

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

Tuesday, June 3, 2014

Committee Members Present:

Dean Johnston, Rick Theisen, Tony Yarusso, William Weber, Barbara Schmidt, Robert Moeller, Sarah Hietpas, Anthony Taylor, Wendy Wulff, Council Liaison

Committee Members Absent: Carrie Wasley

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Johnston called the special meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 3, 2014.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Chair Johnston noted that there was an addendum provided for item #7. It was moved by Weber, seconded by Hietpas to approve the agenda of the June 3, 2014 special meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Weber, seconded by Hietpas to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2014 special meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. **Motion carried.**

PUBLIC INVITATION

Invitation to interested person(s) to address the Commission on matters not on the agenda.

None.

BUSINESS

Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Request for Intercity Regional Trail, One Easement, Three Rivers Park District – Tori Dupre, Senior Planner Parks

Dupre presented the staff report regarding a grant request for Intercity Regional Trail as outlined in the materials provided.

Weber made the motion and it was seconded by Theisen to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Authorize a grant of up to \$18,911 from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account to Three Rivers Park District to finance up to 75% of the costs to acquire a permanent public trailway easement for the Intercity Regional Trail (Attachment 2), financed as follows:
 - \$11,347 from the FY2014 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation, and
 - \$7,564 from Metropolitan Council bonds

Three Rivers Park District will match the grant with up to \$6,303, its 25% share of the total acquisition cost.

2. Authorize the Community Development Director to sign the grant agreement and accompanying documents including the restrictive covenant.

Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Master Plan Amendment to Add Land to Crow-Hassan Park Reserve and Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant Request to Acquire That Land, Three Rivers Park District – Tori Dupre, Senior Planner Parks

Dupre presented the staff report regarding a master plan amendment and grant request for Crow-Hassan Park Reserve as outlined in the materials provided.

Hietpas asked if there's a possibility that the County could change their mind and want to realign the County Road. Dupre stated that plan was abandoned.

Kelly Grissman, Hennepin County stated that she has spoken to the County and they abandoned the project and stated that there are no immediate plans. She noted that they've informed the County of the policy that this parkland will be protected going forward.

Taylor asked about the development of this parcel. Grissman discussed plans to realign the trail and noted it will provide more of a buffer to the equestrian trail as well.

Theisen made the motion and it was seconded by Weber to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve an amendment to the Crow-Hassan Park Reserve Master Plan to change the park reserve boundary to add the property at 27280 Tucker Road.
2. Authorize a grant of up to \$505,560 from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account to Three Rivers Park District to finance up to 75% of the costs to acquire a 38.56-acre parcel at 27280 Tucker Road for Crow-Hassan Park Reserve (Attachment 2), financed as follows:
 - \$111,369 from the FY2014 Parks and Trails Legacy Fund appropriation, and
 - \$394,191 from Metropolitan Council bonds

Three Rivers Park District will match the grant with up to \$168,520, its 25% share of the total acquisition cost.

3. Authorize the Community Development Director to sign the grant agreement and accompanying documents including the restrictive covenant.

Yarusso made a motion to amend the motion and separate staff's recommendations - voting on number 1 first and then subsequently on numbers 2 and 3 together. Schmidt seconded.

Johnston called for a vote on the amended motion. **The motion carried.**

Johnston called for a vote on staff's number 1 recommendation. **The motion carried.**

Johnston called for a vote on staff's number 2 and 3 recommendations. **The motion carried.**

Land Exchange of 0.63 acres and Associated Master Plan Boundary Amendment and Restrictive Covenant Changes for Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve, Scott County - Arne Stefferud, Manager

Stefferud presented the staff report regarding the land exchange for Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve as outlined in the materials provided.

Schmidt commented that this will be a win/win for everyone.

Johnston called for a motion and asked that the recommendations be separated.

Moeller made the motion and it was seconded by Schmidt to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

Approve releasing the restrictive covenant on 0.63 acres of land in Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve needed for a round-about intersection of 154th Street and Murphy Lake Blvd. in exchange for 0.63 acres provided by the City of Savage adjacent to the Park Reserve as depicted in Figures 1 and 2.

Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Moeller made the motion and it was seconded by Schmidt to recommend that the Metropolitan Council: Approve a master plan boundary amendment to Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve that deletes the 0.63 acres needed for the round-about intersection and adds 0.63 acres provided by the City of Savage as depicted on Figure 1.

Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan discussion on Amending Definition and Description of Regional Parks System's Classification of Special Recreation Feature - Raintry Salk, Senior Parks Researcher and Jan Youngquist, Planning Analyst

Salk presented the staff report as outlined in the materials provided.

