

Environment Committee

Meeting date: September 8, 2015

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of September 23, 2015

Subject: Authorization to Negotiate and Execute Agreement to Purchase Land Adjacent to Empire Wastewater Treatment Plant

District(s), Member(s): 16, Wendy Wulff

Policy/Legal Reference: Policy 3-3, Expenditures, MN Statutes 473.504

Staff Prepared/Presented: Bryce Pickart, 651-602-1091

Division/Department: MCES c/o Leisa Thompson, 651-602-8101

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes its Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute an agreement to purchase land adjacent to the Empire Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Background

The property in Empire Township between Biscayne Avenue and the Council's property surrounding the Empire Wastewater Treatment Plant is available for long-term residential development, according to the local comprehensive plan.

Environmental Services would like to purchase this land, if the property owner is willing, to accomplish three objectives: (1) preserve the sludge land application area at the site (needs 600 feet set back from development); (2) provide a buffer from development as a means to avoid additional odor control costs at the plant; and (3) restore additional wetland area, which can be "banked" for use on future MCES projects that require wetland mitigation. An additional benefit is to provide a location for a future regional trail connection to Whitetail Woods Regional Park from the proposed Vermillion River regional trail.

The property proposed to be acquired between 190th Street and 197th Street is approximately 160 acres and includes a house and farm buildings. The property owner owns 160 acres north of 190th Street, which may need to be acquired, depending on property owner preference. This excess property would then be sold later.

Rationale

Real estate acquisition amounts exceeding \$500,000 require Council authorization.

Funding

Funding is available in the MCES Capital Program

Known Support / Opposition

Empire Township supports this acquisition