

**MEMORANDUM**

To: MCWD Board of Managers
From: James Wisker
Date: July 14, 2016
Re: Park Nicollet – Methodist Hospital Partnership Status

Purpose:

To update the Board of Managers on the status of the MCWD-Park Nicollet Partnership for wetland enhancement at Methodist Hospital, in advance of final action to be requested at the July 28, 2016 Board Meeting.

Long Term Background:

The Minnehaha Creek corridor between Highway 169 and Highway 100 has sustained damage to its water quality, channel stability, habitat and public use opportunities as the result of decades of urban development, urban stormwater discharges and adjacent urban uses.

Park Nicollet's Methodist Hospital is located in the north east quadrant of Louisiana Avenue and Excelsior Boulevard in the City of St. Louis Park, historically situated along 1,000 feet of a degraded channelized section of Minnehaha Creek.

In 2004, Park Nicollet began planning for future campus expansion. While the project was first received by the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) through the regulatory department, both parties recognized the significance of the opportunity to align goals around the intersection of health care and patient outcomes, and exposure to natural environments. Patients with access to nature have been found to require shorter hospital stays, encounter fewer post-surgery complications, and need fewer doses of strong pain medication (Ulrich et al. 2004).

Working in collaboration the parties established a project concept to construct a series of new stream meanders, improving channel sinuosity, floodplain hydraulics, bank conditions, and in-stream habitat through the inclusion of woody debris, pools and riffles. The project also included a contribution by Park Nicollet to provide public access via a 1,900 foot boardwalk trail to the 10 acres of restored greenspace and 1,400 feet of restored Minnehaha Creek.

We collaborate with public and private partners to protect and improve land and water for current and future generations.

This work marked the beginning of the Minnehaha Creek Greenway in St. Louis Park, Hopkins and Edina, and a change in planning and partnership philosophy for MCWD which increasingly recognizes the potential for synergy between the natural and built environments.

Regarding the project, Robert Riesselman, Methodist Hospital's Director of Engineering stated, "*In a competitive environment, we know that these investments make our campus much more attractive, and our medical staff believes that this enhanced contact with nature promotes a healing environment that in the long run will lead to better patient outcomes*" (Smith 2010).

Since the initial partnership work at Methodist Hospital was completed in 2009, the MCWD has carried the initial experience forward creating a greenway around Minnehaha Creek through a series of partnerships that regionally treat stormwater, expand and enhance riparian greenspace, provide increased public access, and meet goals of economic development, community connections, and recreation.

Short Term Background

In 2014 sustained rains created a flood of record along Minnehaha Creek resulting in acute impacts to Methodist Hospital operations. Park Nicollet had to place 30,000 sandbags and pump water on an emergency basis to retain access and function to the Methodist Hospital loading docks. Following the flooding, Methodist Hospital engineering and real estate staff contacted MCWD to discuss the exploration of a concept for a permanent flood wall to mitigate the impact of future flooding events on hospital operations.

In January 2015, MCWD and Park Nicollet entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) expressing a mutual commitment to collaboratively identifying flooding solutions for Methodist Hospital. This collaboration included a review of options and locations to provide the compensatory floodplain storage required under regulation, should existing floodplain areas be reconfigured to increase the hospital's resilience to future events.

Through collaboration under the MOU Park Nicollet advanced planning for a potential flood wall to protect the Methodist Hospital loading dock area. To compensate for any floodplain area lost by construction of this wall Park Nicollet would be required under City and MCWD regulation to provide an equivalent volume of compensatory storage. Park Nicollet identified a possible compensatory storage location on land at the north east quadrant of Louisiana Avenue and Excelsior Boulevard.

However, following further review, Park Nicollet and MCWD identified a preferred location (North Site), based on potential costs, environmental benefit and aesthetics, on the north side of the existing boardwalk that would fulfill compensatory storage requirements while creating ecological lift across the site's natural resources.

