



MEMORANDUM

To: MCWD Board of Managers

From: James Wisker

Date: September 11, 2017

Re: 325 Blake Road Update

Purpose:

To provide background information in support of a planned September 14, 2017 briefing to the Planning and Policy Committee (PPC) regarding the status of planning and partnership for the 325 Blake Road project.

Project Background:

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) owns a 17 acre parcel located at 325 Blake Road, in the City of Hopkins. The parcel was acquired by the MCWD in 2011 as a critical component in achieving the District's strategic goals within the Minnehaha Creek corridor.

Since 2009, the MCWD has strategically focused planning and capital improvements within the Minnehaha Creek Greenway, between West 36th Street and Meadowbrook Lake, within the cities of Hopkins and St. Louis Park. This geography has historically produced the largest pollutant load per unit area within the Minnehaha Creek subwatershed, and is a driver of impairments within Minnehaha Creek and downstream Lake Hiawatha. This section of the Creek corridor has also been physically altered to accommodate urbanization, resulting in ditching-straightening and the elimination and fragmentation of riparian greenspace.

Consequently, within this area, the District's focus has been on (1) improving water quality through regional stormwater management, (2) restoring Creek health through improved channel morphology, (3) expanding, enhancing and connecting riparian greenspace, and (4) integrating this vision for an improved Minnehaha Creek into the surrounding urban fabric through collaboration with local communities, landowners and the private business community, and regional-state agencies.

Work to date, including but not limited to partnerships with Park Nicollet at Methodist Hospital, St. Louis Park on the Minnehaha Preserve, Japs Olson on the Minnehaha Preserve Enhancement, and Hopkins at Cottageville Park, have already produced significant measurable results towards the District's mission.

Since 2009 the District and its partners have implemented stormwater management for nearly 200 acres of regional runoff, previously discharging untreated to the Creek. Over 1.5 miles of stream channel has

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been restored, and over 50 acres of riparian greenspace has been created, enhanced and connected. In addition, the project has accomplished a host of economic and social benefits within the corridor, including expanded park and open space, facilitating business expansion and job creation, and connecting communities, all supported by significant outside investment of public and private funds.

It is within this context that the District is working in collaboration with the City of Hopkins, Hennepin County and a number of other public agencies to build on these accomplishments and achieve its goals within the corridor, by advancing clean water improvements at the 325 Blake Road site – where the District plans to implement a three to five acre greenway expansion/connection that treats over 260 acres of regional stormwater, with the remaining portion of the site being sold for mixed use redevelopment along the Blake Road, Minnehaha Creek, Cedar Regional Trail corridors.

September 14, 2017 PPC Briefing:

At the September 14, 2017 PPC briefing, District planning staff will provide the Committee with a status update on planning for the project, and a timeline for next steps. The update will cover:

- Project background and work progress to date
- Stormwater diversions to site, planning and implementation
- Demolition planning and funding
- Plan integration with Blake Road reconstruction
- Request For Qualifications planning and timeline
- Process planning and milestones with City of Hopkins, Blake Road Subcommittee and MCWD

Additional information can be reviewed in advance of the meeting by referencing the 2018 work plan for the 325 Blake Road Stormwater Management Project, which is included in the Board packet for the regularly scheduled meeting.

If there are questions in advance of the meeting, please contact James Wisker at Jwisker@minnehahacreek.org or 952-641-4509

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