

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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Jan Youngquist, AICP
Senior Planner--Parks
Metropolitan Council
390 N Robert Street
St Paul, MN 55101

Dear Jan:

Thank you for your email notification of August 18th, 2010 with the news that the Metropolitan Council's Community Development Committee (CDC) voted to remove Highland Park as a proposed Regional Park Study Area from the draft Regional Parks Policy Plan. They indicated that there is not a demonstrated need for a regional park in this area and felt that the area is not under-served by the regional parks system.

We hope that the CDC and Metropolitan Council keep an open mind regarding their conclusion that there is no regional park need in the Highland Park area. We ask this because if all existing efforts to keep the Ford Plant open do not come to fruition and the plant unfortunately closes, the site will likely be re-developed. The choices related to the location and density of housing, as an example, would have a significant impact on the surrounding current park use and needs.

We ask that the Parks Policy Plan (future plans) accommodate adjustments to local Regional Park services as needs and opportunities evolve including any potential boundary adjustments to existing regional parks.

Please also keep in mind that the regional parks in the area (Hidden Falls / Crosby Farm) are all 'floodplain parks' and are located well below the bluff top elevations of the adjacent neighborhoods, are not available for use during flood events, can be difficult to access due to steep terrain and have a solely natural environmental focus with very limited capacity for infrastructure (restrooms, picnic pavilions, interpretive centers, etc). Highland Park on the other hand is easily accessed at the same elevation as the surrounding region and offers many unique regional recreational opportunities that can never be realized in the floodplain such as disk golf, pool and picnic facilities, and large play area features.

Sincerely,

Michael Hähm, CPRP
Director, St. Paul Parks and Recreation

C: Jody Martinez, Ann Beckman, Arne Stefferud



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