

Committee Report

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Community Development Committee Meeting: March 6, 2023

For the Metropolitan Council: March 22, 2023

Business Item: 2023-37

Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Long-Range Plan Amendment, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Long Range Plan Amendment.
2. Require Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, prior to initiating any project at this location, to send preliminary plans to the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager.

Summary of Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Discussion

Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst, presented the staff report to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission on February 2, 2023. Tyler Pederson, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, was in attendance and responded to questions.

Referring to page 12 of the business item, Commissioner Peichel asked why there was an asterisk associated with one of the neighborhood associations. Pederson responded that in the plan amendment, such notation was associated with the groups that had been involved in the broader Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park planning effort in 2015.

Commissioner Harris asked how golf course improvements would be funded. Kelly responded that the plan amendment calls for adding several regional park-like features to the golf course area, so there is potential for some Council funding to be used for specific elements that align with typical regional park amenities and facilities. Pederson added that the Park Board's enterprise fund would be a primary source of funding for the golf course itself.

Chair Yarusso asked about differentiating enterprise from non-enterprise facilities in the golf course area, as regional park visitor counts and acreages of these facilities have an impact on funding calculations. Pederson responded that golfers and other users of enterprise facilities are not counted in annual use surveys. Kelly added that Council staff are in the midst of a Regional Parks GIS Improvement project that is, among other pursuits, examining the potential for differentiation of enterprise and non-enterprise facilities in regional park implementing agency's annual GIS submittal process. (Agencies currently report such acreages annually using other methods.)

Commissioner Taylor asked whether cross country ski facilities and programming would be elevated to a similar level as Theodore Wirth Regional Park with this plan amendment. Pederson responded that some would like to see Hiawatha become the "Theo Wirth of South Minneapolis" from a cross-country skiing perspective, including snow making. The plan amendment proposes investments in this activity as well as partnerships for high-quality programming for all ages, particularly youth.

Commissioner Harris raised concerns about the application of herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers and the resulting impact on water quality. Pederson responded that the Park Board intends to use

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) among other practices and techniques to reduce adverse impacts to water bodies and natural resources. He added the plan amendment's intention is to bring nature into the golf course area.

Commissioner Taylor acknowledged the anger and frustration some golfers feel about the proposed reduction in golf holes. Pederson responded there is a deep history to honor and respect, but that ecological sustainability is at the core of the plan amendment. Taylor suggested the Park Board should consider taking a systemwide perspective to repairing some of the harm to black golfers at Hiawatha. Chair Yarusso suggested such an action could be a candidate for a future equity grant program application.

Council Member Vento asked how schools were engaged in the planning process. Pederson responded that two high school golf coaches participated on the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Park Board sought additional representation on the CAC from schools. He added the Park Board intends for the golf course to be a learning space.

Commissioner Harris suggested the possibility of adding a third proposed action that would encourage the Park Board to investigate the use of non-toxic chemicals on the golf course. Pederson referenced the many other potential sources of chemical inputs upstream in the watershed and reiterated the Park Board's commitment to developing an ecologically driven golf course. Ultimately Commissioners chose not to add a third proposed action.

Chair Yarusso noted the significant efforts many regional park implementing agencies make in developing and maintaining facilities for winter use and encouraged the Council to consider directly counting (versus estimating) winter use. Commissioner Harris suggested a local university could potentially develop the methodology for doing so.

The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission voted unanimously to approve the proposed actions.

Motion by Commissioner Jeremy Peichel, seconded by Commissioner Monica Dillenburg. Motion carried.



Business Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission: February 2, 2023

Committee Meeting Date: February 21, 2023

For the Metropolitan Council: March 8, 2023

Business Item: 2023-37

Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Long-Range Plan Amendment, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

District(s), Member(s):	District D, Vacant District 8, Abdirahman Muse
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minnesota Statutes § 473.313; <i>2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan</i> : Chapter 5, Planning Strategy 1
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst, 651-602-1361
Division/Department:	Community Development, Regional Parks Unit

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Long Range Plan Amendment.
2. Require Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, prior to initiating any project at this location, to send preliminary plans to the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager.

Background

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) has submitted the Hiawatha Golf Course Area Plan for Council review. Because the Hiawatha Golf Course Area is a part of Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park – a regional park with an existing, Council-approved 2015 plan – the Golf Course Area Plan is considered a plan amendment.

Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park is located near the center of the Regional Parks System (Figure 1) in Hennepin County and South Minneapolis (Figure 2). The regional park encompasses approximately 660 acres of land and water, including Lake Nokomis, Lake Hiawatha, and part of Minnehaha Creek.

The regional park is named for the lakes it surrounds, Lake Nokomis and Lake Hiawatha. The park is a popular gathering space in the heart of South Minneapolis and is located along the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway and the banks of Minnehaha Creek. It provides a wide range of recreational opportunities, including an 18-hole golf course on the west shore of Lake Hiawatha. The golf course and the area immediately surrounding it is the focus of this plan amendment.

The golf course was once the location of Rice Lake and a connected wetland complex. The lake was dredged and the wetlands were filled in the 1920s, and the golf course was designed and constructed in the early 1930s over the dredge materials.

More recently in June 2014, over 11 inches of rain fell over a large area of the Minnehaha Creek

watershed, causing a severe flood and subsequent closure of the Hiawatha Golf Course. At this time, MPRB began a process of assessing damages and working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to reopen the course.

When investigating the flood conditions at the course and in the nearby neighborhood, MPRB and the City of Minneapolis learned of significant groundwater pumping from the golf course. Park planning efforts, initiated before this discovery, were put on hold while MPRB, the City of Minneapolis, and Minnehaha Creek Watershed District conducted a study of the site's conditions. A water management study of the course was completed in 2017 and the study demonstrated that water management could be improved; the pumping required to keep the golf course dry and playable could be reduced; flood-resiliency could be improved; and some traditional golf could be retained on the site.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board of Commissioners aimed to improve water management, preserve traditional golf in some form, and celebrate the welcoming history of Hiawatha Golf Course. This was affirmed in Resolution 2018-230 which included:

- Pursuing a reduced-pumping scenario.
- At a minimum, providing a flood-resilient and ecologically driven nine-hole golf course.
- Reflecting appropriate methods to recognize the role of Hiawatha Golf Course and the history of Black golfers in the Minneapolis park system.

The Hiawatha Golf Course Area Plan was developed through a comprehensive public engagement process spanning over two years, including guidance from a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) which developed a vision and guiding principles and prioritized plan element recommendations for the site. The planning process provided an opportunity to develop a plan that re-imagines the Hiawatha Golf Course area as a place that celebrates the rich history at the golf course and creates a space that celebrates nature in an urban setting, welcomes the larger community, and reconnects this land with the surrounding neighborhoods, Lake Hiawatha, and the larger regional park.

Rationale

The Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Plan Amendment is consistent with the requirements of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, particularly Planning Strategy 1 and other Council policies.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Plan Amendment advances the *Thrive MSP 2040* outcome of Livability by increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation, which enhances quality of life in the region. The plan amendment also advances the Sustainability outcome by promoting a wiser use of water and providing a more flood resilient landscape.

Funding

There is no anticipated acquisition cost associated with the Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Plan Amendment.

The total estimated development cost associated with the plan amendment is \$43,000,000. The Plan identifies \$21,230,000 of this total cost as sourced from MPRB's "General fund." The remainder – \$21,270,000 –as sourced from MPRB's "Enterprise fund."

