

Minutes

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Meeting date: November 7, 2024

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

Members present:

Chair, Tony Yarusso,
at large

Monica Dillenburg, District A

Robert Moeller, District B

Tess Bouska, District C

David Yakes, District D

Chris Suerig, District E

Cecily Harris, District F

Anthony Taylor, District G

Amanda Duerr, District H

Susan Vento, Council Liaison

= present, E = excused

Call to order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Yarusso called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:02pm.

Agenda approved

Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. Agenda approved.

Approval of minutes

It was moved by Dillenburg, seconded by Yakes to approve the minutes of October 3, 2024, regular meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

Public invitation

None.

Business

2024-306: Louisville-Merriam Junction Regional Trail Long-Range Plan, Scott County

Kevin Phan, for Tracey Kinney, gave a presentation on the Louisville-Merriam Junction Regional Trail long-range plan, as outlined in the materials provided.

Yakes asked about public engagement on reduced trail costs. Phan discussed the general comments and themes received. Allisa Olson, Scott County confirmed and expanded on this information.

Moeller asked about the .20-mile Minnesota River Bluffs Extension Regional Trail and connection, and asked, is there a bridge across the Minnesota River to Carver County? Olson stated that no, it is predominantly a trail within the road right of way.

Moeller asked about the name 'Merriam'. Patti Freeman, Scott County provided some history on the the name Merriam, as an early postmaster in Scott County.

It was moved by Moeller, seconded by Yakes, that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Louisville-Merriam Junction Regional Trail Long-Range Plan (future Merriam Junction Regional Trail).
2. Approve the 0.20-mile trail extension of the Minnesota River Bluffs Extension and Scott

County Connection Regional Trail (future Merriam Junction Regional Trail) amending the long-range plan to provide a seamless connection to the Louisville-Merriam Junction Regional Trail.

3. Require Scott County, prior to initiating any construction, to send preliminary plans to the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager.
4. Advise the County to consider implementing the recommendations for the Met Council's wastewater, water, and the regional bicycle transportation network in the Advisory Comments section of the business item.

Motion carried.

2024-307: Shallow Waters Regional Trail Long-Range Plan, Scott County

Kevin Phan gave a presentation on the Shallow Waters Regional Trail long-range plan, as outlined in the materials provided.

Dillenburg asked how the trail use, particularly motorized trail use, will be regulated? Olson noted that motorized use is not allowed and stated that they've not had any trouble with that issue. If needed, local police or county law enforcement would intervene.

Dillenburg suggested adding kilometers (metric system measurement) along with mileage on the trail maps throughout the corridor.

Yakes asked whether there would be opportunities for loop trails off this trail. Olson noted that the trail travels through 3 regional parks, and these intersections offer looping trails within the parks.

It was moved by Dillenburg, seconded by Yakes, that the Metropolitan Council approve the Shallow Waters Regional Trail Long-Range Plan.

Chair Yarusso asked about comments regarding hunting in close proximity to the trail. Olson noted that there are state laws that require hunting be done only within a specified distance from any trails.

Motion carried.

2024-308: Elm Creek Park Reserve, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award (Lasher), Three Rivers Park District

Jessica Lee gave a presentation on the Elm Creek Park Reserve Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award for Three Rivers Park District as outlined in the materials provided.

Chair Yarusso asked about future plans for this property. Ann Recine, Three Rivers Park District stated that the acquisition will be primarily for land protection/conservation and to protect the creek and its shoreline.

It was moved by Dillenburg, seconded by Yakes, that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$420,000 from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Three Rivers Park District to acquire a 2.8-acre parcel located at 12651 Elm Creek Crossing in Champlin, MN, for the Elm Creek Park Reserve.
2. Authorize the Executive Director of Community Development to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.

Motion carried.

2024-221: Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award (CCRRA), Carver County

Jessica Lee gave a presentation on the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award for Carver County as outlined in the materials provided.

Yakes asked about cross-traffic along the trails in the built-up areas. Marty Walsh, Carver County,

described the area within the City of Chaska and noted that this trail will make this route much safer, as traffic speeds in part of this corridor exceed 55-mph. Additionally, the intersection with County Road 41 will be much safer, with a separated grade crossing.

It was moved by Moeller, seconded by Suerig, that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$1,611,000 from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Carver County to acquire in easement approximately 5.2 acres of a former Carver County Regional Railroad Authority corridor located in Chaska, MN, for the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail.
2. Authorize the Executive Director of Community Development to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council

Moeller noted this trail will enhance the use of the overall trail and bring folks to the businesses in downtown Chaska.

Motion carried.

2024-209: Diamond Lake Regional Trail, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award (Boggs), Three Rivers Park District

Lee gave a presentation on the Diamond Lake Regional Trail, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award for Three Rivers Park District as outlined in the materials provided.

It was moved by Yakes, seconded by Dillenburg, that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$525,000 from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Three Rivers Park District to acquire a 23.2-acre parcel located at 17700 117th Ave N in Dayton, MN, for the Diamond Lake Regional Trail.
2. Authorize the Executive Director of Community Development to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.

