

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: July 9, 2013

For the Community Development Committee meeting of July 15, 2013

Subject: North Mississippi Regional Park Master Plan Amendment, Grant Request and Reimbursement Consideration Request, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

District(s), Member(s): MPOSC District D, Vacant

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statute 473.313; Laws of Minnesota 1985, First Special Session, Chap. 15, Sec. 5, Subd. 2 (b); Laws of Minnesota 1987 Chapter 384, Article 3, Sec. 45; Laws of Minnesota 1998, Special Session, Chapter 1, Article 3, Sec. 12; and Laws of Minnesota 2013, Chapter 114, Article 4

Staff Prepared/Presented: Jan Youngquist, AICP, Planning Analyst (651-602-1029)

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

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the North Mississippi Regional Park Master Plan Amendment.
2. Require that prior to development, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board shall send development plans to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) for review and comment to ensure the integrity of the regional interceptor system.
3. Require that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board provide more detail and submit estimated costs for the development projects that were not quantified in the master plan for Metropolitan Council review and approval prior to seeking future grants.
4. Approve a development grant in the amount of \$1,220,551.60 from the North Mississippi Regional Park Fund, comprised of interest earnings on Metropolitan Council park bond accounts in accordance with State law. This grant shall be used to partially finance the construction of a natural filtration swimming pool, bathhouse and site improvements.
5. Consider reimbursing the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board up to \$1,000,000 from the North Mississippi Regional Park Fund account for the construction of a natural filtration swimming pool, bathhouse and site improvements at North Mississippi Regional Park, when that amount of interest has been earned on the Council's park bonds in accordance with State law.

Background

As a result of the 2013 Legislative Session, the Laws of Minnesota 2013, Chapter 114, Article 4, require the expansion of North Mississippi Regional Park to include a portion of Webber Park and Shingle Creek as well as the expenditure of funds for the construction of a natural filtration swimming pool and a building for park users (See **Attachment 1**). In order for the Metropolitan Council to grant funds to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), the project must be consistent with an approved master plan. The MPRB has submitted a master plan amendment that expands the boundaries of the regional park and includes proposed development in the expanded area of North Mississippi Regional Park.

The Laws of Minnesota 1985, First Special Session, Chap. 15, Sec. 5, Subd. 2 (b), plus Laws of Minnesota 1987 Chapter 384, Article 3, Sec. 45, and Laws of Minnesota 1998, Special Session,

Chapter 1, Article 3, Sec. 12 direct the Metropolitan Council to establish a separate account of interest it earns on park bonds and to grant funds from that account for the acquisition and development of North Mississippi Regional Park. The MPRB is requesting a grant in the amount of \$1,220,551.60 from the North Mississippi Regional Park Fund, which is the balance in the fund as of June 1, 2013. This grant will be used to partially finance the construction of a natural filtration swimming pool, bathhouse and site improvements.

The estimated cost for development of the swimming pool and associated facilities is \$6,550,675. The MPRB will use other sources of funding for the balance of the project and is requesting that the Metropolitan Council consider reimbursing the MPRB up to \$1,000,000 from the North Mississippi Regional Park Fund when that amount of interest has been earned on the Council's park bonds.

Rationale

The North Mississippi Regional Park Master Plan Amendment is consistent with the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and other Council policies. The request for a development grant in the amount of \$1,220,551.60 is consistent with the State Laws referenced above. The request for reimbursement consideration is consistent with Finance Strategy 6 from the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

Funding

The estimated cost to implement the development quantified in the master plan is approximately \$6,550,675. The Council is being requested to issue a grant in the amount of \$1,220,551.60 from the North Mississippi Regional Park Fund as part of this action. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board will use other sources of funding for the balance of the project and is requesting reimbursement consideration for up to \$1,000,000 from the North Mississippi Regional Park Fund when that amount of interest has been earned on the Council's park bonds.

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition to the master plan amendment, the grant request, or the request for reimbursement consideration.

