



Title:	Authorization to Submit a Letter to the MPRB in Support of the Draft Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail Master Plan	
Resolution number:	20-058	
Prepared by:	Name: Tiffany Schaufler Phone: 952-641-4513 tschaufler@minnehahacreek.org	
Reviewed by:	Name/Title: N/A	
Recommended action:	Authorize the Board President to sign a letter in support of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's draft master plan for the Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail	
Schedule:	June 23, 2020 – MCWD PPC reviewed the draft master plan for the Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail August 3, 2020 – Public comments due on MPRB's master plan	
Past Board action:	Res #: 17-017	Title: Authorization to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Minneapolis and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and Issue a Request for Qualification for the Integrated Planning of the Minnehaha Creek Subwatershed in Minneapolis
	Res #: 17-059	Title: Authorization to Execute a Contract for Preliminary Design for FEMA Repairs and Minnehaha Creek Corridor Planning

Summary:

In February 2017, the District, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), and City of Minneapolis (City) approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which outlined shared priorities and investment strategies to improve the natural and built environments within the Minnehaha Creek subwatershed in Minneapolis.

At the same time the MOU was authorized for execution, the Board of Managers authorized staff to develop and issue a request for qualifications (RFQ) in coordination with the City and the MPRB that would retain professional services to 1) advance the design and construction of FEMA funded repairs, and 2) begin implementing the goals and workflow of the MOU by integrating plans and investments for FEMA repairs, stormwater management, flood mitigation, road improvements, planned trail and recreation improvements, and regional park master planning.

The RFQ broke the work into two stages. Stage 1 was led by the District and focused on implementation of the Minnehaha Creek FEMA streambank repairs, carrying out a stormwater management study, and developing an integrated creek corridor concept plan which would serve as a foundation for the Stage 2 work. Stage 2 is being led by MPRB and includes developing a master plan for the Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail (MPRT).

Between July 2018 and February 2020, MPRB in coordination with the District and the City, facilitated a master planning process for the MPRT. As part of the master plan process, MPRB convened a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and

numerous community events to create a vision, guiding principles, review concepts and gather feedback for the MPRT. At their February 19, 2020 meeting, the MPRT CAC approved the master plan concepts for recommendation to the MPRB Park Board Commissioners. Between March 2020 - May 2020, the MPRB project team, in consultation with District and City staff, developed the master plan document. On June 19, 2020, MPRB formally released the MPRT master plan document for a 45-day public comment period which closes on August 3, 2020.

At the June 23, 2020 Policy and Planning Committee meeting, District staff provided an update on the MPRB MPRT master plan status, summarized the water resource project opportunities, and summarized the total projected natural resource benefits and costs. The stormwater management, ecological enhancement, and flood mitigation opportunities identified within the draft master plan could add approximately two additional miles of creek length, remove nearly 300 pounds of phosphorus from draining to Lake Hiawatha, restore over 50 acres of landscape, and create over 50 acre-feet of floodplain storage. During the June 23 PPC briefing, the Board expressed their excitement in progressing the vision of this master plan and directed staff to coordinate with MPRB and City of Minneapolis staff to identify priority areas and areas of alignment.

Given the Board's excitement over the draft MPRT master plan, the Board would like to express their support to the MPRB Commissioners for their effort to develop the master plan and for their coordination with the District in its development. Attached is a draft letter in support of the MPRB's draft MPRT master plan.

Supporting documents (list attachments):

- Attachment A: Draft MCWD letter of in support of MPRB's draft Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail Master Plan



RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District’s (District) Watershed Management Plan (WMP) identifies the Minnehaha Creek subwatershed as a priority geography for focusing the District’s planning activities and coordination efforts with its subwatershed partners;

WHEREAS the District’s WMP identifies water quality, water quantify and ecological integrity goals for the Minnehaha Creek subwatershed and identifies stormwater management, stream restoration and restoration of wetlands and ecological corridors as management strategies to achieve those goals;

WHEREAS in 2017 the MCWD Board of Managers, MPRB Board of Commissioners and Minneapolis City Council approved a memorandum of understanding that outlines opportunities to collaborate and integrate mutual efforts in realms of land-use planning, stormwater management, flood mitigation, park and public land management, greenway development, and water resources improvements;

WHEREAS beginning in 2018 the MPRB, in coordination with District and the City of Minneapolis, began a master plan process for the Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail (MPRT);

WHEREAS on June 19, 2020 the MPRB released the draft MPRT master plan document for a 45-day public comment period;

WHEREAS at the June 23, 2020 Policy and Planning Committee meeting the MCWD Board of Managers reviewed the water resource opportunities and the projected natural resource benefits that could be achieved through implementation of the MPRT master plan;

WHEREAS the MCWD Board of Managers recognizes the unique opportunity the MPRT master plan provides to improve water resources and to reimagine the Minnehaha Creek corridor in Minneapolis;

WHEREAS the MCWD Board of Managers desire to continue to collaborate with MPRB and the City of Minneapolis to implement the master plan and wishes to express their support of the June 19, 2020 draft MPRT master plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers authorizes the Board Present to submit the attached letter in support of the MPRB’s draft Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail Master Plan.

Resolution Number 20-058 was moved by Manager _____, seconded by Manager _____. Motion to adopt the resolution ___ ayes, ___ nays, ___ abstentions. Date: 7/23/2020

 Secretary Date: July 23, 2020



July XX, 2020

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) Commissioners
2117 West River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55411

Dear MPRB Commissioners,

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) Board of Managers are writing in strong support of the MPRB's draft master plan for the Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail (MPRT).

MCWD's management strategies rest on our Balanced Urban Ecology approach to water resource planning and implementation. This approach recognizes the environmental, social and economic value created when the built and natural systems work in harmony. Minnehaha Creek and the park space around the Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail are a part of a landscape that creates a sense of place and provides a local identity, adds economic value and increases well-being. The work to ensure that Minnehaha Creek and the Chain of Lakes have clean water and a healthy natural environment are essential to create and sustain a vibrant Minneapolis.

It is for these reasons that the MCWD Board of Managers were excited to see the tenets of MCWD's Balanced Urban Ecology philosophy at play in the draft MPRT master plan. At MCWD's June 23, 2020 Policy and Planning Committee, MCWD staff outlined the water resource opportunities and the total projected natural resource benefits and costs. The vision the master plan brings to restore the natural curves and meanders of Minnehaha Creek would add approximately two additional miles to the creek's length in Minneapolis while also reconnecting the creek to its natural floodplain. The proposed 11 stormwater best management practices (BMPs) would provide benefits that reach beyond the MPRT corridor and would clean water from over 1,200 acres and in some instances from over seven blocks away. These BMPs also have the potential to remove nearly 300 pounds of phosphorus and make significant strides towards MPRB's and the City of Minneapolis' 400.4 pound phosphorus reduction responsibility for downstream Lake Hiawatha.

The stormwater management, ecological enhancement, and flood mitigation opportunities identified within the draft master plan are energizing. The water resource elements in the master plan are important for our organization to see implemented and therefore have our Board discussing where and how MCWD could plug-in to construct the projects. We have asked MCWD staff to work with MPRB and City of Minneapolis staff to learn each agency's priorities within the MPRT master plan and to outline areas of alignment for our agencies.

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



We appreciate the opportunity that MPRB has provided MCWD to participate in the MPRT master plan process. We look forward to working with you and the City of Minneapolis to implement the reimagined Minnehaha Creek corridor. Lastly, we would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how MCWD could be a partner to MPRB on the implementation of this master plan.

Sincerely,

Sherry Davis White
MCWD Board President

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