Once all proposed improvements are completed, and taking the estimated annual revenue into account, the total estimated annual operations and maintenance costs for the plan amendment is \$281,000.

Taken together, the total estimated cost associated with the Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Plan Amendment is \$43,281,000.



Figure 1. Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park location in the Regional Parks System

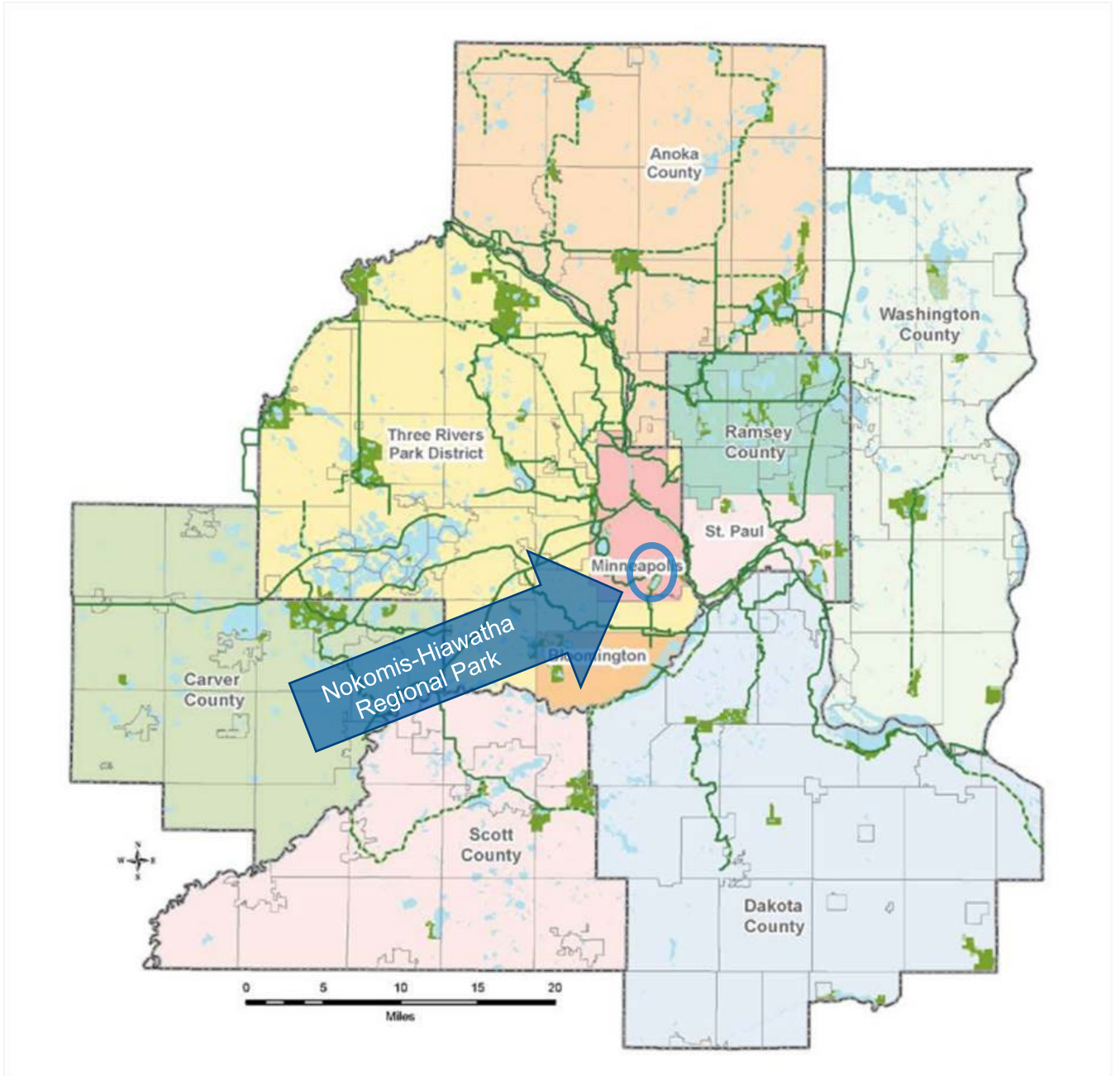
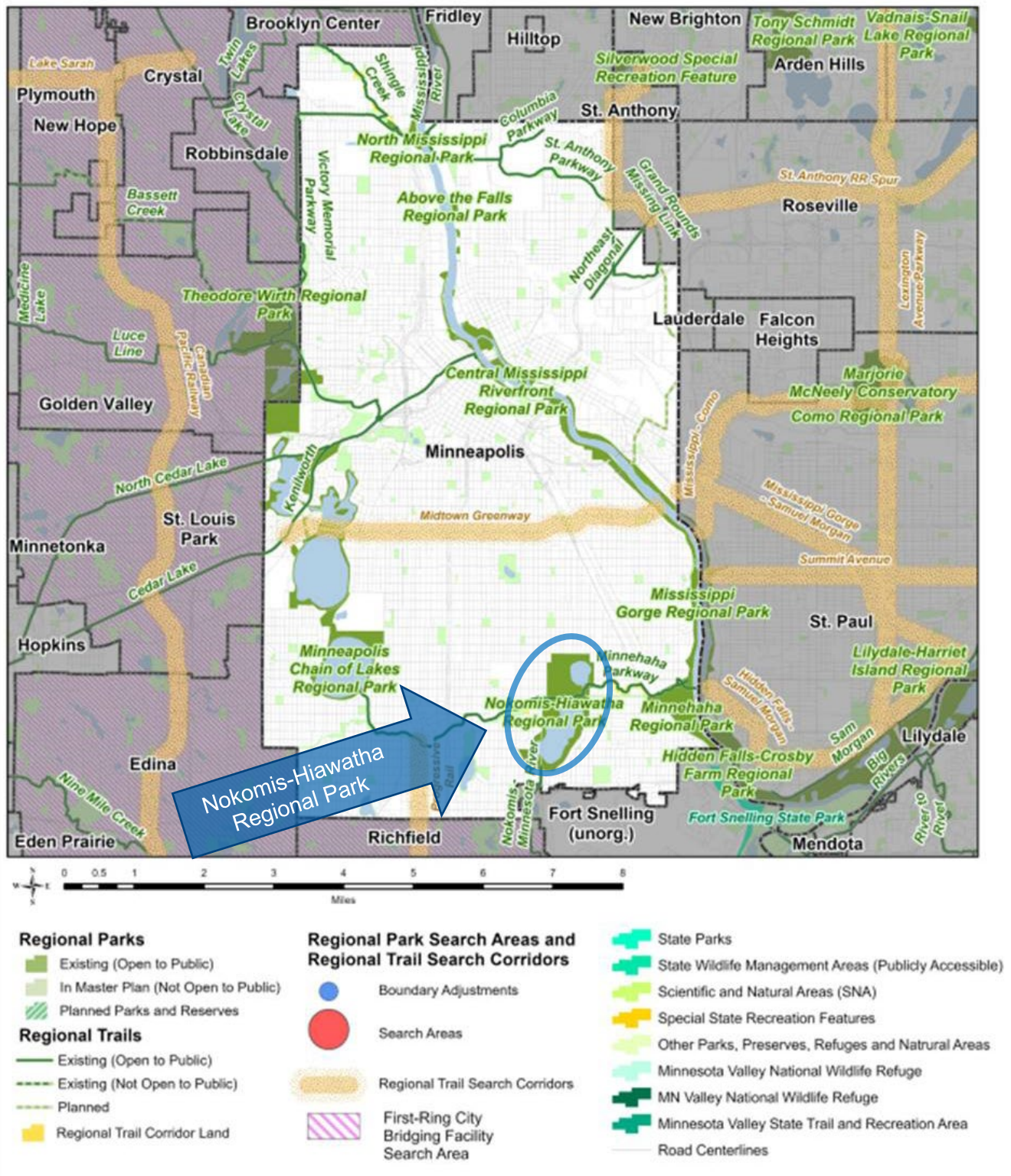


Figure 2. Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park location in the City of Minneapolis



Analysis

Planning Strategy 1 of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires long-range plans for regional parks to address 14 items: boundaries, acquisition costs, stewardship plan, demand forecast, development concept, conflicts, public services, operations, partner engagement, public engagement and participation, equity analysis, public awareness, accessibility, and natural resources. The following analyzes the plan against these requirements.