Analysis

Master Plan Amendment: The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that regional park master plans address the eleven items listed below.

- 1. Boundaries and Acquisition:** North Mississippi Regional Park is located along the Mississippi River and extends from the Camden Bridge area in north Minneapolis to the I-694 bridge in Brooklyn Center. The regional park currently includes approximately 94 acres. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board owns and operates 67 acres of the regional park; Three Rivers Park District owns and operates 27 acres. The master plan amendment proposes to expand the boundary of the regional park to include 16.24 acres of Webber Park, a local park that has been owned and operated by the MPRB since 1908. This action fulfills the intent of the Laws of Minnesota 2013, Chapter 114, Article 4 (See **Attachment 1**).

Figure 1 shows the boundary of North Mississippi Regional Park; the portion of Webber Park being added to the boundary is shown in brown.

Figure 1: North Mississippi Regional Park Boundary and Expansion Area



Not all of Webber Park is being added to the boundary of the regional park. The MPRB has chosen to site facilities on the northwest end of the park that are more suitable for a local park than a regional park. These facilities include a soccer field, basketball court, and tennis courts. This portion of the park will not be added to North Mississippi Regional Park.

Within the regional park boundary expansion area, Hennepin County owns the Webber Library parcel. This property is subject to a right of reverter to the MPRB if the County: 1) stops using the building as a library or 2) tears down the building. The adjacent parking lot and surrounding area is subject to an easement to Hennepin County for nonexclusive parking and associated rights to the building. **Figure 2** shows the Hennepin County parcel and easement.

Figure 2: Hennepin County parcel and easement



Figure 3 shows the boundary expansion area in red and the Hennepin County easement in orange.

Figure 3: Proposed boundary expansion and easement area



2. Demand Forecast: The expansion of North Mississippi Regional Park will provide continuous regional trail connections, swimming facilities and picnicking opportunities. Trails within Webber Park facilitate continuous connections between Shingle Creek Regional Trail, Victory Memorial Parkway Regional Trail, St. Anthony Parkway Regional Trail and North Mississippi Regional Park. These facilities had the following estimated visits in 2011:

Shingle Creek Regional Trail	119,800
Victory Memorial Parkway Regional Trail	614,000
St. Anthony Parkway Regional Trail	219,000
North Mississippi Regional Park	210,000

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources issued the *Ten Year Forecasts of Minnesota Adult Outdoor Recreation Activities 2004-2014* report, which indicates that trail activities such as walking, hiking and bicycling will remain steady or increase over this time period.

The natural filtration swimming pool that is proposed for development as part of this master plan amendment is designed to accommodate a bather load of 500 people per day. The draw for this pool may be wider than for other local pools, due to its natural filtration system, which will be attractive for people that are not able to tolerate traditional chlorine pools or who prefer to be in a chemical-free environment.

Picnicking is a popular attraction at North Mississippi Regional Park. The picnic facilities in the regional park expansion area already serve as an overflow site for those who are not able to secure a picnic site within the current boundaries of the regional park.

3. Development Concept: The proposed development within the amended boundary of North Mississippi Regional Park was identified during an extensive planning process for Webber Park in 2012. The proposed development is intended to enhance recreational opportunities and the site’s natural resources. The proposed design includes developing a natural filtration swimming pool, as well as improving trail connections, picnicking facilities and visitor access to Shingle Creek. The MPRB is proposing to re-meander the creek and create open picnicking areas.

The natural filtration swimming pool will include shallow and deep water sections, including a lap swimming area. The pool will use a biological plant-based filtration system. The water in the natural pool will flow from the swimming area to a biological filter and percolate through a regeneration pond filled with hydroponic plants, gravel and other aggregates. The filtered water returns from the regeneration pond to the pool via standard pumps and pipes. A bathhouse will be developed that will provide space for lifeguards, restrooms and changing areas, as well as a meeting/shelter area.

The picnic areas will include three picnic shelters, picnic tables, fit pit, a performance area, an amphitheater and a pavilion. An entrance feature at the southeast portion of the site is planned to draw attention to the trail connections within the park.

