

Minutes

Community Development Committee



Meeting Date: August 7, 2023

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Steet

Members Present:

- Chair, Robert Lilligren, D7
- Vice Chair, Susan Vento, D11
- Judy Johnson, District 1
- Reva Chamblis, District 2

- Peter Lindstrom, District 10
- Chai Lee, District 13
- Toni Carter, District 14

- Tenzin Dolkar, District 15
- Wendy Wulff, District 16

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Chair Lilligren called the regular meeting of the Community Development Committee to order at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Vento, seconded by Wulff, to approve the minutes of the July 17, 2023, regular meeting of the Community Development Committee. **Motion carried.**

Consent Business

1. **2023-145** Coon Lake Regional Park Long-Range Plan, Anoka County (Chee Yang 651-602-1449) It was moved by Carter, seconded by Chamblis that the Metropolitan Council Approve Anoka County's Coon Lake Regional Park Long Range Plan.
Encourage Anoka County to work with the City of Columbus to change the land use from Rural Residential to Park within the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan when the proposed future 41-acre inholding is acquired and becomes part of the regional park. This will require a comprehensive plan amendment and must be submitted to the Metropolitan Council for review and authorization. **Motion carried.**
2. **2023-169** Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park Long-Range Plan Amendment, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (Colin Kelly 651-602-1361) It was moved by Carter, seconded by Chamblis that the Metropolitan Council approve Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park Long-Range Plan Amendment. **Motion carried.**
3. **2023-170** Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park, Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Award (Ruddick) Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (Jessica Lee 651-602-1621) It was moved by Carter, seconded by Chamblis that the Metropolitan Council Contingent on the approval of the concurrent Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park long-range plan amendment, approve a grant of up to \$964,125 to Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to acquire a 0.2-acre parcel located at 1699 West 34th Street for the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park.
Authorize the Community Development Director to execute the grant agreement and

restrictive covenant on behalf of the Council.

Motion carried.

The Community Development Committee recommended approval of the proposed action without questions or discussion as part of its consent agenda.

Non-Consent Business

1. **2023-168** SW: City of St. Francis Serenity at Seelye Brook Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Review No. 22287-6 (Michael Larson 651 602-1407)

It was moved by Johnson, seconded by Carter that the Metropolitan Council adopt the attached Review Record and take the following actions:

1. Authorize the City of St. Francis to place its comprehensive plan amendment into effect.
2. Find that the amendment does not change the City's forecasts.
3. Find that the amendment is inconsistent with Thrive MSP 2040 policies for residential density in the Diversified Rural portion of the City.
4. Find that the amendment is inconsistent with 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan policies for preserving natural resources outside the Long-Term Wastewater Service Area.
5. Strongly encourage the City to consider the application of ordinances that are consistent with the Council's Flexible Residential Development Ordinance Guidelines in cases in which the City may wish to consider densities greater than 4 units per 40 acres.
6. Advise the City to implement the advisory comments in the Review Record for Land Use and Water Resources.

Motion carried.

Chair Lilligren inquired about the consequences of such policy inconsistencies and possible remedies. Ms. Barajas discussed the Council's role in monitoring such development pressures to ensure that unplanned development does not lead to the premature provision or need for services. Council Member Chamblis inquired about how the Council handled rural development pressure in the past and how that evolved over time. Ms. Barajas discussed various approaches including working with communities to accommodate future urban services or requiring communities to modify their plans.

2. **2023-166** Homework Starts with Home Program (HSWH) – Anoka County, Board Resolution No. 2023-10 (Stephanie Paulson 651-602-1584)

It was moved by Chamblis, seconded by Lindstrom that the Metropolitan Council adopt the attached Review Record and take the following actions:

1. Authorize the City of St. Francis to place its comprehensive plan amendment into effect.
2. Find that the amendment does not change the City's forecasts.
3. Find that the amendment is inconsistent with Thrive MSP 2040 policies for residential density in the Diversified Rural portion of the City.
4. Find that the amendment is inconsistent with 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan policies for preserving natural resources outside the Long-Term Wastewater Service Area.
5. Strongly encourage the City to consider the application of ordinances that are consistent with the Council's Flexible Residential Development Ordinance Guidelines in cases in which the City may wish to consider densities greater than 4 units per 40 acres.



6. Advise the City to implement the advisory comments in the Review Record for Land Use and Water Resources.

Motion carried.

Council Members expressed their excitement for this partnership, and their preferences for wrap around services. Ms. Paulson discussed the commitment of vouchers and coordinating services.

3. **2023-146** Summit Avenue Regional Trail Long Range Plan, Saint Paul (Tracey Kinney 651-602-1029)

It was moved by Carter, seconded by Johnson that the Metropolitan Council

1. Approve the Summit Avenue Regional Trail Long-Range Plan.
2. Require Saint Paul, prior to initiating any construction, to send preliminary plans to the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager.

Motion carried.

Emmett Mullin and Tracey Kinney presented the staff report to the Community Development Committee.

Council Member Vento provided an overview of the discussion at the July 6 Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Committee meeting. She encouraged both the City of Saint Paul and the public to stay engaged as the project progresses.

Council Member Chamblis asked if trash pick-up and driveway access are addressed in the long-range plan. Kinney responded that the long-range plan includes guidance for trash pick-up and driveway access that will be further developed during the design and construction phase of the project.

Council Member Wulff asked if the Summit Avenue Regional Trail Search Corridor was considered in relation to the Mississippi Gorge – Samuel Morgan Regional Trail Search Corridor that is located along Ayd Mill Road. Mullin responded that the Mississippi Gorge – Samuel Morgan Regional Trail Search Corridor is an extension of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board’s Midtown Greenway Regional Trail Search Corridor that intersects Summit Avenue Regional Trail Search Corridor on an angle. The Regional Parks Policy Plan notes that linking trails should be at least 1.5 miles apart so as to not overlap the local service area of the trails, but the policy plan acknowledges there are times when linking trails will come in closer proximity to one another. The distance between the two regional trail search corridors nearest the Mississippi River is just under 1.5-miles.

