

MEMORANDUM

To: MCWD Board of Managers
From: Laura Domyancich
CC: James Wisker
Date: December 18, 2014
Re: MPRB Nokomis-Hiawatha Master Plan Comments

Purpose: To provide a summary of staff's comments on the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's proposed Nokomis-Hiawatha Master Plan in advance of the comment period deadline of January 12, 2015.

Background: Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park includes approximately 386 acres of land surrounding Lakes Nokomis and Hiawatha. The first plan for management of this land was created by Theodore Wirth in 1934, and this plan has remained the guiding document for park management over the last 80 years. Recognizing the need for enhanced park facilities, greater connectivity, and improved water quality, MPRB initiated the Nokomis-Hiawatha Master Plan project in March 2014. An initial three-phase project schedule was developed based on Metropolitan Council Regional Parks and Trails funding deadlines. This includes: 1) development of the Master Plan by June 2015, 2) play area and trail improvements at the 54th Street "Triangle Park", accessibility improvements at the Lake Nokomis main beach, and reconstruction and relocation of portions of trail and shoreline by June 2015, and 3) a second phase of trail and shoreline improvements determined by Master Plan prioritization exercises and completed by June 2016. Following this first set of initiatives, the Master Plan lays out a 12+ year implementation of 42 individual park improvement projects of varying priority and with the coordination of multiple agencies.

In the spring of 2014, District staff was asked to participate in a design charrette for the project to provide input on stormwater and water quality improvement elements of the plan. Staff's current involvement is to review the master plan and provide comments to the project team to prepare the document for approval by the MPRB.

Next Steps: At the conclusion of the comment period, all comments will be compiled and presented to the MPRB Commissioners at a public hearing in early 2015. Upon MPRB approval, the plan will be presented to the Metropolitan Council Park and Open Space Commission for its approval. In the interim, District staff will advocate for additional partnership meetings, continue to provide technical assistance

in finalizing the plan, and coordinate with MPRB staff to initiate projects that will improve water quality and stormwater management through a system-wide approach.

If there are questions in advance of the meeting, please contact: Laura Domyancich at (952) 641-4582 or ldomyancich@minnehahacreek.org.

Attachment 1: Comment Letter

Attachment 2: Nokomis Hiawatha Master Plan

Attachment 3: Nokomis Hiawatha Master Plan Implementation Prioritization and Cost Estimates



SECTION 6: IMPLEMENTATION

Priorities and Estimated Costs

In order to execute the goals for Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park, the Master Plan includes a list of park improvement projects for implementation over time. These projects relate to the recommendations outlined in Section 4 of this document and work to achieve the overall vision for the park. The table on the following page lists the projects and identifies each in relation to the Framework Plans or Activity Center Plans described within the Master Plan.

Each project is also given a preferred prioritization for implementation. Decisions about prioritization were made with recommendations from the CAC and MPRB staff. Issues taken into consideration during the decision process include identified needs, community desires, coordinating implementing agencies, and capital cost estimates. Prioritization categories include:

- » **Ongoing** = Implementation of these projects will continue each year as money is available for capital improvements.
- » **Short** = These projects are planned for implementation within 6 years of the Master Plan approval. Some of the projects in this category are identified as “major capital” projects, which require additional funding outside of annual capital funding in order for short-term implementation (within 6 years).
- » **Medium** = These projects are planned for implementation 6 to 12 years from the Master Plan approval.
- » **Long** = These projects are planned for implementation 12 years after the Master Plan approval.
- » **Dependent** = These projects require significant coordination, approvals, and funding from other agencies, such as the City of Minneapolis or Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. Implementation can only occur as a joint-project with the relevant partnering agency(ies). Cost estimates reflect expenditures expected for the MPRB only.

The total estimated cost for each project is calculated using previous known construction costs, example bids, and other similar example projects. All costs are completed in 2014 dollars and are subject to change. Several varying factors, including design and construction plans, may alter costs as the timing for implementation nears.