Construction of the natural filtration swimming pond and bathhouse is projected to cost \$6,550,675, as shown in **Figure 4**. This project is the MPRB’s first priority for development. Detailed cost estimates for other development proposed in the master plan amendment were not provided and will be developed in the future.

Figure 4: Estimated development costs for swimming pond and bathhouse

Item	Estimated Cost
Landform contract	\$400,000
MPRB in-house management fees	\$65,000
Survey and other professional fees	\$60,000
Construction testing and survey layout	\$100,000
NSP special inspection and testing	\$159,000
Demolition of existing pool	\$65,000
Pool and parking lot construction	\$4,587,000
Contingency	\$114,675
Bathhouse construction allowance	\$1,000,000
Total	\$6,550,675

Figure 5 shows the master site plan for the entire park and **Figure 6** shows the portion of the park being added to North Mississippi Regional Park in red in the context of the master site plan.

Figure 5: Master site plan for Webber Park

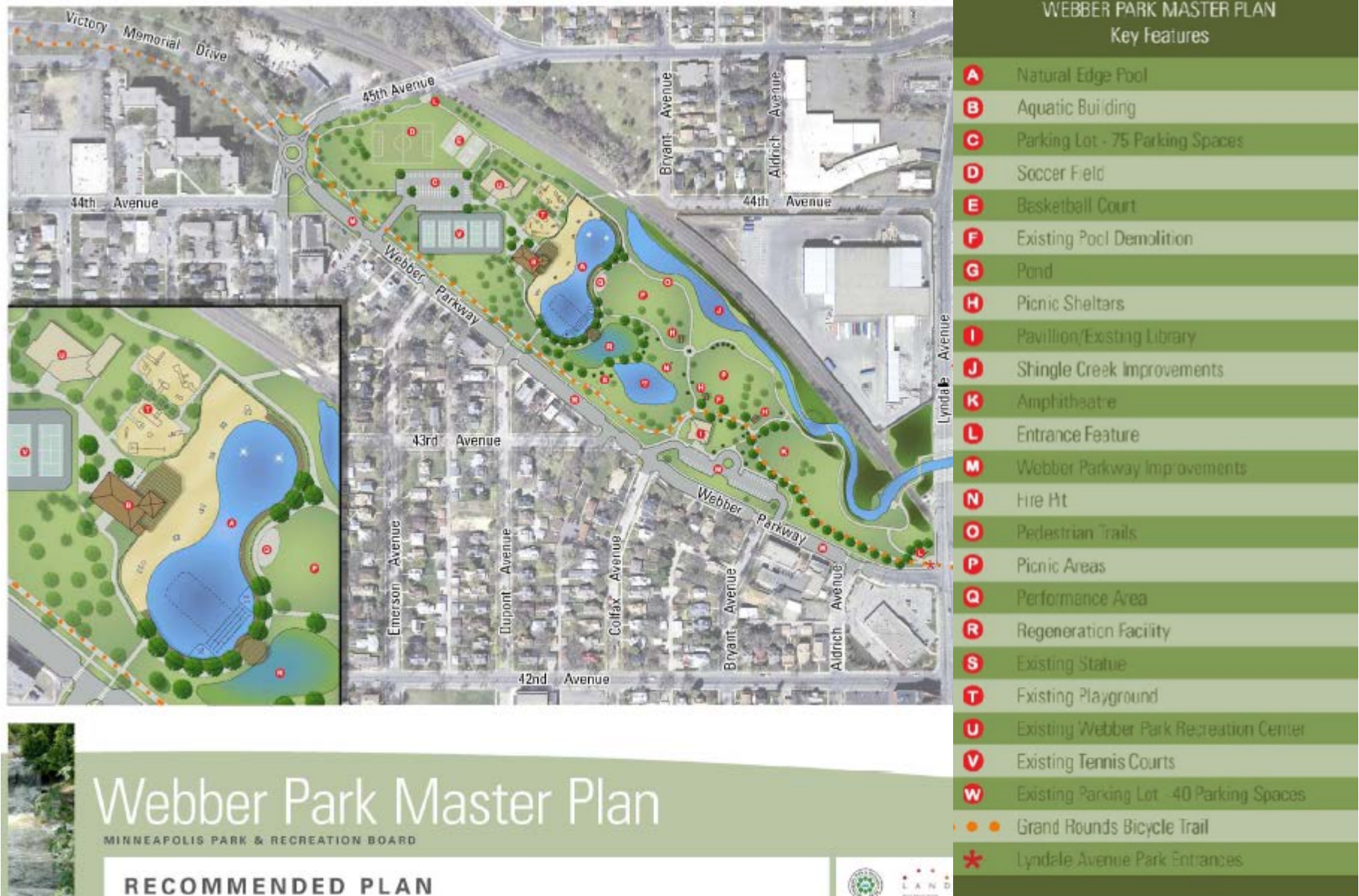


Figure 6: North Mississippi Regional Park expansion area in the context of the master site plan



4. Conflicts: The master plan amendment does not conflict with existing or proposed projects. A portion of the property is owned by Hennepin County for the Webber Library, which is a compatible public use. The remainder of the regional park expansion area is owned by the MPRB and has served as a park since 1908. The site is zoned "Residential: R1A" by the City of Minneapolis; parks are an allowed use in all zoning classifications within the City.

5. Public Services: The regional park is served by existing public and private utilities; no expansion of public services or facilities is needed to accommodate the development proposed in the master plan amendment.

6. Operations: The existing and proposed facilities described in the master plan amendment will be overseen by MPRB staff. Services and staffing levels will increase as needed. MPRB Park Police Officers provide public safety services. Existing maintenance operations staff will continue to serve the park.

Maintenance of the trails within the regional park expansion area includes sweeping, signage, trash removal, vegetation management and snow removal, with an estimated annual cost of \$1,100 per mile. The estimated annual cost of operating and maintaining the natural filtration pool is \$200,000, which will come from the MPRB general fund.