Schmidt stated that the description of bridging facilities should be more specific to natural resources. Salk noted that those components are already denoted in other parts of the policy plan.

Schmidt reiterated that a few descriptive words would make it more clear to emphasize they are regional and natural resource based. Salk stated that description describes activities and not a place.

Johnston suggested an amendment to recommend the staff action proposed.

Theisen asked about the items being stricken. Youngquist explained each and gave examples where they do not fit into the natural resource base requirement base.

Moeller spoke in support of Schmidt's comments.

Hietpas agreed with staff in that requirements of a Special Recreation Feature are defined in the Regional Parks Policy Plan.

Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District spoke in favor of gun clubs noting that hunting activities are something that they have looked at offering in the way of a special recreation feature.

Steve Sullivan, Dakota County Parks discussed the idea of 'shooting ranges' rather than 'gun clubs'. He feels this could possibly be an opportunity for a bridging facility. He also spoke in favor of Schmidt's recommendation to add language to further emphasize what a bridging facility is.

Mark Themig, Scott County stated he supported the inclusion of gun clubs to support hunting/trap shooting. He feels there is a role for regional parks to support gun clubs through shooting activities.

Wulff stated that the gun club located in the Dakota County Wildlife Management Area has a five year waiting list, so she feels this would be a well attended activity if offered.

Weber suggested calling it a hunter training and education facility.

Taylor asked if there is any data to support the popularity of this activity.

Themig noted that all 7 schools in Scott County's Districts have added trap shooting and discussed an article in the Star Tribune regarding the growth of this sport.

Moeller discussed encouraging people to engage in outdoor activities and felt this was a good idea.

Theisen discussed high school competition done at Baker Golf Course. Moeller noted that Baker Golf Course was not a part of the Regional Park System. Stefferud discussed golf courses that are enterprise facilities that fund themselves, however in the winter time, their facilities are often used as warming houses for ski activities and regional dollars have been used to fund these facilities.

Yarusso made the motion and it was seconded by Weber to recommend that the Metropolitan Council revise language related to special recreation features in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan update. The description of a special recreation feature in the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan on page 3-61 should be revised in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan as follows: "area that preserves, maintains and provides specialized or single-purpose recreational activities such as ~~golf course~~, nature center,

marina, zoo, conservatory, arboretum, display gardens, arena, ~~gun club~~, downhill ski area, and sites of historic or archeological significance and bridging facilities. Bridging facilities are viewed as facilities that are intended to assist with the introduction into a specialized or single-purpose recreational activity in an effort to enhance participation in outdoor recreation”.

Johnston discussed Lake Elmo’s gun club and safety issues as well as mining the shooting range to remove contaminants. He shared his concern with adding this type of usage to the Regional Park System.

Taylor stated that other than trap shooting, he feels other areas seem problematic.

Wulff spoke in favor and discussed gun safety programs required for people who want to get licensed.

Moeller stated he would like to make a motion to amend the recommended action to include the words ‘natural resource based’ however did not want to wordsmith the exact language. Salk suggested that nowhere in our statutory language does it dictate that the activity that happens be solely nature based. It is there to provide for the outdoor recreational needs of the region. She cautioned that we need to be very careful where we place that ‘natural resource based’ verbiage. She noted that the park system is supposed to be nature based not necessarily the activities that occur.

Moeller stated he would ask staff to incorporate the essence of the nature based/ natural resource based orientation of the Special Recreation Feature. He stated that he wanted to make sure that the regional park systems stands for a more nature based orientation.

Theisen stated he would vote against this type of a change. He favors staff’s original recommendation.

Youngquist reviewed language on page 218 of the policy plan where there is specific language of the strategy of the Special Recreation Feature. She recommended that the language suggested be included as part of the strategies in the body of the policy plan. She stated that staff can add another bullet point under the requirements of the Special Recreation Feature. Moeller stated that his amendment would incorporate all of the things that Youngquist suggested.

Johnston asked for exact language to clarify Moeller’s amendment to the motion. Youngquist proposed the following: Direct staff to add additional language to the Siting and Acquisition Strategy 3 for definition of Special Recreation Feature to include emphasis on natural resources based facilities. Moeller asked that his amendment be written as outlined by Jan. It was seconded by Hietpas.

Johnston called for a vote on the amendment to the motion. **The motion carried**, with Theisen voting nay.

Johnston called for a vote on the original motion, as amended. Weber made a motion to amend this motion and strike ‘Gun Club’ and replace it with ‘Hunter Training Education Facility’. Yarusso seconded the amended motion. Johnston called for a vote of the second amendment to the original motion. **The motion carried**, with Theisen and Taylor voting nay.