Boundaries

The long-term vision for Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park is to maintain the park within its current boundaries both north and south of Minnehaha Parkway, with no plans to acquire additional land or alter park ownership. As such, the area considered in the development of the Hiawatha Golf Course Area Plan is located within the larger Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park and is entirely owned by MPRB. There are no anticipated boundary adjustments to the regional park resulting from the plan amendment and there are no parcels that need to be acquired for the implementation of the plan.

Acquisition Costs

As noted above, there are no plans to acquire additional land or alter park ownership. Therefore there are no acquisition costs associated with this plan amendment.

Stewardship Plan

MPRB's 2007–2020 Comprehensive Plan outlines MPRB's commitment to stewardship of all land within the park system: "Natural resources such as land, trees, and water are the foundation of the park system and require long-term investment and care. Parks are protected to benefit the entire city; therefore, all residents have a stake in the future of these resources and bear responsibility for their stewardship. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is committed to providing leadership in natural resource management, connecting people to their natural environment, and fostering a sense of stewardship."

As steward of the parks of Minneapolis, MPRB is responsible for providing daily and long-term maintenance and operations for all parks. The existing Hiawatha Golf Course area is operated and managed by MPRB through its enterprise fund. MPRB provides park maintenance and oversight for facility operations, recreation, and programs for its whole system. Staffing levels are increased in the summer through the employment of seasonal staff. Natural resources management services are provided by MPRB including water resources, forestry, horticulture, and natural area management. Community volunteer groups often support MPRB management by working in natural areas, cutting invasive species, picking up trash, and other community-service-related projects. MPRB's volunteer coordinator handles the day-to-day operations and helps the community members develop stewardship agreements that align with each park's management plans. Other operational and support services to the park include administrative services, marketing and communication, revenue handling and finance, human resources, planning and project management, research, and policing.

Future management and stewardship of the property will be funded through a combination of MPRB enterprise activities sources and regional park maintenance and operation sources. As previously mentioned, the enterprise activities sustain themselves and maintenance and operations is paid for by revenues generated, similar to a business model. The regional park operations and maintenance sources are distributed by the Metropolitan Council to all regional parks in the Twin Cities metro area according to many factors associated with each park.

MPRB provided a matrix to clarify and differentiate regional park amenities from partner-supported amenities and enterprise-supported amenities. Some amenities are supported by more than one source of funding. In these cases, MPRB suggests the amenity provides equal benefit to those sources and may require an appropriate split of capital/operating funding sources to implement and maintain (Attachment 1).

Although the design of the site will improve drainage on the golf course and be resilient to periods of temporary inundation, MPRB will need to plan for future flood damages at the golf course since



the area is ultimately part of the 100-year floodplain. Most of the non-golf areas of the park that will be redeveloped for passive regional park uses will be managed through the regional park operations and maintenance system. A more naturalized landscape will be introduced to areas outside the golf course and, to an extent, some areas within the golf course. The natural restoration areas will include prairie, meadows, savannah, wetlands, and riparian zones. These will serve as open space and natural habitat for wildlife and provide improved water management. Typically, routine maintenance will be performed by MPRB staff, while specific services for ecological restoration and habitat areas are often performed by contractors, agency partners, seasonal youth programs, and volunteers.

MPRB will continue to work with non-profit partners on the potential management of the winter recreation systems, similar to their operation at Theodore Wirth Regional Park. Components of the recommended plan allow for improved regional stormwater and groundwater management and these systems will be managed solely by or in partnership with the City of Minneapolis.

Demand Forecast

According to the Council's 2019 visitation estimates, Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park receives two million visits annually, with the vast majority of the use happening in the spring, summer, and fall. Modest growth in visitation is expected due to young families moving into the neighborhoods surrounding the park and the implementation of park improvement projects and new park facilities. Recent data suggests that visits to the Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park have grown by about 4.9% per year.

Visitors to the Hiawatha Golf Course area during the spring, summer, and fall are typically limited to golfers and local neighbors who utilize the open spaces in the northwest corner of the park outside the fence. In the winter, the golf course area is used for walking and cross-country skiing.

Based on the entire record of golf rounds played at the Hiawatha Golf Course, the average number of rounds per year is approximately 44,800, and the maximum number of rounds is 57,700. Within the past decade, only 20,000–40,000 rounds of golf have been played annually at Hiawatha. Some of this decline is due to the flooding from 2014 and closure due to wet conditions. However, some of this is also the result of a declining trend in golf that has been observed at all MPRB courses and nationally, with just under 30,000 rounds of golf played in recent years when the full course was open and playable all season. The MPRB system-wide golf study, completed in 2014, indicated that the Hiawatha Golf Course is operating at 47% of its practical capacity. This statistic is echoed across the MPRB golf system as depicted in the number of rounds played since the early 1990s when golf was at its peak. This is indicative of a golf system which has twice the holes it may need.

In 2020, Hiawatha Golf Course and other MPRB courses experienced a resurgence in golf supported, at least in part, by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 39,000 rounds were purchased at Hiawatha Golf Course in 2020, about the same as 2010, but still 20% less than the late 1990s and early 2000s. The capacity for golf to continue at 2020 levels is uncertain, however.

Development Concept

Early in the master planning process, MPRB's design team worked with the CAC and the public to develop a vision statement and a set of guiding principles for the Hiawatha Golf Course area. The project's vision statement is a high-level statement that captures the inspiration for the future. It does not identify specific details of the plan but guides its overarching direction.

The vision is, "The Hiawatha Golf Course property is a unique destination providing a welcoming and equitable park experience for both the surrounding community and regional park users that is ecologically responsible, addresses water management needs, and is respectful of the site's natural and cultural history. Park development will have a long-term focus for year-round passive and active recreation, where golf and other recreation will interface with ecology and art to provide for a flood-resilient design that is accessible, connected, and celebrates the spirit of Minneapolis."

The four sets of guiding principles include: Natural Resources, Community and Equity, Recreation, and Connectivity and Circulation.



Three preliminary alternatives were developed based on the vision and guiding principles, public input, identified park-system needs, a workshop with MPRB staff, and a working knowledge of the existing site conditions. Recognizing the site's connection to the larger watershed, the water management goals of the project served as the backbone to these designs. The alternatives included a wide range of recreation opportunities and layouts for the Hiawatha Golf Course area, all keeping some form of traditional golf on the property while integrating other recreational uses. The concepts have built-in flexibility to adapt to new information gathered through further exploration of geology, hydrology, and surface water inputs during the next project phases. The goal of the planning effort was to identify how recreational opportunities could be interwoven with engineered solutions to provide a desired outcome that meets the needs of the community.