Unfold to see Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Priorities & Cost Estimate Table

Implementation Prioritization and Cost Estimates

Improvement Project	Framework/Activity Area	Preferred Prioritization	Total Cost	Cost Notes
Repair degraded paths	Circulation	ONGOING	\$625,000	Assumes resurfacing and repair of existing trails
Conversion of lawn to habitat	Natural Resources	ONGOING	\$2,800,000	Costs dependent on grades, soil conditions, and type of habitat
Naturalized shorelines	Natural Resources	ONGOING	\$880,000	3000ft Hiawatha; 5800ft Nokomis
Additional drinking fountains	Recreation	ONGOING	\$200,000	Costs dependent on location and distance from water source
Additional restroom enclosures	Recreation	ONGOING	\$7,500	Includes enclosure only; portable restrooms cost excluded; installation by MPRB
Improved picnic grounds and additional shelters	Recreation	ONGOING	\$600,000	Assumes traditional shelters
Additional gates for winter access to golf course	Circulation	SHORT	\$6,000	Assumes installation by MPRB
Additional neighborhood connections	Circulation	SHORT	\$72,000	Includes bike connection from Community Center to Woodlawn, connections at 52nd and 55th Streets, and sidewalk at 54th Street Triangle Park
Seasonal trail around Lake Hiawatha	Circulation	SHORT	\$5,000	To cover signage and marking; gate access cost in separate line item
Removal of Art Walk	Recreation	SHORT	\$5,000	Removal of signs and restoration of landscape
Enhance the arboretum with signage	Recreation	SHORT	\$5,000	Plant tags and identification signage
Reconfigure trails to reduce conflicts at creek bridge	Lake Hiawatha	SHORT	\$28,000	Trail reconstruction only
Canoe/kayak launch and boat storage relocated to north end of lake	Nokomis Community Center	SHORT	\$5,000	Include relocation of boat storage; labor by MPRB
New playground near Nokomis Community Center	Nokomis Community Center	SHORT	\$250,000	Dependent on site and design
Revise trails to reduce ped/bike/vehicle conflict	Nokomis Community Center	SHORT	\$70,000	Trail removal and landscape restoration (700ft) and new trail construction (1400ft)
Accessible water access at Nokomis main beach	Nokomis Main Beach	SHORT	\$12,500	Trail construction and dewatering
Expand Nokomis main beach to north and relocate rental vendor	Nokomis Main Beach	SHORT	\$150,000	Includes added sand, markings, and signage
Provide shade on and near Nokomis main beach	Nokomis Main Beach	SHORT	\$24,000	Assumes canvas single post structure; Cost with installation
Refurbished vta-course	Recreation	SHORT	\$150,000	Cost for 15 stations with installation
Enhanced crossings of Cedar Ave at Nokomis Minnehaha Parkway	Cedar Avenue Crossings	SHORT: major capital	\$180,000	Includes reconstruction of trail approaches to intersections, curb cut revision, sign relocation and striping
Revised ped/bike trail routing to Cedar Avenue bridge	Cedar Avenue Crossings	SHORT: major capital	\$80,000	Includes new trail access to bridge only
Ped/bike trails around Hiawatha golf course	Circulation	SHORT: major capital	\$585,000	Dual trail system: 1.6 miles of 10ft bike trail, 3400ft of 8ft ped trail; and 900ft on-street bike path along 27th Ave; Assumes coordination with City of Mpls
Pedestrian-only loop around Lake Nokomis lagoon	Circulation	SHORT: major capital	\$92,000	New trail construction
New ped-only bridge over Minnehaha Creek	Lake Hiawatha	SHORT: major capital	\$300,000	Dependent on design and construction
Convert overflow parking to picnic area	Nokomis Community Center	MEDIUM	\$180,000	Removal and restoration
Expand Nokomis Center parking lot	Nokomis Community Center	MEDIUM	\$100,000	Replace number of stalls at overflow parking
New amphitheater	Nokomis Community Center	MEDIUM	\$500,000	Assumes open stage and seating
New skate park	Nokomis Community Center	MEDIUM	\$500,000	Concrete design integrated with landscape
Add 3 sand volleyball courts near Nokomis Main Beach	Nokomis Main Beach	MEDIUM	\$30,000	New court construction
Add parking west of Nokomis Parkway near athletic fields	Nokomis Main Beach	MEDIUM	\$120,000	To include stormwater management
Reconfigure existing parking at Nokomis main beach	Nokomis Main Beach	MEDIUM	\$60,000	To include stormwater management
Revise pathway system near Nokomis main beach	Nokomis Main Beach	MEDIUM	\$90,000	Trail reconstruction
Upgrade and revise arrangement of athletic fields	Nokomis Main Beach	MEDIUM	\$2,000,000	Maximum Cost; Dependent on field configuration and design
Replacement of Hiawatha beach with nature, boardwalk, pavilion, and new boat launch	Lake Hiawatha	LONG	\$600,000	860ft boardwalk; new pavilion; beach removal; canoe launch
New beach house at Nokomis main beach	Nokomis Main Beach	LONG	\$4,000,000	Maximum Cost; dependent on building design, construction plans, and timing.
Dedicated bikeway on Cedar Bridge	Cedar Avenue Crossings	DEPENDENT	\$26,000	Include striping of existing trail on bridge
Pedestrian paths under Cedar Bridge	Cedar Avenue Crossings	DEPENDENT	\$84,000	Assumes trail foundations built with new bridge and structures by others
Road/trail connection between Edgewater and Parkway	Cedar Avenue Crossings	DEPENDENT	\$75,500	Includes construction of roadway and adjacent trail system
Ped/bike trails under 28th Avenue	Lake Hiawatha	DEPENDENT	\$25,000	Dependent on City of Minneapolis bridge replacement project; assume built with bridge and structures by others
Re-meander Minnehaha Creek	Natural Resources	DEPENDENT	\$170,000	Dependent on involvement and funding from Minnehaha Creek Watershed District; costs for collaborative habitat restoration
Expand Nokomis Community Center building	Nokomis Community Center	DEPENDENT	\$3,000,000	Maximum Cost; Dependent on full building design and construction plans
Upgraded tennis/pickleball courts	Nokomis Community Center	DEPENDENT	\$50,000	Assumes resurfacing, striping, and nets
Total			\$18,740,500	<i>(Maximum cost estimate)</i>