7. Citizen Participation: The MPRB conducted an extensive stakeholder engagement process in the development of a master plan for Webber Park, which included:

- Community survey
- Multi-day design charrette with three community working sessions
- Two community meetings to develop the preferred concept
- Three stakeholder focus groups (neighborhoods, partners, programmers)
- Meeting with Henry High School students
- Public hearing at a MRPB Board of Commissioners meeting
- Two meetings with representatives from Hennepin County (Libraries and Transportation), Three Rivers Park District, Shingle Creek Watershed and the City of Minneapolis during the design process

During the design process, the community shared their needs and visions for the park. The majority of participants favored the natural treatment of the pool water rather than traditional chemical treatment. The participants reached a consensus on the master plan design. The MPRB Board of Commissioners approved the Webber Park Master Plan on February 15, 2012. The elements of the Webber Park Master Plan that are within the North Mississippi Regional Park expansion area are incorporated into this master plan amendment.

8. Public Awareness: Once the development of the natural filtration swimming pond is complete, the MPRB will issue press releases, public announcements and will hold a grand opening. Once the pool and associated facilities are operational, public information will be shared through the MPRB website, Summer Guide mailer, and other promotions.

9. Accessibility: All facilities outlined in the master plan amendment will be developed in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. Local guidelines, including the Minnesota Department of Transportation's *Bicycle Transportation Planning and Design Guidelines*, will be utilized when developing pedestrian and bicycle trails. Use of the new natural filtration swimming pool will be free to the public.

10. Stewardship Plan: The master plan does not propose acquiring new land for park development; the land being added to the boundary of North Mississippi Regional Park has been used for park purposes since 1908. Therefore, the requirement of identifying a program for managing the park property prior to developing it for recreational purposes is not applicable.

