



## RESOLUTION

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Resolution number: 20-066

**Title:** Authorization to Execute a Cooperative Agreement with the City of Hopkins for Coordinated Planning, Improvements and Development for 325 Blake Road

WHEREAS the MCWD established the area between West 34th Street and Meadowbrook Lake in the cities of Hopkins and St. Louis Park as a priority area for capital project improvements aimed at stormwater improvement, streambank restoration and broader community goals;

WHEREAS the MCWD Board of Managers has developed a series of strategic capital project initiatives within the urban corridor to advance goals of improving the ecological integrity of Minnehaha Creek, while reintegrating the stream corridor into the surrounding urban fabric;

WHEREAS in 2011 the MCWD acquired the 325 Blake Road property for water resource purposes including stream restoration, regional stormwater management, and corridor habitat and passive recreation improvements, and for the opportunity to integrate these purposes with the public purposes of other bodies;

WHEREAS the MCWD Board of Managers has adopted a policy "In Pursuit of a Balanced Urban Ecology," establishing MCWD's fundamental philosophy and way of doing business, including joining with others to pursue watershed management goals integrated with land use planning; intensifying and maintaining focus in high priority areas; and being flexible and adaptive to new ways of doing business with partners, to effectively leverage assets;

WHEREAS the MCWD has moved forward in planning and construction of regional stormwater infrastructure, Minnehaha Creek Greenway expansion planning, site facility decommissioning and demolition, environmental remediation and preliminary redevelopment;

WHEREAS in 2018 the MCWD explored redevelopment opportunities through a request for qualifications (RFQ) process, leading to a six-month visioning process with a potential master developer and the City of Hopkins (City), culminating in a joint decision of the parties to part ways and focus on further defining the vision and value of the proposed restoration and redevelopment project;

WHEREAS throughout 2019, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the site from a natural resources and redevelopment perspective, MCWD refined its preliminary visioning and technical work, including an internal design charrette to lay out potential greenway and redevelopment scenarios, refined engineering analyses that further outline the technical requirements of treating a large quantity of regional stormwater, and initiation of market analyses that assess the potential for integrating the stormwater and greenway improvements with comprehensive redevelopment in partnership with the City and a private development partner;

WHEREAS in January 2020, the Board of Managers agreed to advance a joint partnership exploration with the City and committed to the following needs of the partnership in order to effectively move forward:

- Engagement: align the partner agencies at the policy-maker level to ensure clarity of roles and expectations;

- Process: develop a clear written process that defines the partnership and steps for effectively moving the project forward;
- Financials: develop a valuation tool to explore the range of values associated with the flexible nature of potential redevelopment programs on the site.

WHEREAS to ensure alignment at the policymaker level and articulate a process that would move the partners towards an integrated project, the MCWD and City developed a joint liaison group comprised of two Hopkins City Council members and two MCWD Board Managers, and reaffirmed the benefits of partnering on planning for redevelopment with the following principles for partnership:

- Open communication at all levels;
- Continuous and deep involvement from the joint liaison;
- Expert involvement to provide a solid financial and technical foundation.

WHEREAS over a period of approximately six months, the joint liaison group has focused on the development of a clear partnership process to be defined through the development of a cooperative agreement, utilizing a similar approach to the joint effort for Cottageville Park and referencing key documents developed to provide clarity and alignment, including a draft vision document, a development decision matrix and preliminary development parameters to accomplish the following:

- Draft vision document – memorializes the shared vision between the City and the MCWD for the redevelopment of 325 Blake Road and provides a shared understanding of the guiding principles for redevelopment;
- Development decision matrix – details the steps of the joint development process and specifies the responsible party and decision-making authority for each step;
- Development parameters – lays out the baseline expectations for key design and financial variables of the development.

WHEREAS the proposed cooperative agreement will enable the MCWD and City to advance redevelopment planning for the site, integrating water resource objectives with land use planning;

WHEREAS the proposed cooperative agreement articulates the steps for advancing redevelopment coordination for the site, including community engagement, communications, financial analysis via a feasibility milestone, developer selection process, preliminary development agreement, concept development and final development agreement processes;

WHEREAS the cooperative agreement uses a draft vision document, development decision matrix and preliminary development parameters as the foundational elements of the partnership, and references several accompanying documents that are simultaneously being drafted, including a preliminary community engagement framework, a preliminary communications framework, and a project sequencing document, in order to fully articulate the partnership and provide clarity of roles and expectations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers hereby authorizes the Board President to execute a cooperative agreement with the City of Hopkins to jointly establish a coordinated planning process for implementation and development at 325 Blake Road, allowing for non-substantive edits on advice of counsel.

Resolution Number 20- 066 was moved by Manager Olsen, seconded by Manager Maxwell Motion to adopt the resolution 5 ayes, 2 nays, \_\_\_ abstentions. Date: 8/27/2020

Kurt Rogness  
Secretary

Date: August 27, 2020