



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** MCWD Board of Managers  
**From:** Tiffany Schaufler  
**Date:** July 11, 2017  
**Re:** Update on Minnehaha Creek Corridor Planning with Minneapolis and MPRB

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### **Purpose:**

At the July 13, 2017 PPC meeting staff will provide an update on the integrated planning of the Minnehaha Creek subwatershed in Minneapolis and the proposed next steps.

### **Background:**

#### History

Historically, Minnehaha Creek has been altered and utilized as a stormwater conveyance system. These alterations have impacted the ecological integrity of the stream and its riparian system. As a result, Minnehaha Creek is listed as an impaired water for multiple parameters as is downstream receiving waterbody Lake Hiawatha. To address the impairments in this regional namesake resource, that comprises the entire lower portion of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed, the District is working to (1) restore natural stream channel structure and function, (2) expand, restore and connect riparian greenspace, (3) treat regional stormwater flows to improve flow regime and water quality, (4) accomplish these objectives in ways that enhance local community goals while connecting people to this iconic resource.

The District has strategically focused its planning and project efforts in the Minnehaha Creek Greenway in Hopkins and St. Louis Park, as this area produces the highest pollutant loading per unit area of anywhere else on Minnehaha Creek. Over the past eight years the District has made significant progress towards its strategic goals within this stretch of Minnehaha Creek by implementing a series of public private partnerships.

In an effort to address these impairments further downstream, the District is planning to transition and focus its planning and project efforts in Minneapolis. The District has worked with the City of Minneapolis (City) and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) on various analyses in recent years to identify opportunities for stormwater management and stream improvements on MPRB land. MPRB and the City are expecting to make various infrastructure improvements in the coming years. The District, MPRB and the City are looking to identify opportunities for collaboration to integrate

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stormwater management, recreation improvements, stormwater improvements, and natural resource improvements along the Minnehaha Creek corridor. To memorialize this integrated approach the three agencies have executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which outlines shared priorities and investment strategies to improve the natural and built environments within the Minnehaha Creek subwatershed in Minneapolis. The MOU outlines how the three agencies will work together to identify multi-jurisdictional initiatives to achieve complex goals such as:

- Reducing flooding
- Achieving regional pollutant load reductions identified in TMDLs
- Reducing runoff volumes and peak flows to Minnehaha Creek
- Eliminating combined sewer overflows
- Enhancing the ecology and recreation opportunity of the creek corridor

#### Request for Qualifications – Integrated Planning of the Minnehaha Creek Subwatershed in Minneapolis

At the February 23, 2017 Board of Managers meeting, the Board approved Resolution 17-017 which authorized the District to enter into the MOU with the City and MPRB and issue a request for qualifications (RFQ) for the integrated planning of the Minnehaha Creek Subwatershed in Minneapolis. Through this MOU the three agencies have agreed to mutually support an effort to create a multi-jurisdictional concept plan and capital improvement plan to improve the natural and built environments within the Minnehaha Creek subwatershed in the City of Minneapolis. The MOU identifies opportunities for partnership which includes the District's FEMA repairs to Minnehaha Creek, the Hiawatha Golf Course assessment, and addressing City localized flooding near 50<sup>th</sup> and Chowen.

Since the February 23, 2017 Board Meeting, District staff has been coordinating with the MPRB and City on drafting the RFQ. The original intent of the RFQ was to seek a consultant team to assist with the FEMA streambank repairs and assist in concept plan development integrating streambank restoration, stream channel modifications, stormwater management, riparian corridor improvements, flood mitigation, and regional trail and park improvements along the Minnehaha Creek corridor. During the drafting of the RFQ, MPRB staff suggested expansion of the RFQ to include master planning for the Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail. The Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail is a 253 acre regional facility with 5.3 miles of parkway and is located within the MPRB system. Inclusion of this master planning within the RFQ would allow the FEMA streambank repairs to include broad scale landscape considerations related to the ecology of the creek. By introducing those topics in the context of a larger planning process, the streambank restoration activities can be considered more holistically. Recreation and connectivity, goals of the MPRB, might be better aligned with the District's goals to improve water quality and the ecological integrity of Minnehaha Creek. The deliverable from the RFQ process is a planning umbrella that could weave the following interagency projects in Minneapolis together which could then be used to develop a capital improvement plan:

- Minnehaha Glen O&M
- Hiawatha Golf Course
- City Flood Area 29/30
- MRPB Ecological System Plan
- MPRB Regional Trail Planning/ Trail Improvements
- Flood Mitigation & Flood Damage Repair

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### Flood Area 29/30 (50<sup>th</sup> & Chowen)

In addition to coordinating on the RFQ, the City of Minneapolis has recently engaged the District and MPRB on a local flooding area (Flood Area 29/30) near 50<sup>th</sup> and Chowen, which the City identified as a priority in the MOU. The City is coordinating with the District and MPRB to develop a list of interagency goals which will be used to help guide the optimal design solution to mitigate flooding in this area.

### Hiawatha Golf Course

MPRB has been coordinating with the District and City on an assessment of the Hiawatha Golf Course. MPRB and City staff are presenting the water management evaluation to the MPRB Board of Commissioners on July 12, 2017. The District has been part of the project advisory team through routine meetings. If anything new is learned at the July 12 MPRB meeting, District staff will provide an update on that information at the July 13, 2017 PPC meeting.

### **Next Steps:**

At the July 13, 2017 PPC meeting, staff will provide an update on the short term moving parts, e.g. City Flood Area 29/30 mitigation study, pending MPRB Hiawatha Golf Course decision in August, RFQ process advancing, and how the logistics of these interagency initiatives will be managed on a short term basis. Moving forward from the July 13, 2017 PPC meeting, staff would like to start a series of discussions on a policy level with the Board. These discussions will track where the work in Minneapolis might take the District at a partnership level with the MPRB and City.

If there are questions in advance of the meeting, please contact Tiffany Schaufler at 952-641-4513 or at [tschaufler@minnehahacreek.org](mailto:tschaufler@minnehahacreek.org).

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