Three preliminary alternatives were presented to the CAC and discussed with MPRB staff. A public input survey was also conducted to gather people's preferences on the features included in each alternative.

3. Alternative 1 - Expanded Opportunities: Unique opportunities abound on a newly formed site with a focus on golf learning (4-hole practice course with comprehensive practice facilities) and recreational exploration that honors the original native landscape and cultures, as well as the past and present-day communities that call this land their home.
4. Alternative 2 - Experience Lake Hiawatha: Views of the lake unfold on every turn where a premiere 9-hole golf course with practice facilities is interwoven into an ecologically diverse landscape that celebrates the history of golf on the site. The target audience is youth and learning adults.
5. Alternative 3 - Back to Nature: Water, ecology, golf (9-hole golf course with practice facilities), and recreation are blended to provide a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in a natural landscape that celebrates community and connection to the land.

The preferred design alternative strives toward a balance of golf and other activities set in a landscape guided by water management (Figure 3). It bends toward ecology in its aspirations, recognizing that restoration of natural processes is a goal greater than those supporting human activities on the site. With ecology as the "yardstick," choices favor preservation, conservation, and restoration rather than expanding past acts of disturbance or creating new development. If a proposal does not measure up to this new conceptual yardstick, the CAC and MPRB determined that it likely should not be a part of the experience of this site. While any number of uses are described, its restoration of sustainable water patterns and recreation, balanced in a new ecologically driven landscape, form the higher order goals built into the concept.

Following the CAC's defined priorities, the Board of Commissioners' direction and the public feedback on the preliminary design alternatives, the design team developed the preferred design alternative for the Hiawatha Golf Course area. This plan, which aligned with the vision and guiding principles, accommodated the site's complex water management needs. It included the development of a 9-hole golf course, driving range, practice facilities, and improved community gathering opportunities. It also created a variety of multi-use and pedestrian trails, allowing for a complete loop around Lake Hiawatha and connections to the regional park and neighborhoods, preserved valued open space on the northwest side of the site, protected existing wildlife habitat, and enhanced winter recreation opportunities. In addition, the plan provides the space and opportunity to celebrate the site's natural and cultural history.

Golf at the Hiawatha Golf Course will be designed to be an inclusive and accessible nine-hole course, catering to players of all skill levels. The programming will focus on learning the game of golf and inviting non-golfers to start playing. Programs like The First Tee of the Twin Cities and Minneapolis Public School teams can offer youth a chance to learn the game and the values golf teaches.

Although the course will remain in the floodplain of Minnehaha Creek, it will be designed to be more flood-resilient; improving drainage, elevating all golf play spaces above the normal water levels on Lake Hiawatha, and elevating critical features above the 10%-annual chance flood elevation.



The course layout will be designed considering integration with other uses in the park; the uses would be separate, but integrated. Safety of park users is of the utmost concern. Netting will likely be necessary in some places; however, providing the appropriate safety margins and buffers to eliminate fencing and netting where possible is the plan's goal. Out-of-play areas will provide opportunities for ecological restoration, habitat creation, and development of additional flood storage. Pumped water will be used for irrigation. To make the golf course and its operations more sustainable, the MPRB will maintain a certification through the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf.

The plan shows the need for a new clubhouse clearly oriented to serving the needs of golfers, a main park building that brings together golfers and birdwatchers, paddlers, runners, and bicyclists in a setting meant for gathering and exchange, where stories about their individual experiences on the site are shared. The addition of a Lake House is a restorative retreat oriented to a healing water experience. Each of the three new buildings work together as one but provide a distinct service to each user.

Through the lenses of ecology and sustainability, a new community gathering space will be created near the existing clubhouse on the hill adjacent to the intersection of Longfellow Avenue and East 46th Street. Three new buildings, using pumped groundwater for heating and cooling, are proposed and are meant to be used and shared by golfers, neighborhood residents, and regional park visitors.

The plan amendment represents a unique opportunity to add new activities within a landscape that places water first and recreation second, creating an elevated place for nature. Then, human activities are added where they do not disturb the core goal of healing and restoration.

Proposed trails provide numerous connections to the surrounding neighborhood and throughout the larger regional park. These trails include paved trails for bicyclists and pedestrians, natural surface trails for pedestrians, and bridges and/or boardwalks over low areas and open water. A loop trail around Lake Hiawatha is included in the plan amendment.

Access via a water trail through the constructed wetlands will welcome paddlers to explore Minnehaha Creek and Lake Hiawatha in new ways. Several new water access points with canoe/kayak launches and storage racks will be included. A fishing pier will also be added on the north shore of Lake Hiawatha.

The proposed plan creates a winter recreation destination in the heart of South Minneapolis, something valued by the community. The expanded clubhouse serves as the jumping off point in the park and includes gathering spaces, access to food, winter equipment rentals, and an outdoor patio with fire pits. Park users will be able to get out, relax, and enjoy the Minnesota winters. Winter activities will include:

6. 4–5 km of groomed cross-country ski trails aligned to minimize impacts to the golf course
7. Cross-country ski stadium area
8. Sledding area on the slopes near the clubhouse
9. Ice skating loop on the expanded lake
10. Winter walking trails
11. Ice fishing
12. Fat biking on groomed trails and on Minnehaha Creek and Lake Hiawatha, as conditions allow.

The winter recreation program will include a snowmaking system utilizing the pumped groundwater for more consistent recreation opportunity throughout the winter. Similar to Theodore Wirth Regional Park, MPRB hopes to build a partnership with an organization to program, operate, and maintain the cross-country ski trail system.



Figure 3. Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park, Hiawatha Golf Course Area, "Recommended Master Plan" Map



Conflicts

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board of Commissioners states in Resolution 2018-230 that “the master planning process shall pursue a reduced pumping scenario as conceptualized in Alternative B, and the Board of Commissioners intends for the CAC to bring forward a solution resulting from the master planning process that includes, at a minimum, a flood-resilient and ecologically-driven nine-hole configuration for a golf course in the property, and the Board of Commissioners intends for the CAC to reflect in the master plan appropriate methods of recognizing the role of Hiawatha Golf Course and the history of black golfers in the Minneapolis park system.” According to MPRB staff, the plan amendment follows this directive. This directive is meant to simultaneously plan for climate change, manage risk, save golf in some form, and create an inclusive space.

MPRB staff acknowledge that, at present, there is a conflict between the golf course space and the rest of the park. The golf course is defined by a restrictive fence encircling the entire site. Only golf can happen within the fenced area during the golf season (i.e., spring thaw to winter freeze). Besides a few stormwater ponds, the vast majority of the golf course is mowed lawn with some tree canopy, similar to how it looked 90 years ago. The design team developed a master plan that minimizes conflict between recreational and natural resource management needs within the site.

To resolve the conflicts between existing and newly proposed recreational and natural-resource management needs, the project blends the two, meaning there isn’t a golf space and a natural resources space per se. Rather, the golf course, and every other element of the plan, is designed with ecology, hydrology, climate change effects, habitat protection and improvement, and landscape character in mind. The course is set mostly above the floodplain, recycles pumped groundwater for irrigation (i.e., water that’s also used for toilet flushing and once-through heating and cooling of a new building), and is set into three spaces which drape over an ecologically driven site design. Three spaces, rather than one large space, greatly increase the length of the course’s natural edges, bringing nature deeper into it. The interstitial corridors between the three golf spaces allow for greater movement of wildlife and non-golf visitors through the golf course. There are other management options too, like allowing roughs to grow longer, the introduction of pollinator friendly species in the roughs like Dutch white clover, self-heal, creeping thyme, mixed with fescue and bluegrass, and reducing the amount and types of fertilizers and herbicides/pesticides used.

