than these features, there are no other wetlands within the regional trail boundary. The development concept is therefore not expected to have any wetland impacts.

Consistency with Other Council Policies and Systems

Environmental – Sewers (Roger Janzig 651-602-1119) – The construction of any new or updating of existing paths, trails, or bridges may have an impact on multiple Metropolitan Council interceptors in multiple locations. To assess the potential impacts to our interceptor system; prior to initiating this project, preliminary plans should be sent to Tim Wedin, Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager (651-602-4571) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services.

Local Planning Assistance – Land Use (Michael Larson 651-602-1407) – The Plan is consistent with the *Thrive MSP 2040* land use policy related to Natural Resources Protection and Water Sustainability. The Plan identifies improvements to natural elements and ecological function and assigns costs to those improvements.

The Plan is also consistent with the Thrive land use policy related to Access, Mobility and Choice. Although the trail's function is primarily recreational, it does provide uninterrupted and protected travel for bicyclists and pedestrians.

MPRB's approach to planning for new and enhanced facilities is consistent with the Council's commitment to the outcome of Equity. The Plan's public engagement process and plan

recommendations reflect the unique demographics of that part of the region, which will result in facilities that respond to the recreational interests of the southeast Asian community.

Minneapolis 2040 recognizes this regional trail. The City's planned urban land uses remain compatible with the nature and character of the regional trail.



**Minneapolis
Park & Recreation Board**

Administrative Offices

2117 West River Road North
Minneapolis, MN 55411-2227

Northside Operations Center

4022 1/2 North Washington Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55412-1742

Southside Operations Center

3800 Bryant Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55409-1000

Phone

612-230-6400

Fax

612-230-6500

www.minneapolisparcs.org

President

Jono Cowgill

Vice President

Latrisha Vetaw

Commissioners

Chris Meyer
Kale Severson
Jono Cowgill
Steffanie Musich
Londel French
Meg Forney
LaTrisha Vetaw

Superintendent

Al Bangoura

Secretary to the Board

Jennifer B. Ringold

Accredited



2010-2020

September 2, 2020

Mr. Emmett Mullin
Metropolitan Council
390 North Robert Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: Clarification of Submittal of Shingle Creek Regional Trail Master Plan

Dear Mr. Mullin:

In October of 2019, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) submitted a new master plan for all lands associated with Shingle Creek Regional Trail. This master plan is the result of nearly two years of community engagement as part of MPRB's North Service Area Master Plan (NSAMP): a project to create new vision plans for all north side neighborhood parks and three regional trails. During MPOSC review and discussion of the master plan, questions were raised about exactly which amenities were being considered for full inclusion in the regional park system, as opposed to those that would be considered neighborhood amenities. Because Shingle Creek Regional Trail exists in a dense urban environment and was home to multiple recreational facilities even before the existence of the regional park system, MPOSC requested additional clarity around exactly what features of the new master plan would be eligible for regional and state funding and would have their users counted in the annual regional park visitor counts.

This memorandum clarifies MPRB's request associated with the master plan submittal. It lists and justifies each amenity proposed for full inclusion in the regional park system (meaning funding access and visitor counting). It also lists those amenities identified in the master plan that would remain local. The list is based on the master plan document submitted previously, for ease of understanding.

Shingle Creek provides critical trail connections and recreational exposure to residents of North Minneapolis and the north metro, including those considered under-represented among regional park system users. The new Shingle Creek Master Plan is an opportunity to introduce new users to the regional system, meet changing recreational needs, and foster equitable use, all while playing to the strengths of this urban creek corridor. I look forward to further conversation with MPOSC members about this regional facility.

Sincerely,

Adam Regn Arvidson, PLA, FASLA
Director of Strategic Planning
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Shingle Creek Regional Trail Evaluation of Amenities