Johnston called for a vote of the original motion inclusive of the two amendments. **The motion carried.**

Master Plan Requirements Discussion for 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan - Jan Youngquist, Planning Analyst and Raintry Salk, Senior Parks Researcher

Salk presented the staff report regarding master plan requirements as outlined in the materials provided.

Wulff clarified whether ‘conflicts in the master plan process’ includes people who do not want to be within a park boundary. She felt it would be helpful to know this.

Youngquist stated that eminent domain has always been an option and noted that the implementing agencies have always done their best to avoid it. She also noted comments from residents must be provided, so they would be a part of the record.

Wulff shared concern with residents who want to be removed from a park boundary as in the instance of a resident from Washington County that addressed this Commission not long ago.

John Elholm, Washington County discussed the resident that Wulff referred to.

Yarusso stated he sees the master plan as a very long range plan that would go beyond current land ownership.

Elholm noted that the Big Marine Master Plan was done back in 1974 and was a vision for the future. He discussed the waiting game that goes along with fully developing a regional park. The master plans identify ideal properties and they wait for willing sellers.

Moeller agreed and stated that the master plans need to identify desires.

Yarusso made the motion and it was seconded by Weber to recommend that the Metropolitan Council revise language related to regional park and trail master plans in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan as shown in Attachment A.

Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

System Protection Requirements for the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan - Jan Youngquist, Planning Analyst and Raintry Salk, Senior Parks Researcher

Youngquist presented the staff report regarding system protection requirements as outlined in the materials provided.

Johnston commented on his previous experience with restrictive covenants with the MN Land Trust and asked if land exchanges have ever been challenged. Youngquist stated not to her knowledge.

Schmidt asked if there are any implications for interim use that are non-conforming. Youngquist stated there is specific language in the Regional Parks Policy Plan that acknowledges some non-conforming uses that were there prior to them being brought in the regional park system.

Hietpas made the motion and it was seconded by Yarusso to recommend that the Metropolitan Council revise language related to system protection in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan as shown in Attachment A (1).

Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Break

Moeller made the motion and it was seconded by Yarusso to recommend that the Commission break for approximately 25 minutes. At 5:40 p.m.

Johnston called for a vote. **The motion carried.**

Call to Order

Johnston called the meeting of the June 3, 2014 Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission back to order at 6:15 p.m.

Proposed System Plan Revisions for 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan - Jan Youngquist, Planning Analyst and Raintry Salk, Senior Parks Researcher

Youngquist presented on the staff report regarding the proposed system plan revisions for the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan as outlined in the materials provided. She reviewed each of the following and solicited comments after each.

Youngquist discussed a regional park study area in Dakota County that would have combined Thompson County Park in West St. Paul with Kaposia Park and Kaposia Landing in South St. Paul. Results showed that only 16.7% of visits were non-local and the benchmark was set for 40% in order for it to qualify as regional distribution of visitation. Wulff noted that she felt 40% non-local visits

seemed to be a reasonable benchmark. Staff recommended removing this regional park study area from the policy plan.

Youngquist next discussed system addition requests. She stated that Parks and Natural Resource Staff met with Three Rivers Park District (3RPD) and also Chair Johnston on June 2 regarding some of the requests that came from 3RPD and the issues surrounding them. Some of the regional trail search corridors that were not originally recommended by Council staff for inclusion in the Regional Parks System as part of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan were revisited. She referred to the Proposed Amended Action that was distributed at today's meeting. She discussed the need to look at trail additions from a comprehensive system wide approach and not agency by agency.

Youngquist began with the Regional Destination trail requests and outlined the criteria for these.

Youngquist discussed West Mississippi River (page 26 of the staff report).

Youngquist discussed Lake Independence Extension (page 27 of the staff report). Moeller stated he supports this extension and asked that 3RPD also look at connecting this trail to Carver County Trail in a long range plan. Youngquist stated staff could speak with 3RPD to look at the feasibility of this.

Youngquist discussed North South 1 (Page 29 of the staff report). Yarusso asked what the east/west distance is. Youngquist stated it is approximately 4.5 miles.

Youngquist discussed Minnetrista Extension (Page 30 of the staff report).

Youngquist discussed CP Rail Extension (Page 31 of the staff report). Weber stated he doesn't feel it will be a commuter rail line in the future – he feels it would be a highly used trail.

Youngquist discussed North South 1 (Page 29 of the staff report).

Youngquist next discussed linking trail requests and the criteria for these.

Youngquist discussed North South 2 (Page 35 of the staff report). She noted how a portion requested would be a duplicative regional trail and therefore should be excluded. She then discussed the portion staff recommends be incorporated into the North South 1 request.