To advance planning to support this alternative North Site location, On March 24, 2016, the MCWD Board authorized the execution of a Cooperative Agreement between Park Nicollet and MCWD. The agreement acknowledged a mutual commitment to partner on the design, permitting and preparation of construction documents for the North Site, while also cooperating to explore long term master planning of flood storage and other natural resource/campus improvement opportunities for Methodist Hospital.

We collaborate with public and private partners to protect and improve land and water for current and future generations.

Pursuant to this agreement a floodplain solution was progressed through design to provide 1,200 cubic yards of floodplain storage by enhancing wetland function on site through targeted excavation, while adding visual interest along the existing boardwalk.

Project Summary and Partnership Framework:

Both parties have discussed and reached conceptual agreement on terms necessary to advance the design into construction. At the July 14, 2016 Board Workshop staff will provide the Board an update, in advance of bringing a construction phase cooperative agreement forward for action on July 28, 2016.

Park Nicollet’s floodwall will remove approximately 1,200 cubic yards of floodplain, requiring an equivalent amount of compensatory storage to be created. Through the Cooperative Agreement, Park Nicollet collaborated with MCWD to develop a wetland enhancement concept (North Site) that meets the following goals:

- Creates approximately 3,600 cubic yards of floodplain storage
- Achieves ecological enhancement across the site’s wetland complex by increasing vegetative structure diversity, quality, complexity and edge
- Provides visual interest and connects boardwalk users to MCWD mission at a site that employs 5,000 people, and experiences over 10,000 patients annually.
- Honors and reinvests in the spirit of the original Park Nicollet-MCWD partnership
- Furthers Park Nicollet’s mission to *improve health and well-being in partnership with our members, patients and community.*
- Advances Park Nicollet efforts to continue distinguishing the Methodist Hospital Campus within the healthcare marketplace

To advance this project into construction, Park Nicollet and MCWD staff have delineated the following roles and responsibilities.

- Park Nicollet will be responsible for the costs of design, regulatory approvals and construction of the project.
- Park Nicollet will coordinate the construction of the project with the construction of the floodwall in the fall-winter of 2016-2017.
- Park Nicollet will consult with the District and obtain prior District approval of the project design plans and specifications, award of the construction contracts, any change in the project design, and determination of substantial completion of the project.
- Park Nicollet will, upon completion of the project construction, grant to the District a permanent easement over the entire natural area in order for the District to provide ongoing vegetation management pursuant to a mutually agreed upon vegetation management plan for the site.

We collaborate with public and private partners to protect and improve land and water for current and future generations.

- The District shall provide to Park Nicollet, upon completion of the project and receipt of as-built drawings, a letter memorializing as a credit the amount of cubic yards of floodplain capacity in excess of the District's regulatory requirement.
- The District secures the right, beginning in 2017, to begin phasing in plantings across the site, in coordination with Park Nicollet; and assumes ongoing vegetation management responsibilities for the site consistent with a mutually agreeable vegetation management plan.
- The District's responsibilities under a cooperative agreement are contingent upon an order approving the project by its Board of Managers

Next Steps:

Staff will provide a briefing to complement this memorandum at the July 14, 2016 Board Workshop. If there are questions in advance of the meeting, please contact: James Wisker at Jwisker@minnehahacreek.org or 952.641.4509

Attachments:

- Draft Concept Plan
- Draft Planting Plan

We collaborate with public and private partners to protect and improve land and water for current and future generations.

Future
Connection
to LRT



Future Bridge with
Trail Underpass

WEST ENTRY

Parking
Garage

Loading
Dock

METHODIST
HOSPITAL

Minnehaha Creek

LOUISIANA AVENUE

Parking
Garage

EXCELSIOR BOULEVARD

1 min. Walk

0 80 160 240 320 400 480 640'

1" = 80' at full size (24 x 36")