Master Plan Amenity	Page #	Regional	Justification and Notes
Trail Connections	254, 256, 259, 261	YES	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Premier Baseball Field	254, 261	no	
New Nature Play	254, 261	YES	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Improved Play and Pool Facilities	254, 261	YES	Play and aquatics are allowed and typical in regional parks. The aquatic facility is a small wading pool that does not charge a fee. The creek in this area is not reliably swimmable, so this aquatic venue provides the access to water typical in regional parks. Supported by 2040 Policy Plan page 106: “Playgrounds, restrooms, and water facilities suitable for families with small children.”
Winter Sledding Hill	254, 261	YES	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Improved “Art” Bridges (3)	254, 259, 261	YES	This is a portion of the trail system designed to create interest and draw people in through interesting designs that reflect and honor the surrounding community.
Multi-Use Diamond	254, 259	no	
Adult Fitness Stations	254, 261	YES	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Natural Area Improvements	254, 256	YES	Allowed and typical in regional parks
New Sepak Tawkra Courts	254, 259	YES	See “Justification of Courts” below
Multi-Use Field	254, 259	no	Lies outside regional park boundary
Canopy Enhancement Zone	254, 261	YES	Allowed and typical in regional parks (natural resource enhancement)
Skate Park	254, 259	YES	A skate park is essentially a play area for a somewhat older age group. Skate parks can be designed to manage their own stormwater runoff and can reference nearby natural features in their design, just like play areas. The siting of the Shingle Creek skate park near the play areas creates a continuum of space for youth as they age, bringing them back to the regional park over many years. Kids will be able to grow up in the regional park, not just as toddlers and elementary school kids, but also as teens. Designed with the environment in mind, this facility can have benefits to the natural resource. Supported by Policy Plan page 100: “Meet the changing recreational preferences to increase use of the Regional Park System....” And Strategy 2: “...focus heavy recreational use in the more developed parts of the system....”

Master Plan Amenity	Page #	Regional	Justification and Notes
New Signage Kiosk/Trailhead (3)	254, 256	YES	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Existing / New Play Area	254, 259	YES	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Pickleball Court	254, 259	YES	See “Justification of Courts” below
New Picnic and Urban Agriculture Area	256	YES	Picnic areas are allowed and typical in regional parks. Urban agriculture areas as described in MPRB’s Community Garden Policy focus on providing healthy food and park experiences with a focus on racial equity. Community Gardens are important for families in food deserts such as north Minneapolis and particularly benefit elders and families with young children. MPRB’s policy requires the establishment of community harvest plots along with individual plots, so that the general public can also grab a tomato or zucchini as they enjoy the park. Formal garden spaces are found throughout the regional park system, so the only real difference here is that the maintenance (planting, tending, and cutting) is done by community members for nutritional purposes. Food crops can also provide similar pollinator benefits as perennials, making this use an environmental alternative to the existing mown turfgrass. Supported by Policy Plan page 100: “Meet the changing recreational preferences to increase use of the Regional Park System....” and Strategy 2: “...focus heavy recreational use in the more developed parts of the system....” And page 106: “Amenities suited for the aging population and those with limited mobility; Clustering of amenities for multi-generational family gatherings.”
New Shelter (2)	259	YES	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Possible Building Expansion	259	no	
Open Lawn	259	YES	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Outdoor Classroom	259	YES	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Riffle/Pool Cross Vanes (creek restoration)	261	YES	Allowed and typical in regional parks (natural resource enhancement)
Expanded Basketball	261	YES	See “Justification of Courts” below
Picnic Area	261	YES	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Restroom Building (not labeled, but found near pool and play facilities)	261	YES	Allowed and typical in regional parks

Shingle Creek Regional Trail Justification of Courts

The Shingle Creek Master Plan envisions three separate court areas, each with particular benefits to the community, and each with the ability to increase park use among underserved communities. These sepak tawkra, pickleball, and basketball courts are relatively small improvements in the parks, in terms of land area, meaning they will have limited impact on the adjacent natural resource. All will be designed with stormwater management in mind, to protect Shingle Creek from runoff. All will exist within the regional park boundary.

These courts provide benefits to regional parks users in the following ways:

- Providing recreational amenities not commonly found in regional parks but desired in the community. If regional parks provide only nature recreation, numerous users will forgo regional parks and never discover them.
- Providing recreation in close proximity to natural areas. Though a natural area is not necessary to enjoying a game of pickleball, as it is to canoeing, for instance, recreation of any kind near natural areas has similar mental and physical benefits. Many people play impromptu games of volleyball or soccer near lakes. The connection between these courts and the adjacent waters and woods will be healthful for these users.
- Drawing new users to the regional system and then linking those users to other parks and trails. Families coming to the sepak tawkra courts may also then decide to walk along the creek, or bike longer trails. Trailhead signage will communicate the opportunities available even beyond Minneapolis. These courts (especially the sepak tawkra and pickleball) will be a regional draw and will connect people to the regional parks.
- Creating multi-activity recreational spaces for all ages. Courts are often one part of a family's recreational activities when they visit parks. Pickleball players are likely to have social time afterwards. Sepak tawkra is a family event, with many members exploring the rest of the park rather than playing. The social life of basketball involves interludes of walking, sitting, and talking. All these other activities will happen in the context of natural areas.
- Providing desired recreation for underserved groups. Pickleball's largest user group is seniors. Sepak tawkra is almost exclusively played by people of Asian ancestry. Basketball is highly (though not exclusively) popular among African-American and East African people. All of these groups are under-represented in the regional parks.