Youngquist discussed Lake Sarah Extension (Page 38 of the staff report). Youngquist noted a portion that would be excluded due to duplicative area near Basset Creek Regional Trail.

Youngquist discussed Silver Lake Connection (Page 34 of the staff report). Youngquist stated staff will need to have conversations with all the agencies that fall under the jurisdiction of this trail. At this point, staff is not recommending including this request at this time.

Yarusso discussed other possible trails being discussed in this area and noted this is why convening all agencies involved is so important.

Youngquist discussed East-West 1 (Page 37 of the staff report). Youngquist stated this is mostly linking to other trails and not linking the regional park units. Staff felt it would be more appropriate as part of the Bike Transitway in the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) and therefore are not recommending it at this time.

Yarusso suggested also looking at bicycle looping trails as recreation in and of themselves.

Wulff discussed the bike plan in the TPP and noted if this portion was included it would be financed with park dollars.

Weber discussed the equity angle. Youngquist discussed outreach with communities of color and stated that trails were not on their radar. Salk added that in the focus groups held there was a lack of trail usage found entirely.

Youngquist discussed Progressive Rail Extension (Page 39 of the staff report). This addition is not being recommended. Staff see it as more of a local trail and not regional.

Youngquist discussed North South 3 and County Road 61 in Carver County (Page 2 of the Proposed Amended Action). Youngquist noted a portion of the North-South 3 that would be excluded due to its duplicity to an existing trail.

Weber discussed greater population density in the urban areas and spoke in favor of allowing duplicity in some cases (like this) where there is heavy usage. Youngquist discussed the closeness in some areas is due to trails being built on existing rail lines.

Wulff doesn't agree with duplicity as there are areas in the regional without any trails.

Youngquist reviewed the Proposed Amended Action provided at the meeting.

Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers Park District stated he feels it is unfortunate that this process is moving so quickly. He stated that we need a Regional Trail System Map. He stressed the importance of a bike trail transportation network and folks need to get together in the planning efforts.

Vlaming discussed the Dakota Rail Regional Trail Extension and noted it would be the only contiguous paved east/west regional trail. He asked the group to consider the section being dropped due to duplicity where the Dakota Trail would be paved vs. a limestone trail.

Moeller asked about the north/south trail linkage into Carver County he spoke of earlier. Vlaming responded that they will take a look at it with his Board. Youngquist stated she looked at this area in Shorewood's Comprehensive Plan and noted that they do have a trail planned for there. She noted there is an opportunity there. She discussed the intent of looking at trails regionally with all the agencies.

Johnston asked what would be a consequence of waiting on this piece. Vlaming stated it would be a shame and would mean a delay.

Moeller noted that this is a popular trail and feels it should be included. Weber supports it because it would be paved. He stated that limestone trails do not see as much usage.

Kelly Grissman gave some background and history of planning and public engagement that has been done to date. Some of what they've heard people want is trails close to home, separated from the road. She stated their plan is visionary but they should not be penalized for this. They are trying to create communities that are desirable, walkable and great places to live work and play. She discussed local trails and their desire to work off of these trails – also talked about their design standards. She noted that regional trail usage has doubled in the past 5 years and feels this trend will continue. It may seem inequitable on the map but 3RPD should not be penalized for their forward thinking but should instead be a model for other agencies.

Hietpas agreed but doesn't feel 3RPD has been penalized. She pointed out Washington County as an example where there are a lot of search areas but not a lot of trails developed. Grissman stated that Washington County didn't propose any additional trails.

Weber doesn't feel 3RPD has proposed too much. He felt other agencies may be haven't proposed enough.

Wulff noted that they may not have the money to develop the master plans they currently have approved.

Yarusso stated you need to establish a search corridor, then a master plan before you can be eligible for funding.

Youngquist pointed out they did not have a big outreach to all agencies. She noted that some of the other agencies did have some proposals however they weren't vetted with their Boards yet. There were also some that came in after the deadline.

Salk added that in 2010 there was a big push for additions in the 2030 plan. Four years later we haven't even figured out how to finance those. The push this round was not for additions.

Taylor asked how we can be conservative but keep the ball moving forward. He noted that trails cost around one half a million dollars a mile and we need to be thinking about this.

Theisen clarified that these are just long range proposals with no funding attached to them. So, at this point we are not breaking the bank with these proposals.

Salk stated that all of our units are subject to visits and the amount of their portion of the money is determined by this, so there are repercussions. Theisen argued that usage doesn't come until they're in place.