1/4 ac

1/8 ac

Future Connection to LRT

PLANT LIST AND LEGEND

KEY	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	MCWD QUANTITY	P/N QUANTITY
WETLAND PLANTING ZONE				
A. UPLAND AREAS				
1	TREES		0	7
ACF	ACER X FREMANII "JEFFERSRED"	AUTUMN BLAZE MAPLE		
2	SHRUBS		94	231
ARM	ARONIA MELANOCARPA	BLACK CHOKEBERRY		
COG	CORNUS A. S. "REGZAM"	RED GNOME DOGWOOD		
CLH	CLETHRA ALNIFOLIA "HUMMINGBIRD"	HUMMINGBIRD CLETHRA		
DIL	DIERVILLA LONICERA	DWARF BUSH HONEYSUCKLE		
B. ISLANDS AND FRINGE AREAS				
1	TREES		14	44
ACS	ACER SACCHARINUM	SILVER MAPLE		
LAL	LARIX LARICINA	TAMARACK		
POD	POPULUS DELTOIDES	EASTERN COTTONWOOD		
2	SHRUBS		776	940
COA	CORNUS AMOMUM	SILKY DOGWOOD		
COS	CORNUS SERICEA	RED-OSIER DOGWOOD		
COR	CORNUS RACEMOSA	GRAY DOGWOOD		
SAH	SALIX HUMILIS VAR. HUMILIS	PRAIRIE WILLOW		
AMF	AMORPHA FRUTICOSA	INDIGIO BUSH		
3	FOCAL PLANTS		621	0
EUM	EUPATORIUM MACULATUM	JOE PYE WEED		
SAC	SAMBUCUS CANADENSIS	AMERICAN ELDERBERRY		
SPA	SPIREA ALBA	MEADOWSWEET SPIREA		
C. AREAS NEAR BOARDWALK AND FLOODWALL				
1	TREES		17	7
AVL	AMELANCHIER LAEVIS	ALLEGHENY SERVICEBERRY		
MOA	MORUS ALBA	MULBERRY		
POS	POPULUS SP	POPLAR SP		
VIL	VIBURNUM LENTAGO	NANNYBERRY VIBURNUM		
2	SHRUBS		477	0
CEO	CEPHALANTHUS OCCIDENTALIS	BUTTONBUSH		
COR	CORNUS RACEMOSA	GRAY DOGWOOD		
COS	CORNUS SERICEA	RED-OSIER DOGWOOD		
SPA	SPIREA ALBA	MEADOWSWEET SPIREA		
D. EMERGENT ZONE (0-18 INCHES OF WATER)				
			37700 sqft	0
1	SEED MIX			
BWSR	BWSR 34-181	Emergent Wetland (0-18" of water)		
2	HERBACEOUS PLUGS TO COMPETE WITH CATTAIL			
SAG	SAGITTARIA LATIFOLIA	BROADLEAVED ARROWHEAD		
SCR	SCIRPUS FLUVIATILIS	RIVER BULRUSH		
SCV	SCIRPUS VALIDUS	SOFT-STEM BULRUSH		
SPR	SPARGANIUM CURYCARPUM	GIANT BUR-REED		
E. WET MEADOW ZONE (PERMANENT MOISTURE)				
			49280 sqft	0
1	SEED MIX			
BWSR	BWSR 34-261	Riparian South & West (Permanent moisture)		
2	HERBACEOUS FORB PLUGS TO SUPPLEMENT 34-261 SEED MIX (PERMANENT MOISTURE)			
AST	ASTER LUCIDULUS	SWAMP ASTER		
AST	ASTER PUNICEUS	RED-STEMMED ASTER		
HYG	AGASTACHE FOENICULUM	GIANT HYSSOP		
EUP	EUPATORIUM MACULATUM	JOE-PYE-WEED		
HEA	HELIUM AUTUMNALE	SNEEZEWEED		
IRI	IRIS VERSICOLOR	BLUE FLAG IRIS		
LIG	LIATRIS LIGULISTYLIS	MEADOW BLAZINGSTAR		
PER	PERILOCHUM PERFORIATUM	CUP PLANT		
VER	VERNONIA FASCICULATA	IRONWEED		
VHA	VERBENA HASTATA	BLUE VERVAIN		



Future Bridge with Trail Underpass