Council Member Carter asked if there is a plan for a continuous trail between the Summit Avenue Regional Trail and the Samuel Morgan Regional Trail. Kinney responded that the plan has prioritized the intersection between the two trails for an upgraded pedestrian crossing. The plan looked at all of the intersections along the trail and provided guidance for enhanced safety to provide a continuous trail experience. Council Member Carter asked about the timeline for the trail project. Kinney responded that the trail is not funded yet. There are plans for work to be done in the short term; with most of the project likely taking place in 10 – 15 years. Mullin added that the development of the trail will proceed at the speed of the redevelopment of Summit Avenue.

Council Member Johnson asked what the role of the Council is after the long-range plan is approved. Mullin responded that the Council’s role is to review the long-range plan. The design and construction of the trail is a local process that includes additional community engagement. She stated that she hopes that the trail can be used year-round and that it is free from snow in the winter.



Council Member Wulff asked if the Council's authority allows for the search corridor to be evaluated at this time. LisaBeth Barajas, Executive Director of Community Development, responded that the Council's authority is with its policy plan. It has been the Council's practice to consider search corridors as part of the development of the Policy Plan. The system plan for the Regional Parks and Trail System can be reevaluated as part of the 2050 Regional Development Guide.

Council Member Carter asked how the Council stays involved after the Council approves the long-range plan. Mullin responded that the action referring to the wastewater treatment preliminary plan review is specific to the utilities within the trail corridor. Barajas responded that there are precedents where an action is included to receive updates on the construction project. Council staff regularly meet with the Implementing Agencies and reviews funding requests for consistency with the long-range plan. Mullin responded that after the Council approves the plan then the trail will be eligible for funding. Funding requests are reviewed for consistency with the long-range plan.

Council Member Lindstrom asked if the plan is consistent with the Council's policies. Mullin responded that the plan is consistent with the Policy Plan, as well as other Council systems and policies.

Tom Darling from the Summit Avenue Resident Preservation Association (SARPA), spoke in opposition to the plan. Darling stated that the proposed trail will result in the destruction of hundreds of trees which conflicts with regional policy that linking trails should not have an adverse impact on the site's natural resources. He expressed concerns about the proposed trail's feasibility, safety, and the proposed reduction in parking spots. He also suggested the trail plan does not address the needs of the disabled community. Lastly, he stated that the Saint Paul project team had not reviewed a third-party arborist's report.

Patty Hartman spoke in opposition to the plan. Hartman expressed concerns about the plan's engagement process. She said Summit Avenue is not just a transportation corridor, it is a piece of Saint Paul that includes architecture, history, beauty, and environmental assets.

Bridget Alice from SARPA spoke in opposition to the plan. Alice stated that SARPA is pro-bike trail, but opposed to where it is being placed. She advocated for an on-road trail which is consistent with regional policy for a linking trail.

Council Member Wulff expressed concerns about investing in the Summit Avenue Regional Trail since it is more of a transportation corridor as compared to a recreational trail. She sees the proposed regional trail as a local trail.

Council Member Johnson asked about the requirements for a regional linking trail. Mullin responded that the trail must be regionally significant, including making a connection to other regional parks and trails; as well as serve a regional audience. He stated that the proposed trail meets these requirements due to the parkway's significance and historical nature, as well as its character as a destination, and the connections the trail makes to many local, regional, and state parks and trails.

One dissenting vote.

4. **2023-154 JT:** Imposing a Metropolitan Region Sales and Use Tax for Local Affordable Housing Aid, Resolution No. 2023-7 (Lisa Barajas 651-602-1895) It was moved by Wulff, seconded by Johnson that the Metropolitan Council adopt Resolution No. 2023-7 imposing a metropolitan region sales and use tax for local affordable housing aid.

Motion carried.

Nancy Bence from Beacon requested to speak on this item. She requested the CDC to provide reliable housing vouchers and please vote for the resolution.

Council Member Wulff explained they have no control on the decision making for this item.

Information

1. Regional Parks System 2022 Annual Use Estimates (Darcie Vandegrift 651-602-1669)

The Metropolitan Council has prepared annual use estimates for the Regional Park System since 1995 in partnership with the ten regional park implementing agencies.

The Council bases its estimates of park visits on counts of visitors entering regional parks and trails from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The count is a collaboration between all ten regional parks implementing agencies, whose staff conduct the summer counts, and Council staff who complete the analysis.

An estimated 69 million visits were made to the Regional Parks system in 2022 representing a 6.4% increase from 2021. This increase was due to an increase in special events, large increases in Ramsey County and Carver County visitation, and continued increase in trail visits. 70% of the visits were to regional parks, park reserves, and special recreation features. The rest were to regional trails. The most visited regional park was Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, with 7.5 million visits. Other highly visited parks include Como Regional Park, Zoo, and Conservatory, Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park, and Mississippi Gorge Regional Park.

The Council uses a four-year rolling average of counts to ensure a representative sample of each park and each trail. Off-season visits (winter, spring, and fall) are based on a survey asking visitors how often they visit during off-season months. The most recent survey was completed in 2021 and incorporated into the estimates for the first time this year.

Council Members asked for a definition of visits, regional parks vs other parks. Ms. Vandegrift explained the differences and the random samples conducted by park agencies and the training provided.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Community Development Committee meeting of August 7, 2023.

Council Contact:

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