Youngquist explained that some of the proposals have existing trail segments and if we bring them into the system, these segments will be counted and thereby increasing their visits which in turn could affect the amount of money that agency is allotted. She clarified that visits would only be counted once a master plan was approved.

Weber noted that the Met Council has adopted the goal of creating 1,000 miles of trails. He felt these should be included in order to strive towards this goal.

Wulff stated she still stands by staff and the policy regarding duplicity.

Moeller stated that if all the agencies had the opportunity to make submissions we should not penalize 3RPD for doing so as it make the system appear unequal. He noted this is a long range plan.

Salk noted that what was recommended by staff is based on current policy. There are certain criteria to be mindful of and proximity is one.

Moeller discussed variances possibly being made to the policy of logic works.

Wulff commented that policies are in place for a reason. She noted that in all her years on the Planning Commission and City Council in Lakeville, they never once made a variance. If a policy was inappropriate, the policy needed to change.

Steve Sullivan, Dakota County Parks discussed the Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan being done separately. He felt the idea of meeting together with these folks was a good one. He noted that we need to bring the greatest public value to the table. He stated this is a vision and noted that master plans have not been approved yet.

Taylor made the motion and it was seconded by Theisen to recommend that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Add the following proposed Regional Trail Search Corridors to the Regional Parks System in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan as shown and described in **amended Attachment I**:
 - West Mississippi River (modified)
 - Lake Independence Extension
 - North-South 1 (modified)
 - **North-South 3 (modified)**
 - **Dakota Rail Extension (modified)**
 - CP Rail Extension
 - Minnetrista Extension
 - Lake Sarah Extension (modified)
 - **County Road 61 in Carver County**
2. Remove the Thompson–Kaposia Regional Park Study Area from the Regional Parks System as part of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

Weber made an amendment to the motion to include the extension of Dakota Rail Trail that staff proposed to omit due to duplicity. It was seconded by Taylor.

Wulff shared her concern with doing something against policy in the interest of hurrying up the process.

Johnston stated that these are all good proposals and feels we need to support staff's recommendation as guided by policy. He felt there have been good suggestions made working together. He stated that he is against the motion to amend.

Schmidt asked about additions to the system at a later date. Youngquist stated that can happen however it will require a public hearing which is a six month process.

Yarusso spoke to the argument of paved vs. unpaved and feels the entire section needs to be built the question is who pays for it.

Moeller felt this would be an attractive inclusion.

Weber added that the unpaved portion is much less used in his opinion.

Johnston called for a vote on the amendment to the motion. **The motion carried.** Five voted for and three against the motion.

Johnston called for a vote of the original motion, as amended. **The motion carried,** unanimously.

What's Ahead

Youngquist reviewed the following outline of what is coming up:

- **July 1 MPOSC meeting**
 - Draft of 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan
 - Redlined version for discussion
 - Prepare for scheduling of public hearing
- **August 5th MPOSC meeting**
 - Schedule public hearing
 - Put forward the draft of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan for public review and comment

Expectations for the Redlined Copy

- **New Chapter 1**
 - Focused on Thrive MSP 2040
- **Integration of MPOSC policy discussions**
- **Updates throughout**
 - Data, language, regional park system additions
 - **Additions:**
 - Finance section: PTLF
 - Management considerations
 - Grant requirements: Bond declarations, purchase agreements
 - **Deletions:**
 - Outdated legislation
 - Regional Parks Foundation

INFORMATION

Next meeting will be July 1, 2014 at 4:00 p.m.

REPORTS

Chair: Chair Johnston again offered that meetings may go better/faster if some of the questions Commissioners had are directed to staff prior to the meeting. He noted that staff's contact information is included on each staff report.

Commissioners: None.

Staff: None.

ADJOURNMENT

8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandi Dingle
Recording Secretary

Attachment A

Existing text from the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan is shown below. Additions and revisions that are proposed for incorporation into the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan are highlighted in yellow. Proposed deletions are shown with a strike-through in red.

