

## Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: August 4, 2015

For the Community Development Committee meeting of August 17, 2015

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of August 26, 2015

**Subject:** Lake Elmo Park Reserve Boundary Amendment, Washington County

**District(s), Member(s):** MPOSC District F, Sarah Hietpas

**Policy/Legal Reference:** MN Statute 473.313

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Michael Peterka, Intern (651-602-1361)

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**Division/Department:** Community Development, Regional Parks and Natural Resources

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve a boundary amendment to the Lake Elmo Park Reserve Master Plan, adding an 18.2 acre parcel, as shown in Appendix A.

### Background

Lake Elmo Park Reserve is located in central Washington County. The existing park reserve is 2,165 acres in size. Washington County is requesting an amendment to the Lake Elmo Park Reserve Master Plan to add property to the park reserve boundary. The most recent park reserve master plan was approved by the Metropolitan Council in 2006.

In the 2006 Lake Elmo Park Reserve Master Plan, Washington County added eight parcels to the park reserve boundary as inholdings for future acquisition. Three of these parcels are located near the main park reserve entrance at the intersection of Keats Avenue and 10<sup>th</sup> Street North and are shown in Appendix A. Of the designated inholdings, Parcel F only contained a portion of an existing parcel. As a result, only 15.3 acres of the 33.5 acre property were designated as a potential land acquisition for the park reserve. Washington County is requesting to add the remainder of the property, shown in Appendix A as Parcel F1, to boundary of the park reserve. Adding F1 to the boundary will allow the landowner to sell the entire parcel, totaling 33.5 acres, to Washington County.

Parcel F1 is bordered by the park reserve to the north, 10<sup>th</sup> St North to the south, the Oakdale Gun Club to the east, and inholding Parcel F to the west. Ownership of the land will allow Washington County to manage the area in a manner consistent with the park reserve. This will allow the park's character to be visible near the main entrance at the intersection of Keats Avenue and 10<sup>th</sup> Street North. The acquisition of F1 will also support the goal of establishing a buffer between the gun range and the park reserve.

The proposed land is considered to be disturbed, cultivated land with no significant resources. The topography is gently rolling with a small drainage basin near the eastern edge of the parcel. Once purchased, native vegetation will be restored to the site, making it similar to adjacent park areas. Existing native, woody plants located to the north and east will be allowed to advance into the parcel. This will create a valuable “edge habitat” for wildlife. The southern portion of the parcel will be restored to a prairie habitat. The existing soils will be examined in the drainage basin, and the area will likely be restored to wetland or a wet meadow habitat. There is currently an existing skiing/hiking trail located within the park, just north of the proposed parcel. This trail will be re-routed to pass through the new parcel, adding distance and variety to the trail.

### **Rationale**

The Lake Elmo Park Reserve Boundary Amendment is consistent with the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and other Council policies. The master plan requirements outlined in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* have an effective date of July 1, 2015. The Lake Elmo Park Reserve Boundary Amendment was submitted to the Council prior to July 1, 2015, so it was reviewed subject to the requirements outlined in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

### **Funding**

The estimated total cost for the acquisition of the combined F and F1 parcel is \$861,800.

Approval of this master plan makes the costs eligible for regional parks funding, but does not commit the Council to any funding. Future funding based on this master plan may be awarded through the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund. Council action is required to approve the CIP and to approve specific grants to Washington County.

### **Known Support / Opposition**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the boundary amendment on June 2, 2015. There is no known opposition.

Appendix A: Existing inholdings in red and proposed boundary amendment in brown