NOTE: Estimates based on 2014 Dollars; costs are subject to change as project plans and designs are finalized at time of implementation

Estimated Operations and Maintenance Costs

Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park is maintained and operated by the MPRB. The existing MPRB budget therefore supplies equipment and staffing resources required to maintain and operate the park year-round. Annual operations, maintenance, and public safety costs are funded through the MPRB's budget, as funding allows. The budget is administered by the MPRB's Superintendent and approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Some of the recommended improvements, such as reconstruction of trails, will reduce some of the maintenance costs in the near-term for ongoing repairs. Other improvements, such as the significant increase in naturalized plantings, will require a revision in maintenance regimes that are not currently staffed. As implementation of these plantings are realized over time, alterations to staffing and funding will be considered in order to accommodate the maintenance of newer features. Some park improvements, especially those addressing stormwater, are typically funded and maintained in collaboration with partners, such as City of Minneapolis and Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

Funding Sources

Development of Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park involves a number of partners. Partners already contributing to native plantings, park development, and water quality improvements include the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, City of Minneapolis, and citizen volunteers.

The estimated costs shown reflect the cost to MPRB if no outside funding is available. Projects within Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park are likely to be implemented with a variety of funding sources, both MPRB and outside. MPRB will actively seek grants, collaborative funding agreements, donations, volunteer projects, and multi-agency projects to reduce the total cost to MPRB. This Master Plan sets forth an aggressive vision for the park over the next 25 years and opens doors to a greater variety of funding options. Implementation will require continued community advocacy and outside money.



Wading in the water at Lake Hiawatha

MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

QUALITY OF WATER QUALITY OF LIFE

December 18, 2014

Adam Arvidson
Design Project Manager
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
2117 West River Road, Minneapolis, MN 55411

Re: Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Master Plan Draft Comments

Dear Mr. Arvidson:

I am writing in response to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's (MPRB) request for comment by January 12, 2015 on the Nokomis-Hiawatha Master Plan.

As part of the MPRB's process, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District staff participated in a charrette in May to provide water resource information that may relate to the Nokomis-Hiawatha planning effort. During those meetings, the District provided background information and general support for MPRB efforts to naturalize the Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park.

The Draft Nokomis-Hiawatha Master Plan includes the following general areas of improvement:

1. Naturalization of floodplain land in the southwest corner of Lake Nokomis, into proposed stormwater features.
2. Replacing turf grass with natural plantings (savanna, prairie, meadow).
3. Naturalizing Lake Nokomis (5,800') and Lake Hiawatha (3,000') shoreline.
4. Remeandering Minnehaha Creek between Cedar Avenue and Minnehaha Parkway.
5. Improvements to trail, playgrounds, athletic fields, Nokomis Main Beach, etc.

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District supports the MPRB efforts to integrate planning in ways that meet recreational objectives, reduce operational costs, improve ecological integrity, and complement the surrounding urban environment.

The following comments are offered as a means to refine the Master Plan and to facilitate implementation success.

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District is committed to a leadership role in protecting, improving and managing the surface waters and affiliated groundwater resources within the District, including their relationships to the ecosystems of which they are an integral part. We achieve our mission through regulation, capital projects, education, cooperative endeavors, and other programs based on sound science, innovative thinking, an informed and engaged constituency, and the cost effective use of public funds.

1. **Stormwater:**

Existing stormwater facilities in the southwest corner of Nokomis (Amelia, Gateway, and Knoll Ponds) were installed to treat the large adjacent urban subwatersheds. It is unclear if the intent of the Master Plan is to divert additional drainage areas into the “proposed stormwater features.” Given the presence of existing treatment facilities it is unlikely that additional treatment in this area would provide a substantial improvement in water quality.