Master Plan Content Requirements and Funding Process

Each master plan for a regional park, park reserve, and special recreation feature must include information for each of these items: (pp 2-30 to 2-31)

- **Boundaries and acquisition costs:** A list of parcels to be acquired and the estimated total cost and schedule for their acquisition, and information on natural resources, site suitability, special assessments, potential contamination based on data from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and other conditions that affect acquisition of the site or location of the boundaries.
- **Stewardship plan:** A program for managing park property, including activities, expenses and anticipated revenue prior to developing the property for recreation purposes. Planned non-recreation uses and disposition of revenue from such use should be detailed.
- **Demand forecast:** The recreational demand to be met by the site as identified by the Council, the regional park implementing agency or other sources.
- **Development concept:** A plan for recreational development and natural resources management including schedule and cost estimates for each project and the approximate capacity of each facility, that should include:
 - Description and location of planned development and natural resources management projects
 - Approximate capacity of each facility
 - Mapping of existing and planned local and regional trail connections to the site and information on how they relate to development within the park
 - Wayfinding signage plan, indicating the types of signs and general locations within the park
 - Information on the source and location of drinking water that is adequate for the recreational uses of the park
 - Schedule and cost estimates for each project

Conflicts between recreational and natural resource management needs in developing the park until should be addressed and resolved. Amendments to an acquisition-phase master plan should be made prior to funding recreation and visitor support facilities if there is insufficient detail on the scope and cost of the facility. Alternatively, the final design/engineering phase of a proposed facility should be funded first, with construction funding provided in a separate capital improvement grant

- **Conflicts:** Identification of conflicts with other existing or proposed projects or land uses affecting the park, including steps necessary for their resolution.
- **Public services:** A description of any non-recreational public services and facilities, such as roads or sewers, needed to accommodate the proposed recreational use, including the timing of these services and the arrangements necessary to provide them.
- **Operations:** Rules, regulations or ordinances affecting the site, including estimated operations and maintenance costs and sources of revenue to operate and maintain recreation facilities and to manage natural resources in the park unit. The operations plans should indicate how energy to operate and maintain the park unit is being managed and conserved. The plan should also

state how solid waste from park users is recycled and disposed of consistent with applicable laws.

- **Citizen engagement and participation:** A process to engage the public and involve affected municipalities and the general public in the master planning development of a master plan. The community engagement process must seek to mitigate existing racial, ethnic, cultural or linguistic barriers and include diverse races, ethnicities, classes, ages, abilities and immigrant statuses. The process also must include, but not be limited to, timely notice to the affected municipality with an opportunity for the public to be heard. The master plan should include a summary of comments received, with emphasis on issues raised.
- **Public awareness:** Plans for making the public aware of services available when the regional park is open, including information on how to access the park by transit, if applicable.
- **Accessibility:** A plan that identifies special populations to be served by the facility and addresses accessibility, affordability and other measures designed to help ensure that the facility can be used by members of special population groups.
- **Natural resources:** As part of the master plan, there should be a natural-resource management component that includes:
 - Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) as a part of the master plan process. An NRI should include a land cover inventory that is consistent with the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System developed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the MetroGIS – a consortium of government entities in the region that create, manage and share digital geographic data in a GIS (Geographic Information System). The natural resource inventory should include native plant communities mapped in the Minnesota County Biological Survey and listed (rare, endangered, and threatened) species documented in the Natural Heritage Information System. The natural resource inventory may include other land-based information. The Metropolitan Council has created the Natural Resources Digital Atlas (NRDA)--an easy to use mapping application designed to assist communities and other organizations and users in the Twin Cities metropolitan area to identify and protect locally or regionally significant natural resources. Using consistent, region-wide information based on the above data or tool will assure compatibility with other natural resource inventories that have been completed or will be done in the metropolitan region.
 - The Natural Resource Inventory should be a basis for projects/proposals to restore degraded resources and maintain high-quality natural resource features, including the estimated capital costs of natural resource restoration projects. Implementing agencies should consult with natural resource professionals in the design and final construction of park facilities, especially trails, that are adjacent to or cross over natural resource areas. The final design and construction should allow the public to view and enjoy these natural habitats with minimal adverse impact on that habitat.
 - Information on how surface water and groundwater resources in the unit, including wetlands, will be protected. This should include standards and requirements that are consistent with the Council's model ordinance for stormwater management. The master plan should include provisions to, first, avoid wetland impacts; second, minimize impacts; and, finally, mitigate impacts when no other options are available.
 - Information on how vegetation will be managed.

Master plans for linking trails:

Each master plan for a regional linking trail must include information for each of these items (p 2-32):