11. Natural Resources: Over time, several changes have been made to Shingle Creek, including damming the creek to create a swimming facility. Currently, Shingle Creek follows through an armored trench on the northeast portion of the park. Webber Pond is a lined pond that requires regular filling to be sustained. The master plan naturalizes Shingle Creek in order to restore its ecological value. Webber Pond will be reduced in size to create the natural filtration swimming pond that will not require chemical treatment, but will use a regeneration wetland and pump system to filter and recirculate the water.

Grant Request: The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is requesting a grant in the amount of \$1,220,551.60 from the North Mississippi Regional Park Fund, which consists of the balance in the fund as of June 1, 2013. This grant will be used to partially finance the construction of the natural filtration swimming pool, bathhouse and site improvements. This grant request is consistent with the Laws of Minnesota 1985, First Special Session, Chap. 15, Sec. 5, Subd. 2 (b), plus Laws of Minnesota 1987 Chapter 384, Article 3, Sec. 45, and Laws of Minnesota 1998, Special Session, Chapter 1, Article 3, Sec. 12.

From 1985 to the present, the Metropolitan Council has authorized 20 grants totaling \$14,331,595 to acquire and develop North Mississippi Regional Park in accordance with the legislation cited above. Of this amount \$13,126,895 is interest earnings on bonds issued by the Council for regional park capital improvements. Details on the grants awarded for the park are shown in **Attachment 3**.

Reimbursement Consideration: The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board will use other sources of funding for the balance of the project costs and is requesting that the Metropolitan Council consider reimbursing the MPRB up to \$1,000,000 from the North Mississippi Regional Park Fund when that amount of interest has been earned on the Council's park bonds.

The request for reimbursement consideration is consistent with Finance Strategy 6 from the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, which states:

Finance Strategy 6: Reimbursement

"...Reimbursement will be considered for development provided the project in question is consistent in timing, scale, type and cost with an approved master plan; that all information required for the development grant is submitted to the Council prior to the regional park implementing agency undertaking the project; and that the Council approves the project..."

This request meets the terms of Finance Strategy 6 for the following reasons:

1. The timing, scale and cost for the construction of the natural filtration swimming pool, bathhouse and site improvements are consistent with the master plan that is concurrently being considered for approval with this reimbursement consideration request.
2. Sufficient information has been submitted in this request regarding what would be financed with a Council grant to meet the requirements of Finance Strategy 6. In this case, that information is contained in the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's letter, shown in **Attachment 2**.
3. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is requesting Metropolitan Council approval for its expenditures on this project prior to undertaking it.

Review by Other Council Divisions

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig 651-602-1119) This project may have potential impacts on multiple Metropolitan Council Interceptors in multiple locations. To assess the potential impacts to our interceptor system, prior to initiating any construction within this project location, preliminary plans should be sent to Scott Dentz, Interceptor Engineering Manager (651-602-4503) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review and comment.

Community Development – Environment and Surface Water Management (Jim Larsen 651-602-1159) – No comments.

Transportation Planning (Ann Braden 651-602-1705) – No comments.

Metro Transit (Michael Mechtenberg 612-349-7793) – No comments.

Conclusions

1. The North Mississippi Regional Park Master Plan Amendment is consistent with the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and other Council policies.
2. The estimated costs to develop the natural filtration swimming pond and associated facilities is \$6,550,675. Additional development is proposed in the master plan, although adequate detail regarding the development and estimated costs were not provided. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board will need to provide more detail and submit cost estimates for these development projects for Metropolitan Council review and approval prior to seeking grants for these projects.
3. The proposed development may have a potential impact on MCES facilities. In order to maintain the integrity of the regional sewer system, preliminary development plans for the projects proposed in the master plan should be submitted to Scott Dentz, Interceptor Engineering Manager (651-602-4503) at Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review and comment.
4. State law requires the Metropolitan Council to spend the interest it earns on park capital improvement bonds for the acquisition and development of North Mississippi Regional Park. The MPRB request for a grant in the amount of \$1,220,551.60 is consistent with State law and represents the available balance in the North Mississippi Regional Park Fund account as of June 1, 2013.
5. The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that requests for reimbursement consideration are consistent with the terms of Finance Strategy 6. This review concludes that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's request for reimbursement consideration of up to \$1,000,000 for construction of a natural filtration swimming pond and associated facilities at North Mississippi Regional Park is consistent with the terms of Finance Strategy 6. The timing of when the MPRB is reimbursed the \$1,000,000 is dependent on when that amount of interest is earned on the Council's park bonds.