Motion carried.

2024-310: West Mississippi River Regional Trail, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award (Yancy), Three Rivers Park District

Lee gave a presentation on the West Mississippi River Regional Trail Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award for Three Rivers Park District as outlined in the materials provided.

Yakes asked if this is within a flood zone? Racine confirmed and pointed out parcels within the flood zone and noted that the appraiser has taken this information into account.

Chair Yarusso asked for further clarification on the auction of the house. Lee stated it is sale price is estimated, and that Three Rivers will very likely only receive a percentage of the desired amount. They are carefully tracking these costs and noted that any additional funds received will be used as stewardship for this property, and anything above the amount needed will be put back into the regional park system. Mullin noted this is a complex acquisition and expressed appreciation for Three Rivers efforts to explore re-using the house as affordable housing.

It was moved by Moeller, seconded by Dillenburg, that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve a grant of up to \$1,280,000 from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund to Three Rivers Park District to acquire four parcels totaling 6.9 acres located at 15520 Lawndale Lane North in Dayton, MN, for the West Mississippi River Regional Trail.
2. Authorize the Executive Director of Community Development to execute the grant agreement and restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.
3. Require that Three Rivers Park District resolve access issues with the property owner before acquiring the property.
4. Require that if Three Rivers Park District is able to sell the newer home at a public auction,



the proceeds must first be used to cover stewardship costs that exceed their required match. Any remaining proceeds must be used for the betterment of Three Rivers Park District's share of the Regional Parks and Trails System.

Motion carried.

Information

Celebrating 50 Years of the Regional Parks and Trails System

Mullin gave a presentation regarding the celebration of 50 years of the Regional Parks and Trails system as outlined in the presentation provided.

Imagine 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan: Public Comment Summary and Next Steps

Kelly and Phan gave a presentation on *Imagine 2050* Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan and Public Comment Summary and discussed the next steps as outlined in the materials provided.

Duerr asked if the public comments are available to see. Mullin stated the final Council recommendation will include a summary report that includes all public comments as well as responses.

Vento asked, do we have a date the Council will receive this? Lisa Barajas, Executive Director Community Development, discussed the timeline of when it will be going to the Council.

Vento suggested inviting Deputy Superintendent Tucker Blythe from the National Park Service to one of our future meetings. She believes a strong relationship with the National Park Service would be good for the Regional System, as the National Park relies on so many regional parks for its existence. She also discussed river protection on the Mississippi River as a critical issue.

Chair Yarusso discussed cultural landscape classification and asked whether there are any similar classifications in other outdoor recreation systems. Mullin stated that there were other similar classifications in other places, but that this one is new and unique for us.

Moeller asked if commissioners could get the actual Policy Plan and Planning Handbook documents a couple of weeks prior to having to make a recommendation. Mullin stated staff can do that and provide hard copies if needed.

Chair Yarusso asked about bridging facilities and whether they are permanent fixtures within a park or temporary and how the rules would apply. Mullin stated that when bridging facilities were discussed several years ago, this topic came up. The current rules state bridging facilities may be stand-alone facilities or they may be nested in an existing unit of the regional parks system. The current proposal says that if the bridging facility is a stand alone facility or nested within an existing unit, then it may be counted as part of the annual use estimate. Chair Yarusso feels it is important to have all the implementing agencies agree with this and if there is conflict, it will need to be addressed. Mullin stated that several of the agencies submitted comments in support of this recommendation.

Chair Yarusso discussed funding themes and ways we can request funding increases, including who does it and how is it done. Duerr discussed the process at the Legislature. Mullin noted that the Council is part of the Governor's Cabinet, and as such, we need to follow his budget recommendations. Individual commission members may express their hopes and position, as they have more autonomy.

Vento discussed the tie among Republicans and Democrats at the legislature within the House, and noted that unified 'ask' from the ten agencies is important and powerful.

Barajas noted there is a lot of coordination with the implementing agencies once the Governor's budget is announced, prior to going before the legislature.

Reports

Chair

Chair Yarusso stated that the Constitutional Amendment to renew the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) did pass. He also noted that appointments for some of our Commissioner Members will need to be renewed in January. He asked that Commissioners let staff know of their intent to reapply.

Committee Members

Duerr noted there will be a ribbon cutting for the Veteran's Memorial Trail in Dakota County.

Council Liaison

Vento stated that the fishing pier amendment for matching dollars was not approved by the full Council due to budget constraints. This might be something to plan for in the future.

Staff

Mullin stated he is meeting with the implementing agencies later this month to discuss the coming 2025 legislative session. He also stated staff are working hard on public comment review with the policy plan. More to come in December.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting of November 7, 2024.

Approved this 5th day of December 2024.

Council contact:

Sandi Dingle, Recording Secretary
Sandi.Dingle@metc.state.mn.us
651-602-1312