Public Services

Most of the Hiawatha Golf Course Area Plan can be developed without extensive investment in public infrastructure, services, and utilities. Because of its location within the city, there is direct access to electricity, gas, water, and sewer services to implement the plan. City water, sanitary sewer, gas, and electric service is currently provided to the site at the existing clubhouse location at the intersection of 46th Street and Longfellow Avenue. The new proposed facilities at the clubhouse area may require updates to the existing utility connections due to the increase in facility size and capacity, which will be further evaluated in future phases of project design. These costs have been factored into the project costs. However, there are no new proposed facilities (e.g., buildings/plumbed restrooms) at other locations within the park area that will require new public services.

The existing clubhouse has a parking lot that will be modified and expanded as part of the recommended plan. There is on-street parking on the streets to the west and north of the golf course area and no additional parking is proposed within the park as part of the recommended plan. There are no anticipated changes to the roads surrounding the Hiawatha Golf Course area which include 43rd Street to the north, Longfellow Avenue to the west, and Minnehaha Parkway to the south. However, the regional master plan includes improvements to the regional trail crossing at Minnehaha Parkway, adjacent to this master plan amendment area, which will require continued coordination with the City of Minneapolis. With the recommended trail improvements, it is expected that many park users will arrive on bike or foot, and bike parking is planned for the clubhouse area and other gathering spaces.

Because improved water management and reduced pumping were drivers for this plan, there are



several infrastructure components related to the stormwater and groundwater management that are critical to the implementation of the plan. Stormwater management, as it relates to the implementation of the plan, will be designed in accordance with the stormwater management rules of the City of Minneapolis and Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. Additionally, the regional stormwater management infrastructure will include diversion of the storm sewer system at the corner of 19th Avenue South and 43rd Street into the Hiawatha Golf Course through the proposed water management area that will provide water quality treatment and help reduce flooding in the larger Lake Hiawatha watershed to the north. This diversion will also allow for the incorporation of trash collection and management to help reduce the trash load to Lake Hiawatha from the northern watershed. This system would be constructed and managed in partnership with the City of Minneapolis.

A new groundwater pumping system is proposed as part of the recommended plan to reduce groundwater pumping at the site while still protecting basements of nearby homes. Preliminary evaluation indicates that the groundwater pumping infrastructure will include strategically placed wells that will continuously monitor groundwater levels and direct two dynamic pumping systems: a drain tile pumping system at the corner of Longfellow Avenue and 44th Street and a well pumping system at East 43rd Street and 17th Avenue South. Further data collection and updated groundwater modeling during future phases will refine the proposed groundwater pumping system design.

Operations

The MPRB has adopted a set of ordinances which define the rules and regulations for Minneapolis Parks to provide for:

- The safe and peaceful use of the parks and corresponding facilities.
- Educational and recreational benefits and enjoyment of the public.
- Protection and preservation of the property, facilities, and natural resources.
- The safety and general welfare of the public. A copy of the ordinances may be obtained from the MPRB web site (www.MinneapolisParks.org), and rules and regulations are also posted throughout the Minneapolis Parks' properties and facilities.

Partner Engagement

Park and trail planning in Minneapolis is rooted in public engagement. It is a process that includes extensive outreach, a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) of appointed members of the public, various input and engagement methods, and plan reviews at key points through open and targeted engagement events. The planning process uses many community engagement methods to gather input from a variety of targeted groups. According to MPRB, one method does not outweigh another; the input received, whether from loud voices or soft voices, is highly regarded.

The draft plan amendment was subject to review and comment by the public, and a public hearing before approval by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board of Commissioners. Before adoption, a formal approval process with the Board of Commissioners was required, including a 45-day public comment period that began July 31, 2020. This document is the acting plan for guiding improvements for the park. Additionally, it is an amendment to the Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Plan, requiring approval by the Metropolitan Council.

Representation on the CAC was one of the first things established at the start of the planning process. Elected officials, nearby neighborhood organizations, and Minneapolis Public Schools were asked to appoint members to the CAC. Many of these organizations were also engaged during the development of the 2015 Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Plan. Additionally, several other representatives were invited to participate based on feedback and specific concerns expressed prior to the start of the master planning process.

The CAC comprised a total of 18 people who met seven times over the two-year process to become knowledgeable about all aspects of the property (past and present); discuss and develop a plan vision, goals, and guiding principles; explore alternatives and options presented to them



including providing input; and finally, provide their master plan recommendation to the MPRB.

Appointments by community organizations and entities (8 appointments):

13. Standish-Ericsson Neighborhood Association*
14. Nokomis East Neighborhood Association
15. Hale Page Diamond Lake Community Association
16. Field Regina Northrup Neighborhood Group (no appointment made)
17. Hale School parent representative (no appointment made)
18. Lake Nokomis School parent representative (no appointment made)
19. Northrup School parent representative
20. Friends of Lake Hiawatha

Appointments by elected and appointed officials and other entities (14 appointments):

21. MPRB President
22. MPRB Park District 5 Commissioner
23. MPRB at-large Commissioners (three appointments)
24. City of Minneapolis Ward 11 City Councilmember
25. City of Minneapolis Ward 12 City Councilmember
26. City of Minneapolis Mayor
27. Hennepin County District 4 Commissioner
28. Minneapolis Public Schools District 5 Director
29. Minneapolis Public Schools Athletic Director
30. MPRB Director of Golf
31. MPRB Assistant Superintendent for Recreation
32. Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors (no appointment made)

Beyond the specific functions of the CAC for this planning process, MPRB engages many partners including government agencies, non-profit organizations, and for-profit organizations to provide an award-winning park and recreation system and fulfill MPRB's mission. These partnerships strengthen stewardship of the parks. The recommended plan for the Hiawatha Golf Course area will continue to build on existing partnerships for additional data collection needed to inform final design, implementation of the plan, and management of the park and natural resources.

Anticipated project partners will include the Metropolitan Council, the Minneapolis Parks Foundation, the City of Minneapolis, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, the Loppet Foundation, the First Tee of the Twin Cities, local school golf teams, golf leagues, and future restaurateurs and concessionaires. The MPRB has an opportunity to engage with these project partners along with other community organizations, such as the Friends of Lake Hiawatha, as future phases progress.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board of Commissioners approved the Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Plan Amendment at its meeting on September 7, 2022 via Resolution 2022-269 (Attachment 2).

Public Engagement and Participation

Members of the public were invited to attend and participate in CAC meetings, which included a designated time for public comment. Public attendance at CAC meetings typically ranged from approximately 40 to 80 people.



When it was clear that some voices may not be heard through the CAC meetings, the design team added five focus group sessions with various themes and convened each twice during the project. The two different sets of focus group sessions targeted specific interests within the community. These sessions provided venues to listen to stories, thoughts, ideas, and concerns specific to the following groups:

33. General golfers
34. African American golfers
35. Persons with environmental interests
36. Neighbors living near the golf course
37. Indigenous/Dakota community members

A total of 10 well-attended focus group sessions were held during the plan development process.