Other large watersheds in the northeast of Lake Nokomis remain largely untreated. Given the goal of improving water quality, additional investigation is recommended to determine the viability of integrating large-scale regional treatment within areas of the park now proposed as being naturalized.

Since the area proposed for “stormwater features” in the southwest quadrant is prone to high water, the District supports the MPRB’s efforts to naturalize this portion of parkland. This will provide a functional landscape link between the existing stormwater wetlands and reduce operational costs associated with maintaining turf in an area prone to flooding.

Finally, no specific costs were listed for stormwater improvements within the implementation plan on Page 47.

2. **Naturalization of Landscape:**

The District supports MPRB efforts to naturalize portions of parkland, converting turf grass to savanna, prairie, or meadow. Given the need to balance functional active-recreation land with more passive-use natural areas, vegetative restoration should be strategically located.

Locations should be chosen that optimize landscape level connectivity, augment park aesthetics, and stack multiple functions. Therefore, as suggested in #1 above, the District recommends further investigating opportunities to layer functions of shoreline restoration, regional stormwater management, and “restored habitat”. This is consistent with Master Plan recommendations on Page 25.

For example, proposed areas along the east side of Lake Nokomis may be combined to improve shoreline characteristics and manage untreated regional stormwater, which will also achieve vegetative restoration objectives currently classified as “restored habitat”.

Regarding cost, the implementation plan on Page 47 estimates \$2,800,000 for conversion of lawn to natural plantings. There is an estimated 386 acres of land within the Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park. The Master Plan establishes goals of increasing natural acreage from existing 10% (38.6 acres) to a proposed 50% (193 acres). Based on the District’s experience, this work typically costs \$2,800/acre - \$3,800/acre. Therefore, it is unclear why \$2,800,000 is allocated to “conversion of lawn to habitat.”

3. **Shoreline:**

The District supports the MPRB efforts to naturalize shorelines. The implementation plan proposes 8,800 feet of restoration for a cost of \$880,000. This represents \$100 per lineal foot. In the District's experience this number could be \$50-\$80 higher per lineal foot if vegetation and rock are installed. The District recommends developing an assumed typical design to better inform implementation cost estimates as the Master Plan continues to be refined.

4. **Minnehaha Creek:**

The District supports efforts to improve the geomorphology of Minnehaha Creek to address ecological integrity goals. Further study is required to determine the potential hydraulic impact upstream and downstream of a proposed remeander, between Cedar Avenue and Minnehaha Parkway. Accordingly, the District recommends that the boundary for stream remeander concepts within the Master Plan be expanded to include stream Reaches 6 and 7. Reach 7 extends between Bloomington Avenue to Nokomis Outlet, and Reach 6 extends from the Nokomis Outlet to Hiawatha. This revision supports the evaluation of improvement on a systems basis.

5. **Hiawatha Golf Course:**

Finally, the Nokomis Hiawatha Master Plan excludes evaluation of the Hiawatha Golf Course. The District understands that the MPRB intends to conduct public engagement on January 13, 2015 regarding the Hiawatha Golf Course, in response to infrastructure needs cited in the 2013 Golf Operational Study, and the 2014 flooding which damaged the course.

Given the potential opportunities to address golf, trails, regional stormwater, flooding, and the restoration of Minnehaha Creek in an integrated manner, the District recommends that a systems approach be taken that incorporates the Hiawatha Golf Course improvements into the Master Plan.

We look forward to partnering with MPRB to develop comprehensive vegetation and stormwater management on all lands under MPRB management that will provide the highest water quality benefit.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our comments on the Master Plan Draft. We look forward to next steps including partnership meetings to discuss refining the structure of future collaboration.

Sincerely,

Laura Domyancich
Project and Land Technician

Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park Master Plan
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NOTE: Estimates based on 2014 Dollars; costs are subject to change as project plans and designs are finalized at time of implementation

NOKOMIS-HIAWATHA REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN

Key Features

- A** Picnic Area
- B** Beach
- C** ADA water access
- D** Parking
- E** Play Lawn
- F** Fishing Pier
- G** Enhanced Crossings
- H** Restrooms & Drinking Fountains
- I** Improved Sidewalk Access



Landscape Key

- Regional Park Boundary
- Building
- Bike Path
- Multi-use Path
- Pedestrian Path
- Naturalized Shoreline/Wet Meadow
- Stormwater Feature
- Restored Habitat (savanna, prairie, meadow)



Continued coordination with Cleveland County for ongoing intersection study