



MEMORANDUM

To: MCWD Board of Managers
From: Renae Clark, Planner/Project Manager
Date: April 11, 2016
Re: Arden Park Project Development Process and Schedule Briefing

Purpose:

In response to the Board resolution on April 7, 2016, on April 14, 2016 staff will present a briefing on the project development plan and implementation schedule for Arden Park creek and riparian restoration in Edina. This memorandum provides background information for the presentation.

Background:

In October 2013, the Board authorized staff to investigate alternatives for the West 54th St. grade control structure in Edina in coordination with the City's proposed street reconstruction and replacement of the West 54th Street bridge. The grade control structure was recommended for removal in the District's 2003 Stream Assessment because it is a barrier to fish passage and creates an impoundment causing accumulation of sediment, degrading upstream aquatic habitat.

The public engagement process implemented by the City of Edina and MCWD revealed that the grade control structure caused a standing wave to form at the downstream end that was a regional attraction for whitewater paddlers and the Board directed that project alternatives maintain the existing recreational functionality. For this reason, staff recommended a bypass channel alternative that would allow for fish passage but would leave the structure intact. The Board ordered the project on September 25, 2014, and the pipe portion of the bypass channel was incorporated into the City's bid package for W. 54th St.

The street reconstruction project was delayed due to bid prices and it was subsequently discovered that, following the record flooding of 2014, the wave is no longer forming and there has been further deterioration of the spillway presenting potential entrapment hazards for paddlers. Given the loss of the recreational feature, staff recommended that the District revisit removal of the structure and restoration of the creek and the Board authorized this direction in Resolution 15-009 on January 29, 2015. A larger-scale stream restoration effort incorporating recreational amenities, improving safety, and enhancing riparian vegetation throughout the Park was supported by the City of Edina in a letter of support. In addition, the Rapids Riders Club provided written support to remove the grade control and encouraged the incorporation of new whitewater features in tandem with meeting ecological goals. The group organized a subcommittee "Friends of the Wave" to participate in the design of the project.

Project design dollars were levied in the 2016 budget. During the first quarter of 2016 staff has been working with the City of Edina in creating a project development process which includes a schematic concept design with a public participation process and terms for a cooperative agreement to aligning goals and responsibilities for project development. On April 14, 2016 staff will outline the project development process and timeline to reflect the revised CIP schedule.

Schedule:

May – July 2016 Schematic Concept Design Development Process

August – December 2016 Design Development

July 2017 Solicit bids for construction

2018 Construction

Next Steps:**April 28, 2016**

1. Board authorization of a Cooperative Agreement with the City of Edina to collaborate on the development of a schematic concept plan for Arden Park to integrate natural resources improvements with overall park improvements consistent with the following goals:
 - Provide fish passage upstream - connecting the 8 miles of stream channel downstream to the 1.15 miles upstream (until Browndale Dam)
 - Eliminate impoundment and sedimentation and restore natural stream function
 - Improve in-stream and riparian habitat through Reach 15 – improve fish and macroinvertebrate IBI scores, address impairments
 - Improve recreation to replace recreational value that was lost, improve canoe launches
 - Improve public safety - potentially eliminate need to portage across W 54th St.
 - Work with City to incorporate park improvements that residents requested through the public engagement process (e.g. controlling buckthorn, improving creek access and viewsheds, stormwater management)

2. Board authorization of a consultant contract to develop a schematic concept design with opinion of probable cost