Inclusion of these courts is supported by the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, Recreation Activities and Facilities Policy, in the following ways:

- Strategy 1: Balance Conservation and Recreation
 - "Avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects and restore and enhance environmental quality:"
 1. Stormwater runoff will be managed from the courts prior to impacting Shingle Creek.
 2. The Shingle Creek Master Plan as a whole envisions significant environmental enhancement and these courts constitute a very small percentage of the land area of the park.
 3. The courts exist in areas that are currently managed as turf grass, meaning no existing natural habitat will be removed to implement them.

- “Be compatible with other uses and activities, minimizing user conflicts and preserving user experiences:”
 1. The court areas of Shingle Creek are in already built-up recreational areas that include play areas, a wading pool, and skate park.
 2. The primary trail routes through the park will not be impacted by the implementation of these courts.
 3. The more nature-focused areas of the park, where the noise of active recreation would be less welcome, are located at the northern and southern ends of the park, far from the proposed court locations.
- “Help conserve, enhance, and/or restore the natural-resource base while balancing user access through facility development:”
 1. Courts will be placed outside of the park’s core environmental corridor (the creek and adjacent woodlands).
 2. Users desire these facilities, based on MPRB’s community engagement, and they can be built without impact to natural resources.
- “Remove or reduce barriers that prevent use of the regional system....:”
 1. Key barriers to BIPOC park users include a lack of facilities they desire and lack of exposure to nature-based recreation options. These courts will leverage existing recreational desires to introduce new users to the regional park system.
- “Meet the changing recreational preferences to increase use of the Regional Park System by all the residents of the region, across age, race, ethnicity, income, national origin, and ability:”
 1. Pickleball is growing significantly in popularity among seniors. Providing this popular activity in a park that is already a hybrid of natural resource and active recreation will connect these users to the regional trail system.
 2. Sepak takraw is almost exclusively played by people of Asian ancestry. This is not a group that currently uses regional parks extensively.
 3. Basketball is regularly played by groups of friends in a pick-up format, making it no different fundamentally from the pick-up soccer, volleyball, baseball, and other sports that already occur in regional parks, often as part of large family gatherings near natural areas. Furthermore, basketball is extremely popular among East African and African-American youth, groups that do not currently use regional parks extensively.

■ Strategy 2: Range of Recreation Opportunities

- This strategy calls on implementing agencies to “focus heavy recreational use in the more developed parts of the system.”
- It also states that “residents of the region are best served when then individual units that make up the system play to their strengths rather than trying to be all things to all people.”
- Shingle Creek Regional Trail is and always has been an active urban park with a mix of recreational amenities arranged along a semi-natural creek corridor. It is highly developed and offers only minimal immersion in nature. Though the plan calls for significant natural resource enhancement, it is also an appropriate place for more formal recreational options, such as courts.
- Single Creek’s strength is to serve as a gateway to the system as a whole by connecting people to regional facilities within and beyond Minneapolis after drawing them in with desired recreational facilities.

■ Strategy 3: Equitable Use

- This strategy says: “If needed, new facilities and/or programs should be designed to increase use of the Regional Park System by all the residents of the region...”
- Later, the strategy lists ways the Council will enhance equitable usage, including: “Continue and expand convening stakeholder meetings...to enhance knowledge and continuous improvement” and “Require regional park implementing agencies to incorporate public engagement process that includes involvement from individuals representing diverse ages, races, ethnicities, incomes, national origins, and abilities when developing or amending master plans.”
- The courts proposed in the Shingle Creek Master Plan arose directly from extensive community engagement over two years of planning. A wide variety of voices was included in those efforts, including seniors, youth, and people of varying races, ethnicities, national origins, and incomes. All three court types specifically address needs expressed by underserved groups in the regional parks.
- The strategy goes on to “encourage regional park and trail design that meets changing recreational preferences, including amenities for the aging population and those with limited mobility, and clustering of amenities for multigenerational family gatherings.”
- The pickleball and sepak takraw courts address changing recreational needs, the former targeted toward an aging population.