Several different online public surveys were conducted during the planning effort to solicit input. The surveys included:

38. Visioning input from the CAC and general public (more than 129 survey response forms were submitted which included 292 single-word descriptors, more than 150 images, and numerous vision statement examples).
39. CAC and public input on the three preliminary concepts (more than 450 survey response forms were submitted).
40. CAC prioritization of preferred project elements (resulted in a ranked prioritization of 26 project elements).
41. Public input on the draft preferred alternative (more than 440 comments were received).
42. Public input on the draft plan during the 45-day comment period (345 surveys and 26 emails were submitted generating over 1,100 comments).

Equity Analysis

Development of this plan amendment began nearly eight years ago, predating the enactment of the Equity Analysis requirement (June 2020). Even so, Community and Equity comprise one of four sets of guiding principles for the plan amendment:

43. Create equitable experiences and spaces that promote community with multi-generational, family-friendly, fun opportunities that are interactive and respectful for all park users
44. Celebrate history in a meaningful way on the site
45. Support sustainability in all aspects of the site, including environmentally, culturally, and economically
46. Reduce barriers and encourage access to a broader set of park users
47. Minimize negative impacts to the adjacent neighborhood, including consideration of impacts to traffic, parking, and noise

During the planning process, MPRB also intentionally engaged youth, the Black community, and the Indigenous community. The Youth Design Team is a group of young adults from across Minneapolis who is interested in parks and recreation. Youth Design Team positions are paid and a great opportunity for youth interested in policy and planning to gain applicable community-engagement and career-building skills and experience. For the Hiawatha Golf Course, this group conducted a simple design activity where they brainstormed ideas in small groups, put those ideas together, and presented the ideas to MPRB staff. They also talked about climate changes and a need to rethink how we use our parks.

As noted above, a focus group was formed to focus on African American golfers and their history, amongst four other focus group topics. The first focus group session was held in November 2018. Harry Davis Jr., a longtime civic leader and son of Harry Davis Sr., former school board member



and civil rights activist, presented to a group of about 30 people, then answered several questions from attendees. The second focus group session was an open house held in March 2018 that reserved time for each of the five focus groups to comment on plan alternatives.

Beyond focus group sessions, CAC meetings, and public open houses, the design team reviewed hundreds of emails and written comments, some of which pertained to Black golfers' history at the golf course. A prominent theme was "An 18-Hole Golf Course is the Only Way to Honor/Support Black/Minority Community".

MPRB also noted that Indigenous voices were difficult to hear over other louder voices. One of the focus groups centered on Indigenous history. The first focus group session was in January 2019 and was hosted in part by members of Dakhóta lápi Okhódakičhiye and Healing Place Collaborative.

As part of the focus group sessions, the history of the Dakota people was presented, and a dialogue was started with the Dakota community. Although many issues were discussed, several topics emerged from the conversations. Members of the tribe spoke about the significance of this area to the Dakota and other tribes, with the larger area around Fort Snelling being both a place of genesis and genocide. Having this area acknowledged as a Dakota place would be powerful. With the future changes at the site there is an opportunity to reconnect with nature and let the land heal. Other comments from the focus session suggested that the Dakota people have felt invisible, that people often think of the Dakota people as if they only existed in the past when there are many Dakota here today. Making the Dakota people visible and have part of their story told is important. There is a rule in Dakota histories and stories called "Owóthanna," which means they tell it straight— nothing is added, changed, or left out. Conversation with the Dakota community started with the master planning process; this connection will continue to be fostered through future phases of project implementation, giving the Dakota a platform to tell their story.

The first section of the plan amendment – Acknowledgements – begins with a "Dakota Land" section that reads: "The MPRB acknowledges the land subject to this master plan amendment is Bdote, lands once richly inhabited by the Dakota and other Indigenous peoples. Under the hands of the MPRB, that land changed dramatically and in ways that fail to resonate with the spirit of the Dakota and the honor they bring to the land. In crafting a master plan to guide the future of this land, we bring good intentions of healing what we have so dramatically disturbed, and with good hearts hope to restore the vital functions of the land and the water that passes through it. We are striving for a more holistic balance than has existed here for the past century, one that can better sustain all peoples for the next centuries."

Public Awareness

The high public interest in this project and the location of the Hiawatha Golf Course area - within the heart of South Minneapolis and the larger Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park - will help make the public aware as park development progresses. Ongoing community engagement will be a critical part of the future design process. The MPRB will publicize and promote the Hiawatha Golf Course area along with the larger Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park through a variety of established channels, including its website, social media, publications, community newspapers, and other media. Grand openings, press releases, and integration with school and recreational programs will also expand awareness. Within the Hiawatha Golf course area trails will be signed, and current MPRB system maps will be incorporated as progress is made in extending trails and making connections to the larger Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park.

Accessibility

MPRB continually strives to provide equal access and equal opportunities for all residents to its neighborhood and regional parks and trails which are open to all community members. As outlined in the 2015 Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Plan, MPRB is committed to connecting park users to the land and each other. The 2007–2020 Comprehensive Plan identified the following strategies specifically related to accessibility and special needs populations:

48. Build or renew facilities to meet or exceed standards for accessibility.



49. Ensure that recreation opportunities are available for persons with disabilities.

50. Identify and reduce physical and financial barriers to participation in programming.

New facilities and amenities within the Hiawatha golf course area will be designed to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as principles for universal accessibility. Existing facilities that do not meet ADA requirements shall be rehabilitated to meet ADA standards as requirements dictate.

Because cost can also be a barrier for park and recreation use, most of the park amenities and facilities will not require a fee for public use, consistent with MPRB policy throughout its system. Amenities such as multi-use and pedestrian-only trails, community gathering spaces, picnicking, play spaces, and public water access points are generally provided free of charge. In line with other regional park units managed by MPRB, some amenities proposed for the Hiawatha Golf Course area could have fees or costs including boat storage, rental fees for canoes and kayaks, the purchase of food and beverages at the improved clubhouse, and cross-country ski passes.

There are also fees associated with the use of the Hiawatha Golf Course for golf, use of the driving range, and use of other golf-specific facilities (e.g., equipment rental, golf cart rental, virtual simulators, etc.). Historically, Hiawatha Golf Course has served a diverse community with a wide range of ages, acting as both a learning center for youth and high school teams and a home course for those that have golfed for 40 or more years. Discounted rates are available for adults over 55 and for juniors. Practice facilities, such as the putting greens and pitching and chipping areas, are free to anyone. MPRB recognizes the importance of Hiawatha's role as an inclusive learning facility and intends to keep golf at the course as affordable as possible.

Although many existing users of the site arrive by car, there are several public transit options nearby. The Light Rail Transit (LRT) Blue Line runs along Hiawatha Avenue, approximately a half-mile east of Lake Hiawatha. The closest LRT transit stations are at 38th Street S. and 46th Street S. The 46th Street S LRT station is near trails along Minnehaha Creek, providing off-street bicycle and pedestrian access to the park.

Bus connections can be made from 38th Street and 46th Street LRT Stations and several city bus routes provide nearby transit access to the Hiawatha Golf Course area, including Metro Transit routes 14, 22, and 46.

There is bicycle access to the Hiawatha Golf Course area via the 21st Avenue, 42nd Street, 46th Street bikeways, and the Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail. With the addition of bike parking and multi-use trails throughout the site, it is anticipated many park users will be arriving by bike or on foot. With the addition of water trails and non-motorized landings some visitors may also arrive by canoe or kayak.

