

INTRODUCTION

MRCCA plans must provide for and encourage creation, connection, and maintenance of open space and recreation facilities and identify potential public access points and trail locations. (This plan element is a combination of two plan elements, part 6106.0070, Subp. 4.A .(7) and part of (8).)

Open space and recreational facilities, such as parks, trails, scenic overlooks, natural areas, islands, and wildlife areas add to the quality of a community and increase opportunities for the public to access the river.

MINIMUM MRCCA PLAN REQUIREMENTS

1. Map and Describe

- Map and describe all existing and proposed future open space (both public and potential private open space where future land development is anticipated) and recreational facilities, including those providing public access to the river. This element can be met by including open space and recreational facilities on the relevant regional and local park and trail maps required as part of the Parks & Trails Plan element. The MRCCA boundary must be shown on park and trail maps in order to identify existing and planned facilities in the MRCCA.

2. Policies

A. Required Policies

These can be used verbatim or customized as appropriate:

- Encourage creation, connection, and maintenance of open space, recreational facilities, including public access to the river.
- Identify and encourage connection of CA-SR district land to existing and planned parks and trails, for LGUs with developable land in CA-SR districts. (Not applicable in communities with no CA-SR district.)
- Encourage that land dedication requirements be used to acquire land suitable for public river access.

B. Examples

The following example policies are from existing MRCCA plans, and are meant to provide ideas for developing policies to create and maintain open space and recreational facilities (not all requirements identified above have a corresponding example):

General

- Provide public open space, trails and park facilities with a river orientation (Hastings)
- Provide trail links to regional trail systems and trails maintained by adjacent municipalities (Inver Grove Heights)
- Existing islands within the Corridor shall be preserved and managed as open space. (Dayton)
- The City shall work to expand and connect parks along the Mississippi riverfront. (Hastings)
- Connections between the terrace neighborhoods and the river may be improved by adding a limited number of pedestrian routes (stairs, ramps, walkways) between the bluff elevations and the river flats. (St Paul)
- Provide uninterrupted vegetated shorelines along the Mississippi and its tributary streams and ravines (such as Rice Creek, Springbrook, Stonybrook Creek and Oak Glen Creek) to...provide connections to nearby natural areas (such as Springbrook Nature Center). (Fridley)

Subdivision/development

- Require open space provisions and encourage public spaces (such as overlooks, plazas, historic landscapes, or interpretive facilities) where possible in new development or redevelopment projects in the corridor. (Fridley)
- The city will pursue easements or public acquisition for future river trail connections in new and existing developments in the river corridor. The city will pursue opportunities as appropriate to acquire future abandoned railroad right-of-ways and appropriate tax-forfeited parcels for acquisition and possible river trail development. (St Paul)
- Require park dedication that is generated within the corridor to consist of land within the corridor or if cash

is given in lieu of land, the cash should be used towards improving open space, riverfront access, storm water drainage areas or other public service within the River Corridor. (Fridley).

3. Implementation Actions

A. Required Implementation Actions

These can be used verbatim or customized as appropriate:

- Include facilities in the capital improvement program for parks and open space facilities (if relevant).
- Develop a system for reviewing, tracking, and monitoring open space required as part of the subdivision process.

B. Examples

None available from existing plans

MRCCA ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS

Following is a summary of the types of MRCCA ordinance requirements that local governments must adopt. Understanding these requirements will help guide development of the MRCCA plan for effective ordinance administration.

General Development Standards for Public Facilities

1. Facilities must be designed and constructed to:
 - a. Minimize visibility of the facility
 - b. Comply with structure and bluff setback, height, and lot area standards, unless subject to applicable exceptions.
 - c. Be consistent with the vegetation management, land alteration, and stormwater standards
 - d. Avoid Primary Conservation Areas
 - e. Minimize disturbance of spawning and nesting times
2. In conducting facility right-of-way maintenance
 - a. Natural vegetation must be maintained to the extent feasible
 - b. When natural vegetation is removed, it must be replaced with native plants
 - c. Chemical control of vegetation must be avoided.
3. Specific standards for recreational facilities:
 - a. Buildings and parking must comply with setback standards, unless subject to applicable exceptions.
 - b. Hard-surface trails are not allowed on the face of bluffs with slopes exceeding 30%.
 - c. Trails, paths and viewing areas must minimize
 - i. Impacts to Public River Corridor Views (PRCVs)
 - ii. Disturbance to and fragmentation of Primary Conservation Areas (PCAs).

Subdivision

1. The CA-SR district requires a 10% set aside only if the parcel contains native plant communities OR provides feasible connections to a regional park or trail system.
2. Land dedicated for public access or public facilities may be counted towards the open space set aside requirement.
3. Protected open space must connect with natural and recreational areas, where present on adjacent parcels, to form an interconnected network.

MORE INFORMATION

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HANDBOOK

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