- **Boundaries and acquisition costs:** A list of parcels to be acquired and the estimated total cost and schedule for their acquisition, and information on natural resources, site suitability, special assessments, **potential contamination based on data from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency**, and other conditions that affect acquisition of the site or location of the boundaries.
- **Demand forecast:** The recreational demand to be met by the trail as identified by the Council, the regional park implementing agency or other sources.
- **Development concept:** A plan for development, including schedule and cost estimates for the project. **The plan should include:**
 - **Mapping of existing and planned local and regional trail connections to the trail corridor**
 - **Wayfinding signage plan, indicating the types of signs and general locations along the trail corridor**
- **Conflicts:** Identification of conflicts with other existing or proposed projects or land uses affecting the park/trail unit, including steps necessary for their resolution.
- **Public services:** A description of any non-recreational public services and facilities, such as roads or sewers, needed to accommodate the proposed trail, including the timing of these services and the arrangements necessary to provide them.
- **Operations:** Rules, regulations or ordinances affecting the trail, including estimated operations and maintenance costs and sources of revenue to operate and maintain the trail.
- **Citizen engagement and participation:** A process to **engage the public and** involve affected municipalities **and the general public** in the **master planning** development of a master plan. **The community engagement process must seek to mitigate existing racial, ethnic, cultural or linguistic barriers and include diverse races, ethnicities, classes, ages, abilities and immigrant statuses.** The process **also** must include, ~~but not be limited to,~~ timely notice to the affected municipality with an opportunity for the public to be heard. The master plan should include a summary of comments received, with emphasis on issues raised.
- **Public awareness:** Plans for making the public aware of services available when the regional trail is open, **including information on how to access the trail by transit, if applicable.**
- **Accessibility:** A plan that identifies special populations to be served by the facility and addresses accessibility, affordability and other measures designed to help ensure that the trail can be used by members of special population groups.

Master plans for regional destination trails or greenways:

Master plans for regional destination trails or greenways shall include all of the elements outlined above for regional linking trails as well as a stewardship plan, and natural resource inventory: (p 2-33)

- **Stewardship plan:** A program for managing the surrounding greenway areas and natural resource features.
- **Natural resources:** As part of the master plan, the natural resource management component should include:
 - Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) as a part of the master plan process. An NRI should include a land cover inventory that is consistent with the Minnesota Land Cover Classification system developed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Metro GIS – a consortium of government entities in the region that create, manage and share digital geographic data. Using the same NRI format will assure compatibility with other natural resource inventories that have been completed or will be done in the metropolitan region. The natural resource inventory should include native plant communities mapped in the Minnesota County Biological Survey and listed (rare, endangered, and threatened) species documented in the Natural Heritage Information System

- The Natural Resource Inventory should be a basis for projects/proposals to restore degraded resources and maintain high-quality natural resource features, including the estimated capital costs of natural resource restoration projects. Implementing agencies should consult with natural resource professionals in the design and final construction of the trail/ greenway, that are adjacent to or cross over natural resource areas. The final design and construction should allow the public to view and enjoy these natural habitats with minimal adverse impact on that habitat.
- Information on how surface water and groundwater resources in the unit, including wetlands, will be protected. If appropriate, this should include standards and requirements that are consistent with the Metropolitan Council's model ordinance for stormwater management. The master plan should include provisions to, first, avoid wetland impacts; second, minimize impacts; and, finally, mitigate impacts when no other options are available.
- Information on how vegetation will be managed.

System Protection

System Protection Strategy 4: Phase 1 ~~environment site assessments~~ Environmental Site Assessments must be ~~done~~ **conducted** for land that may be contaminated or that may have abandoned wells ~~on it.~~ **prior to seeking regional parks funding for acquisition** (pp 2-50 to 2-51) Regional park implementing agencies must conduct Phase 1 ~~environmental site assessments~~ **Environmental Site Assessments** on land that is suspected to be contaminated or land suspected to have abandoned wells as part of ~~the master planning process~~ **its due diligence process for land acquisition**. The Phase 1 ~~environmental site assessments~~ **Environmental Site Assessment** will determine the likelihood of soil contamination or abandoned wells, including the likelihood of contaminated groundwater aquifers. The findings of the site assessment should be included in the ~~master plan grant request~~ submitted to the Metropolitan Council.

The cost of the Phase 1 ~~environmental site assessments~~ **Environmental Site Assessment** is eligible for reimbursement as an acquisition cost.

Prior to the Council determining whether the contaminated land, including lands with abandoned wells, should be part of the proposed park or trail, the Council will make findings of fact regarding the following factors:

- The likelihood and extent of the contamination.
- Whether the land is essential to make the regional park or trail function as intended according to a Council-approved master plan and the existence of a reasonable alternative to relocate the park or trail facilities elsewhere.
- Whether responsible parties have been identified who will remediate the site.
- Whether the estimated costs to clean up the contamination or cap the abandoned well(s) outweigh the need versus the recreational, economic and social benefits the park or trail would provide.

If the Council concludes that the land should be added to the regional parks system, this does not imply that the Council will use park funds to clean up the site or cap abandoned wells. Park funds will only be used for contaminated soil cleanup or capping abandoned wells if the four preceding conditions have been met.