Natural Resources

The landscape of the existing Hiawatha Golf Course is not ecologically diverse and primarily comprises turf grasses. Delineated wetlands, including constructed ponds and adjacent low areas that are chronically wet, cover approximately 20% of the project area. After the floods of 2014, numerous trees died due to a significant period of inundation, and several ash trees were removed due to the emerald ash borer. Today, tree coverage is a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees with a canopy covering approximately 20% of the project area.

Areas providing habitat for wildlife are primarily confined to the shoreline of the lake along the existing berm, the vegetated delta where Minnehaha Creek enters Lake Hiawatha, and the forested slope in the southeast corner of the project area. Wildlife commonly observed by area residents includes otters, beavers, coyotes, owls, predatory birds, songbirds, and other waterfowl. Hiawatha Golf Course is within the Mississippi migratory bird flyway.

The pre-European settlement landscape of this area was a matrix of upland prairies, oak woodland/savanna, and brush land with wetlands and wet prairie communities found along the stream corridors, bordering lakes, and in low depressions. Much of the low area of the golf course was part of a wetland complex prior to the dredging of the property in 1929.

The plan protects existing areas of important habitat for wildlife that were identified by the public. The plan balances the desired recreation activities with the restoration of a variety of ecosystems on the site including open water aquatic habitat, wetland and shoreline restorations, riparian buffers, and upland prairies and oak savannah. This includes incorporation of ecological restoration within the golf course in out-of-play areas.

These restorations create habitat and can help mitigate the impacts of climate change. They can remove atmospheric carbon dioxide through carbon sequestration or capture and long-term storage within trees and native perennial grass plantings and soil organic matter. Additionally, the restorations improve the flood resiliency of the site.

Since the golf course was constructed, the watershed and conditions along Minnehaha Creek have changed significantly for a variety of reasons, including development within the watershed, modifications to the dam at Lake Minnetonka, and other utility and infrastructure projects along and adjacent to the creek. Flows on the creek can have extreme fluctuations due to rain events and management of Lake Minnetonka water levels. Most normal creek flows through the property are contained within the creek's channel. The course is part of the Minnehaha Creek floodplain, with the earthen berm overtopping during larger and intense events (i.e., flows greater than the approximately 10-year or 10%-chance storm event). The Hiawatha Golf Course has been impacted by large floods in 1952, 1965, 1987, and most recently in 2014. As noted above, record rainfalls in the spring and summer of 2014 flooded the course for an extended period of time and overwhelmed the pumping system. Between repairs and lost revenue, total flood costs were estimated to be \$4 million.

Beyond the historic and chronic flooding, Minnesota's climate is changing. The state is seeing larger, more frequent, and more intense rainfall events that directly impact creek flows and conditions on the golf course. Looking to the future, the Minnesota State Office of Climatology expects this trend continue, with unprecedented rainfall events. This expected change increases the risk of flooding on the course and could result in more events like that of 2014. Additionally, the most recent six years have been the wettest period in the Twin Cities' climatic history, resulting in higher regional groundwater levels and likely more groundwater inflow to the golf course. This is exemplified by the increase in the estimated annual pumping from 308 million gallons per year in 2017 to more than 400 million gallons per year in 2019.

Improved water management, along with a chance to heal and restore the landscape, is the foundation of the plan amendment. The plan aims to shape the land and water in more sustainable ways than occurred here a century ago, this time starting with the understanding that water is the force that shapes the land. Reduced pumping, improved water quality, and reduced chronic flooding issues are byproducts of a plan conceived as a means of healing the patterns of water misuse that have existed at Hiawatha Golf Course for almost a century.

Consistency with Other Council Policies and Systems

Council staff have reviewed and found the proposed master plans to be consistent with the other plans and policies of the Council, including *Thrive MSP 2040*, the *Water Resources Policy Plan*, the *Transportation Policy Plan*, and the *Housing Policy Plan*. Additional review comments are included below.

Community Development – Forecasts (Todd Graham, 651-602-1322) – The Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Plan Amendment (Review File No. 50052-2) is informed by the Met Council regional forecast. The Park Board considers local population growth (section 2.4) and diverging trends of golf course use vs. other park uses. Council staff concur with the Park Board's demand assessment.

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig, 651-602-1119) – Metropolitan Council Interceptor (1-MN-344) runs through the southern portion of this Regional Park. The interceptor was built in 1926 and is a 132 x 123-inch Reinforced Concrete Pipe. To assess the potential impacts to our interceptor system; prior to initiating any project at this location, preliminary plans should be sent to Tim Wedin, Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager (651-602-4571) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services.



Environmental Services – Water Resources (Maureen Hoffman, 651-602-1279) – The Plan appears to be accurate and complete, and potential water resource impacts appear to be addressed.



5 January 2023

Evaluation of Amenities within the Hiawatha Golf Course Area Master Plan

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) would like to offer the following matrix to clarify and differentiate regional park amenities from partner supported amenities and enterprise supported amenities. Some amenities are supported by two or three sources of funding. In these cases, the amenity provides equal benefit to those sources and may require an appropriate split of capital/operating funding sources to implement and maintain.

Master Plan Amenity	Master Plan Page #	Regional, Partner, or Enterprise	Justification/Notes
Storm sewer diversion and trash collection system	19, 22	Regional/ Partner	System to improve water quality in new regional park water bodies and existing Lake Hiawatha, partially City-owned structure
Underground groundwater pumping system	19, 22, 25	Regional/ Partner/ Enterprise	Required to lower groundwater levels within the park and neighborhood, allows for golf course drainage,
9-hole, Par-36 golf course	19, 21, 22	Enterprise	
Enhanced golf practice areas	19, 21	Enterprise	
Driving range	19, 21	Enterprise	
Cart paths	19, 21, 22	Enterprise	
Protective netting or fencing in golf course	19, 22	Enterprise	
Snowmaking cooling and distribution system	19, 23	Regional/ Partner/ Enterprise	Some pumped water will be used to heat/cool the new community gather building. Other pumped water may be used for snow making and golf course irrigation (both enterprise functions)
The north shore gathering area	19	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
All bridges/boardwalks	19, 21, 22	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks, all structures support non-golf movements
Paved pedestrian and bicycle trails	19, 21, 22	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Natural surface trails	19, 21, 22	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Dog patio	19, 21	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks, public space and free to use
Outside food and beverage	21	Enterprise/ Partner	
Community gathering building	19, 21	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
A. Event/banquet space	19, 21	Enterprise/ Partner	
B. Kitchen and bar	21	Enterprise/ Partner	



Attachment 1: Evaluation of Amenities within the Hiawatha Golf Course Area Master Plan
continued

C. Small public restaurant	21	Enterprise/ Partner	
D. Informal lockers	21	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
E. Classrooms	21	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
F. Restrooms	21	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
G. Deck	21	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks, public space and free to use
H. Cart storage	21	Enterprise	
Golf pro shop/clubhouse	19, 21	Enterprise	
A. Point of sale	21	Enterprise	
B. Pro shop	21	Enterprise	
C. Informal lockers	21	Enterprise	
D. Trophy display	21	Enterprise	
Parking Lot	21	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks, park-wide public parking area
Improved entrance	21	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Water access	19, 21	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
A. Boat storage	19, 21	Enterprise	
B. Rentals, concessions	21	Enterprise/ Partner	
C. Warming house	21	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks, public space and free to use
D. Beach access	21	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
E. Native plantings/shoreline restoration	19, 21, 22	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Picnic facilities	22	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Play area (E44th St/Longfellow Ave)	22	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Open space/lawn	22	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Nine Experiences (Interpretive Elements):	19, 21, 22	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
A. Stormwater Terrace	19, 22	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
B. Pumping as a Resource	19, 22	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
C. All Are Welcome	19, 21	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
D. A Place to Learn	19, 21	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
E. Island Respite	19	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
F. Telling Our Story	19	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
G. A Connection to Water	19, 21	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
H. Urban Nature	19	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
I. Celebrating Minnehaha Creek	19	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks
Ice skating loop	23	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks, public space and free to use
Sledding area	23	Regional	Allowed and typical in regional parks, public space and free to use



