MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
QUALITY OF WATER, QUALITY OF LIFE

Meeting: Board of Managers
Meeting date: 8/28/2025
Agenda Item #: 11.1
Action Type: Request for Board Action

Title:	Authorization to Contract for Downtown Long Lake Feasibility Study
Resolution number:	25-045
Prepared by:	Name: Rachel Baker Phone: 952-641-4522 rbaker@minnehahacreek.org
Reviewed by:	Name/Title: Michael Hayman, Director of Project Planning; Chuck Holtman, Smith Partners
Recommended action:	The Board of Managers authorizes the District Administrator to negotiate and execute a contract for the Downtown Long Lake Feasibility Study
Schedule:	June 16, 2025 – Release RFP for consultant services July – August 2025 – Evaluate proposals and conduct interviews September 2025 – Feasibility kickoff
Budget considerations:	Fund name and code: Holbrook Park Regional Stormwater (3502) Fund budget: $174,940 (grant award from BWSR) Expenditures to date: $0 Requested amount of funding: Disclosed under separate cover

Past Board action:		
	Res # 25-035	Authorization to release a Request for Proposals for the Downtown Long Lake Feasibility Study
	Res # 21-019	Authorization for Long Lake Creek Subwatershed Watershed Assessment Contract Scope Adjustment and Extension
	Res # 19-055	Authorization to Execute Contract with Consultant to Conduct the Long Lake Creek Subwatershed Assessment
	Res # 19-039	Authorization to release RFP for the Long Lake Creek Subwatershed Assessment

Background

Since 2018, the cities of Long Lake, Medina, and Orono; Long Lake Waters Association (LLWA); and Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) have been working together towards a common goal of improving water quality within the Long Lake Creek Subwatershed. This effort will help the cities meet state load reduction requirements for the five impaired lakes in the system and ensure that area lakes are swimmable and fishable.

To support this effort, the MCWD took on the role of convener and technical lead in 2018. With the support of the partners, MCWD obtained state grant funding and led a subwatershed assessment to provide a strong scientific understanding of the system, identify cost-effective projects and strategies, and develop a clear and actionable roadmap to implement them.

Between 2019-2020, MCWD conducted the assessment and worked with the partners to identify and evaluate a variety of potential watershed improvement projects. In late 2020, staff developed an Implementation Roadmap Preview and presented it to the Board and each of the three city councils to introduce the findings, recommendations, and near-term

priorities that came out of the subwatershed assessment. This allowed the partnership to start building council understanding, gauge their support, and continue to develop the full roadmap.

In January 2023, MCWD staff produced a final report referred to as the Long Lake Creek Roadmap (Roadmap). The Roadmap identified 34 projects for advancement based on their cost-effectiveness and feasibility to implement. These projects were further categorized based on an implementation strategy, which includes (1) regional stormwater treatment, (2) landscape projects, and (3) internal load management.

In the downtown Long Lake area, the Roadmap identified the need for additional regional treatment and recommended exploring opportunities at Holbrook Park, Nelson Lakeside Park, and other publicly-owned properties. In 2023, with the support of the partnership, MCWD applied for and received $174,940 from the state Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to conduct a feasibility study for Holbrook Park to identify potential regional treatment locations, costs, and benefits. However, following a preliminary site assessment and conversations with the city, staff identified an opportunity to expand the feasibility study to also include the downtown area of Long Lake.

At the May 20, 2025 Long Lake City Council Meeting, MCWD staff presented an overview of the partnership history, Roadmap, and proposed feasibility study. The City accepted the Roadmap, supports the ongoing partnership, and supports MCWD's plans to conduct a feasibility study in the downtown Long Lake area.

Request for Proposal Process

Scope

The feasibility study will aim to identify cost-effective and technically sound options to reduce phosphorus export from stormwater runoff within downtown Long Lake by examining opportunities at Holbrook Park, Nelson Lakeside Park, and other nearby properties. Tasks include concept evaluation and feasibility-level design at various project sites, a permitting scan, an operations and maintenance assessment, and a cost-benefit analysis.

On June 16, 2025, MCWD distributed the Downtown Long Lake Feasibility RFP to its running list of more than 40 engineering and professional firms and posted it to the MCWD website. MCWD staff solicited proposals from June 16, 2025 through July 16, 2025. An optional informational meeting for interested consulting firms was held at the MCWD office on June 26, 2025 to answer any questions and provide guidance on the submittal process.

Proposal Evaluation

A team of three MCWD staff evaluated five submitted proposals. The team evaluated the firms' proposals based on the following criteria:

- Approach and methodology: Project understanding, completeness and specificity, and identification of needs, and innovation
- Experience: Comparable experience, staff experience, and area knowledge
- Cost: Completeness and fee structure

Following the initial proposal review, two firms were selected for interviews – Houston Engineering Inc. (HEI) and HDR. The in-person interviews consisted of a short presentation by the selected firms, followed by an in-depth question-and-answer session conducted by MCWD staff.