Attachment A (1)

System Protection

System Protection Strategy 2: Conversion of regional park system lands to other uses

Lands in the Regional Parks System will only be converted to other uses if approved by the Metropolitan Council through an equally valuable land or facility exchange as defined below:

“Equally valuable land” is defined as land that is contiguous to the regional parks system unit containing the land proposed to be exchanged (within the same park/trail unit) and the land has comparable or better natural resource characteristics and could provide comparable or better recreation opportunities than the land being released from the covenant. In exceptional circumstances, the Metropolitan Council may accept as equally valuable land the addition of land to another unit of the regional parks system where that replacement land has comparable or better natural resource characteristics and comparable or better recreation opportunities than the land being converted, where no other reasonable alternative exists and where all other provisions of this policy can be met.

“Equally valuable facility” is defined as an exchange of land for facilities when recreational benefits and/or natural resource benefits are increased as a result of the exchange. For example, some land within a regional trail corridor may be exchanged to widen a highway if a highway department constructs a trail overpass or underpass of the widened road at no cost to the regional park implementing agency.

The Metropolitan Council will consider conversion of regional park land to other uses only if the conversion will not harm the Regional Parks System. The following criteria will be used to determine whether regional parks system lands may be exchanged for other land or a facility:

Issues with respect to the existing park system unit:

- Whether the park system unit can continue to meet Council site and site attribute standards established for the particular type of park system unit (regional park, park reserve, trail greenway or special recreation feature)
- Whether the park system unit will continue to function as originally planned
- Whether environmental features (wildlife habitat, water quality) will be adversely affected and can be protected with the new use
- Whether the loss of site or function will be made up through acquisition of a site with comparable characteristics adjacent to or in the immediate area of the current location
- Whether the park system unit benefits from a facility in exchange for the parkland
- Whether the need for the conversion, as in the instance of transportation improvements, is generated by the recreational park system unit

Issues with respect to the alternative use:

- The land area needs of the proposed project
- Whether the specific site requirements for the proposed project are unique to the area proposed for conversion
- Whether the proposed project is consistent with Council policies
- Whether the proposed project is of greater benefit to the region than continuance of the regional parks system unit

For those changes that represent a potential system impact, the Council will use a process comparable to the review period for plan amendments with a potential impact on the regional system. For

conversions such as small exchanges of land to provide right-of-way for access, an expedited review will be used.

Lands in the regional parks system may be subject to use-conversion proposals for a number of reasons. Some very limited conversions may be accommodated and still not affect the ability of the remaining area to offer the facilities and services planned. A well-designed transit waiting station or a properly located and operated yard waste compost site could be of positive value to the regional system and can be worked out between the proposing parties, the implementing agencies and the Council in accordance with the system management guidelines.

However, most conversions are likely to detract from the ability to provide the type and quality of outdoor recreation experiences promised in the master plan. Some of the undesirable conversion impacts will be obvious and direct, such as unsightly landscapes or structures, barriers to movement, loud noises, night light or obnoxious odors. Other conversion impacts are more indirect, such as those that affect water quality and plant and animal life. In addition to adversely affecting the regional parks system's ability to deliver service, removal of lands for non-recreation open space uses also sets a bad precedent.

Restrictive covenants:

The Metropolitan Council requires that a restrictive covenant must be recorded on all land that has been acquired for the Regional Parks System using regional funds. The restrictive covenant ensures the parkland is used in perpetuity for regional parks system purposes and ensures that there is no sale, lease, mortgage of the parkland or other conveyance, restriction or encumbrance filed against the property unless the Council approves the action in writing and the Council's approval is recorded against the parkland.

The only restrictive covenant amendments approved by the Council in which no land was exchanged were for small strips of land needed for public highway improvements. The land was needed to make roads safer and there was no alternative. These projects also improved access to the adjacent regional parks system unit.

AMENDED ATTACHMENT I: RECOMMENDED REGIONAL TRAIL SEARCH CORRIDORS FOR THE 2040 REGIONAL PARKS POLICY PLAN

Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor	Estimated Miles for Inclusion	Estimated Acquisition / Development Cost
West Mississippi River	28.1	\$ 14,700,000
Lake Independence Extension	5	\$ 2,600,000
North-South 1 (modified)	28.2	\$ 14,700,000
Minnetrista Extension	2.2	\$ 1,200,000
CP Rail Extension	5.4	\$ 2,800,000
Lake Sarah Extension (modified)	10	\$ 5,000,000
North-South 3 (modified)	20	\$ 10,100,000
Dakota Rail Extension (modified)	2	\$ 950,000
County Road 61 (Carver County)	1	\$ 750,000
Total	101.9	\$ 52,800,000