Attachment 1: Evaluation of Amenities within the Hiawatha Golf Course Area Master Plan
continued

Cross-country ski trail	23	Enterprise/ Partner	
Cross-country ski stadium	23	Enterprise/ Partner	

Link to Hiawatha Golf Course Area Master Plan:

<https://www.minneapolisarks.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/20220907-Hiawatha-Golf-Course-Area-Master-Plan.pdf>





Resolution 2022-269

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE HIAWATHA GOLF COURSE AREA MASTER PLAN AND ITS AMENDMENT TO THE NOKOMIS-HIAWATHA REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN, DIRECTING STAFF TO ENGAGE HIGH LEVEL PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE RELATED TO GOLF COURSE DESIGN INCLUDING LOCAL EXPERTISE RELATED TO TEACHING THE SPORT OF GOLF AND RECREATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS RAISED IN THE MASTER PLAN, AND FURTHER DIRECTING STAFF TO ENGAGE WITH OTHER JURISDICTIONS AS NECESSARY TO ADVANCE THE MASTER PLAN TO ITS FULL IMPLEMENTATION

Whereas, The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) is the steward of the Minneapolis parks;

Whereas, The MPRB was founded in 1883 by an Act of the State Legislature, and has the responsibility to design, improve, and manage parks in Minneapolis;

Whereas, The MPRB owns and operates Hiawatha Golf Course and the property is a part of the Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park;

Whereas, The area of Hiawatha Golf Course was discovered to be pumping significant volumes of groundwater and is understood to be threatened by flood events;

Whereas, Following a significant flood event in 2014, the Board of Commissioners directed staff to review conditions relating to water management and to create a master plan for the Hiawatha Golf Course Area;

Whereas, MPRB has completed a community-driven master planning process for the Hiawatha Golf Course Area located within Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park sitting generally between Lake Hiawatha, Minnehaha Parkway, Longfellow Avenue, and East 43rd Street;

Whereas, The Hiawatha Golf Course Area Master Plan (the Plan) shall be an amendment to the Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Master Plan;

Whereas, The Plan pushes toward a balance of golf and other activities set in a landscape guided by water management that meets the master plan direction outlined in Resolution 2018-230 and the Community Advisory Committee priorities developed over seven CAC meetings and 10 focus group sessions between March 2018 and July 2019;

Whereas, The Plan was created in collaboration with the City of Minneapolis and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, under a memorandum of agreement between these three agencies, but was primarily led by the MPRB;





Whereas, The MPRB project team has refined the Plan document based on comments received from MPRB staff, stakeholders, and from the general public during a 45-day comment period that concluded on September 15, 2020;

Whereas, A public hearing was held on February 17, 2021 to allow additional public comment on the final Plan prior to its consideration by the Board of Commissioners;

Whereas, On April 7, 2021 Resolution 2021-136 to approve the Master Plan with amendments that included a naming of a facility, which requires six votes, failed on a vote of four to two votes;

Whereas, On July 21, 2021 Resolution 2021-249 which considered approval of the master plan was defeated by the Board of Commissioners four votes to five;

Whereas, Newly elected commissioners have expressed interest in considering a resolution to approve the Plan as originally written and presented;

Whereas, Resolution 2022-156 directing staff to organize a public hearing before the Planning Committee of the Board of Commissioners failed to gain approval;

Whereas, The Board of Commissioners have received significant direct and emailed communications from a range of constituencies following consideration of Resolution 2022-156, which communications range from advocacy for the proposed Plan to conceptual approaches for other configurations of the Hiawatha Golf Course Area;

Whereas, Should the Plan be approved by the Board of Commissioners, advocacy for the perpetuation of golf at the Hiawatha Golf Course Area suggests a need for golf course architect with experience at the highest levels of the profession and with particular experience related to managing and mitigating water issues and creating golf experiences integrated with environmental restoration and engagement of golf expertise with an orientation to teach the sport of golf to youth;

Whereas, Expertise related to the design of a golf course at the Hiawatha Golf Course Area according to the directions of the Plan, if approved, must demonstrate clear and robust experience in addressing, managing, and to the degree practicable, mitigating groundwater and stormwater concerns raised during the master planning process;

Whereas, Expertise engaged in improvements at the Hiawatha Golf Course Area, should the Plan be approved, must demonstrate clear and robust experience in resolving issues identified during the master planning process, including but not limited to habitat preservation, integration of non-golf recreation activities, lake quality enhancement including the removal of floatable and other trash conveyed by City of Minneapolis stormwater infrastructure to Lake Hiawatha, protection





of nearby homes from the intrusion of groundwater to the same degree they are protected by the current regime of pumping on Hiawatha Golf Course, and reduction in non-trash pollutant conveyance from the golf course and City of Minneapolis stormwater infrastructure to Lake Hiawatha;

Whereas, The process of evolving conditions at the Hiawatha Golf Course property related to water management and water quality necessitates ongoing and close coordination with other jurisdictions, including but not limited to the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District and the City of Minneapolis; and

Whereas, This resolution is supported by the following goals and strategies in Parks for All, the MPRB Comprehensive Plan: "Goal 2, Strategy 13 - Make golf courses and golf course buildings welcoming multi-use recreational and ecological facilities, Goal 6, Strategy 5 - Utilize data-driven, equitable, science-based, regional, future-facing, ecological understanding in preserving, stewarding, maintaining, and improving natural areas, enhancing habitat connectivity, and improving and managing park infrastructure, Goal 6, Strategy 8 - Implement strategies to remove and reduce trash and plastic in parks and water bodies, and Goal 9, Strategy 9 - Reimagine Enterprise Fund programs and facilities across the system based on market-driven approaches and sponsorship opportunities to offset park program and asset costs that balance ecology and recreational uses;"

RESOLVED, That the Board of Commissioners approves the Hiawatha Golf Course Area Master Plan and its amendment to the Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Master Plan;

RESOLVED, That the Board of Commissioners directs staff to engage, in subsequent stages of advancement of the master plan toward full implementation, high level professional golf expertise with experience in managing and mitigating water issues and integrating environmental restoration in the course design, and form a Technical Advisory Committee comprised of individuals with golf expertise with a particular orientation to teaching the sport of golf to youth;

RESOLVED, That the Board of Commissioners directs staff to engage, in subsequent stages of advancement of the master plan toward full implementation, expertise addressing and resolving the recreational and environmental concerns identified in the master plan to the greatest degree practicable;

RESOLVED, That the Board of Commissioners directs staff to prepare a plan for advancing the master plan toward full implementation in collaboration with other jurisdictions, especially the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District and the City of Minneapolis; and

RESOLVED, That the President of the Board and Secretary to the Board are authorized to take all necessary administrative actions to implement this resolution.