Attachment 1: Minnesota State Legislature—North Mississippi Regional Park Boundary Amendment

Laws of Minnesota 2013, Chapter 114, Article 4

Sec. 99. NORTH MISSISSIPPI REGIONAL PARK.

(a) The boundaries of the North Mississippi Regional Park are extended to include the approximately 20.82 acres of land adjacent to the existing park known as Webber Park and that part of Shingle Creek that flows through Webber Park and continues through North Mississippi Regional Park into the Mississippi River.

(b) Funds appropriated for North Mississippi Regional Park may be expended to provide for visitor amenities, including construction of a natural filtration swimming pool and a building for park users.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective the day after the governing body of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and its chief clerical officer timely complete their compliance with Minnesota Statutes, section 645.021, subdivisions 2 and 3.

Attachment 2: Request Letter from Jennifer Ringold, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board



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June 21, 2013

Mr. Arne Stefferud
Metropolitan Council
390 North Robert St.
St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: North Mississippi Regional Park – Natural Filtration Swimming Pool, Bathhouse and Site Improvement Reimbursement Grant Request

Dear Arne:

Pending approval of the boundary amendment to North Mississippi Regional Park master plan, I request a grant of \$1,220,551.60 using interest earnings from the North Mississippi Regional Park Fund. That Fund is comprised of interest earnings the Metropolitan Council earns on its park fund accounts, which by law must be used for the acquisition and betterment of North Mississippi Regional Park (Laws of Minnesota 1985, First Special Session, Chap. 15, Sec. 5, Subd. 2 (b), plus Laws of Minnesota 1987 Chapter 384, Article 3, Sec. 45, and Laws of Minnesota 1998, Special Session, Chapter 1, Article 3, Sec. 12). The funds would partially finance the construction of a natural filtration swimming pool, bathhouse and site improvements as proposed in the master plan amendment to the North Mississippi Regional Park submitted concurrently with this grant request. The requested grant time period is August 1, 2013 through December 31, 2016.

The natural filtration swimming pool will include shallow and deep water sections, including a lap swimming area. The pool will use a biological, plant-based filtration system. The bathhouse will provide space for lifeguards, and restrooms, as well as a meeting/shelter area. The related site improvements are lighting, pathways, sidewalks, landscaping and other site amenities within the project area.

The natural filtration swimming pond and bathhouse is projected to cost \$6,550,675. \$4 million of this cost is provided by existing Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) sources - Minneapolis Net Debt Bonds (\$2,500,000), Infrastructure Acceleration Funds (\$500,000), and MPRB Capital Levy (\$1,000,000). The MPRB will be seeking Hennepin County Youth Sports Grant for \$325,000 to support the project. The MPRB will apply the \$1,220,551.60 grant towards the project and requests reimbursement consideration of up to \$1 million in future North Mississippi Regional Park Fund interest earnings to cover the balance of the project.

The Park Board recognizes that the timing of when those interest earnings are available cannot be accurately forecasted. Consequently the Park Board acknowledges that it may have to use other funding sources to

meet cash flow needs of this project, and would receive grant(s) from the Metropolitan Council for this project when interest earnings are available.