Recommendation

Staff is recommending that HDR be selected as the consultant and awarded the contract for services detailed in the HDR proposal, which is provided under separate cover to the Board of Managers. HDR's proposal stood out for its strong emphasis on collaboration and innovation, and for its ability to envision project opportunities within a long-term strategy for Long Lake. The proposal and presentation offered a detailed and well-reasoned process for identifying and evaluating potential project opportunities that balance technical feasibility with community and placemaking goals. It was clear that HDR had spent time reviewing each project area in the RFP, sharing with us their initial thoughts on site challenges and constraints, potential solutions, and placemaking potential. Finally, HDR has teamed up with landscape architect firm Damon Farber, which displayed a deep understanding of how design can benefit both natural and cultural landscapes.

While HDR's proposal was among the more expensive in total project cost, it is due to HDR and Damon Farber identifying this effort as an opportunity to provide a more robust vision throughout the downtown area, including supporting charrette processes and design schematics. MCWD staff feel strongly that HDR's experience, familiarity with our collaborative and holistic approach, and ability to integrate ecological and community co-benefits will deliver a plan that best reflects MCWD's philosophy of balanced urban ecology.

In accordance with Minnesota Statutes 13.591, subdivision 3(b), the submitted proposals will not be part of the public record until the contract has been executed. A copy of all submitted proposals will have been distributed to the Board of Managers, via email, for review prior to the August 28, 2025, meeting.

Next Steps

Following authorization to contract, staff will work with HDR's project manager to finalize the scope of work and contract. Staff do not anticipate the scope requiring any substantive changes. The final contract will not exceed the amount set forth in the proposal. The feasibility consultant team is expected to initiate work in September 2025.

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RESOLUTION

Resolution number: 25-045

Title: Authorization to Contract for Downtown Long Lake Feasibility Study

WHEREAS in 2014, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) completed a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Study, which established nutrient budgets for impaired water bodies in the Long Lake Creek Subwatershed, which includes five impaired lakes within the cities of Long Lake, Orono, and Medina;

WHEREAS TMDL allocations have been established and the City of Long Lake (City), like other parties, is required to show progress towards meeting the established TMDL allocation;

WHEREAS in April 2016, the City of Long Lake passed a resolution to partner with other intergovernmental agencies to pursue grants to improve water quality in the Long Lake Creek Subwatershed, recognizing that pursuing grants and working in partnership would result in more organized and effective efforts;

WHEREAS in 2018, with support from this partnership, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) obtained state grant funding and led a subwatershed assessment to provide a scientific understanding of the system, identify cost-effective projects and strategies, and develop an actionable roadmap for implementation;

WHEREAS in January 2023, MCWD produced a final report referred to as the Long Lake Creek Roadmap (Roadmap);

WHEREAS the Roadmap identified 34 projects for advancement based on their cost-effectiveness and feasibility to implement. These projects were further categorized based on an implementation strategy, which includes (1) regional stormwater treatment, (2) landscape projects, and (3) internal load management;

WHEREAS the Roadmap identified the need for additional regional treatment in the downtown Long Lake area and recommended exploring opportunities at Holbrook Park, Nelson Lakeside Park, and other publicly owned properties;

WHEREAS in 2023, with the support of the partnership, MCWD applied for and received $174,940 from the state Board of Water and Soil Resources to conduct a feasibility study for Holbrook Park to identify potential regional treatment locations, costs, and benefits; following a preliminary site assessment and conversations with the city, staff identified an opportunity to expand the feasibility study to also include the downtown area of Long Lake;

WHEREAS at the May 20, 2025 Long Lake City Council Meeting, the MCWD presented an overview of the partnership history, Roadmap, and proposed feasibility study; the City formally accepted the Roadmap, supports the ongoing partnership, and supports MCWD's plans to conduct a feasibility study in the downtown area.

WHEREAS on June 12, 2025, the Board of Managers authorized staff to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a feasibility study that will aim to identify cost-effective and technically sound options to reduce phosphorus export from stormwater runoff within downtown Long Lake;

WHEREAS in response to the RFP, MCWD received written proposals from Geosyntec, HDR, Houston Engineering, ISG, and Stanley Consultants. MCWD staff evaluated written proposals based on project understanding, methods and approach, project team and experience, and cost;

WHEREAS on the basis of its evaluation of written proposals and consultant interviews, staff recommends the selection of HDR, based on its strong project understanding, emphasis on collaboration and innovation, detailed and holistic approach, and experienced team;

WHEREAS the Board of Managers finds that the evaluation has been thorough and properly structured, and that the work proposed by HDR is demonstrated to be competitive;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes the District Administrator, on advice of legal counsel, to execute a contract with HDR Inc. for engineering, design, and consulting services for the Downtown Long Lake Feasibility study, in accordance with the developed scope of work as the Administrator may refine it, and in an amount not to exceed the amount set forth in the proposal, and authorizes the Administrator to execute contract amendments in his discretion up to an additional 10 percent, in aggregate, of the contract amount.

Resolution Number 25-045 was moved by Manager _____, seconded by Manager _____. Motion to adopt the resolution ___ ayes, ___ nays, ___abstentions. Date: 8/28/2025

_____ Date: _____

Secretary