Should you need additional grant information please feel free to contact me at 612-230-6464.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennifer B. Ringold". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Jennifer B. Ringold
Director of Strategic Planning

Attachment 3: List of Grants awarded to North Mississippi Regional Park as of December 2009

Grant No.	Grant Amount	Grant Revenue Source		Grant Description
		State bonds & LCCMR funds	Council grant interest earnings	
SG-87-143	\$ 4,840,755	\$ 500,000	\$ 4,340,755	Land acquisition on west bank of river in Minneapolis
AG-88-32	\$ 200,000		\$ 200,000	Land acquisition on east bank of river north of Camden Bridge
AG-88-2	\$ 700,000		\$ 700,000	Land acquisition on west bank of river in Brooklyn Center
AG-92-7	\$ 125,000		\$ 125,000	Develop trail from northern edge of park on east bank of river south to intersection of East River Road and 37th Ave. E. in Fridley
AG-93-13	\$ 317,500		\$ 317,500	To acquire land in Brooklyn Center portion of the park
SG-94-36	\$ 138,334		\$ 138,334	Match to \$160,000 ISTE A grant for trail development from intersection of East River Road and 37th Ave. E. south to the Camden bridge and south of the bridge to link with existing MPRB trails along St. Anthony Parkway.
AG-94-1	\$ 100,000		\$ 100,000	Repair existing access road, connect existing trails with boat launch area, develop picnic area and develop 2,000 feet of hike/bike paths north of Camden bridge.
SG-94-66	\$ 553,976		\$ 553,976	Trail development between 53rd Ave. and Camden bridge, park entrance at 49th Ave., a recreational node between 47th Ave. and 51st Ave., upgrade and improve boat launch south of Camden bridge.
SG-94-77	\$ 180,181		\$ 180,181	Acquire final seven parcels in Brooklyn Center
SG-99-14	\$ 50,000		\$ 50,000	Cover extra costs required by MN DOT for spending a \$300,000 State of MN appropriation and \$291,000 ISTE A grant for trail development in Brooklyn Center portion of park.
SG-97-262	\$ 2,750,000		\$ 2,750,000	Creative play/tot lot, wading pool, trails, picnic shelter, restrooms, park roads and parking area plus related utilities and landscaping between 47th Ave. and 51st Ave.
SG-99-127	\$ 882,453		\$ 882,453	Partial financing for visitor interpretive/historic center

Grant No.	Grant Amount	Grant Revenue Source		Grant Description
		State bonds & LCCMR funds	Council grant interest earnings	
SG-02-147	\$ 1,228,038	\$ 342,000	\$ 886,038	Finance remainder of visitor interpretive/historic center
SG-03-090	\$ 528,000	\$ 358,000	\$ 170,000	Develop bike and pedestrian trail system between park entrance near Lyndale Avenue extending westerly to Humboldt Ave. along 49th Ave. North.
SG-04-035	\$ 4,700	\$ 7,000		Ecological restoration match to Env. Trust Fund financed grant from DNR. (Includes Env. Trust Fund and Metro Council interest earning grants)
SG-05-21	\$ 150,000		\$ 150,000	Partial reimbursement to Hennepin County for developing trails along 49 th Avenue North.
SG-2006-149	\$ 154,000		\$ 154,000	Complete reimbursement to Hennepin County for trails along 49 th Avenue (\$72,000) and begin parking and trail improvements between 49 th and 51 st Avenues (\$82,000)
SG-2007-98	\$ 348,825		\$ 348,825	Continue parking and trail improvements between 49 th and 51 st Avenues, and extend separated bike path that currently ends in the picnic shelter area and add open air picnic shelters.
SG-2008-049	\$ 654,298	\$ -	\$ 654,298	Continue project described in grant SG-2007-98 above, plus if funds permit construct restroom and picnic facilities at the boat launch area located at 42 nd Ave./Camden Bridge.
SG-2009-074	\$ 425,535		\$ 425,535	\$225,535 to reimburse Park Board for local funding of trail, picnic and parking area improvements, 49th Ave. to 53rd Ave N., and \$200,000 to finance design/engineering studies and construction for parking, pedestrian/bicycle facilities and additional recreation amenities in 47th Ave. N. area of park
Total approved as of Dec. 9 2009 (most recent action)	\$ 14,331,595	\$1,207,000	\$ 13,126,895	

