

		Executive Summary
C	Community Development Committee	Item: 2006-388
	Meeting date: December 18, 2006 Metropolitan Council meeting date: January 17, 2007	
ADVISORY INFORMATION		
	Date:	December 7, 2006
	Subject:	Request for reimbursement consideration in a future regional parks CIP for Dakota Rail Regional Trail design/construction plans, Three Rivers Park District
	District(s), Member(s):	District 3 – Mary Hill Smith, District 4 – Julius C. Smith
	Policy/Legal Reference:	Strategy 2(f) of the <i>2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan</i>
	Staff Prepared/Presented:	Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst– Parks (651-602-1360)
	Division/Department:	Community Development Division/ Regional Systems Planning and Growth Strategy

Proposed Action/Motion

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the request to consider reimbursing Three Rivers Park District up to \$648,644 for final design development and construction plans for the Dakota Rail Regional Trail in a future regional parks capital improvement program. However, the Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.
2. Request Three Rivers Park District to submit construction plans detailing the exact location of the trail and any other pertinent information to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) to ensure that the proposed construction will not interfere with the operation of any MCES sewer interceptors.

Issue

Should the Metropolitan Council consider reimbursing Three Rivers Park District up to \$648,644 for final design and construction plans for the Dakota Rail Regional Trail in a future regional parks capital improvement program?

Overview and Funding

On March 8, 2006 the Metropolitan Council approved a trail development master plan for the Dakota Rail Regional Trail, a 13.5-mile multi-use path that will be managed by Three Rivers Park District. The trail is proposed to originate in Wayzata and follow the Dakota Rail Corridor through Wayzata, Orono, Minnetonka Beach, Spring Park, Mound, Minnetrista, and St. Bonifacius. The point of termination lies at the Hennepin County border; however, the trail is intended to continue 31.5 miles through Carver and McLeod Counties to the city of Hutchinson.

When, the Metropolitan Council approved a development master plan for the trail on March 8, 2006 it also requested the Park District to submit construction plans detailing the exact location of the trail and

any other pertinent information to the Council's Environmental Services (MCES) to ensure that the proposed construction will not interfere with the operation of any MCES sewer interceptors.

Three Rivers Park District has submitted a request that the Metropolitan Council consider reimbursing the Park District up to \$648,644 in a future regional parks capital improvement program for final design/construction plans of the Dakota Rail Regional Trail under the terms of Strategy 2(f) of the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan. The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission reviewed this request on December 5. The Commission found the project is consistent with the terms of Strategy 2(f) for the following reasons:

1. The timing, scale and cost of the final design/construction plan project are consistent with the development master plan approved by the Metropolitan Council in March 2006.
2. Enough information has been submitted in this request regarding what would be financed with a Council grant to meet the requirements of Strategy 2(f).
3. The Park District is requesting Metropolitan Council approval of the project prior to proceeding.

The Commission also discussed the following matters:

1. Three Rivers Park District formed a design/development task force composed of representatives from each city along the trail, which developed recommended design principles to shape the development of the trail.
2. Based on updated costs, the construction of the 13.5 mile trail and associated bridges (2 trestle bridges and 2 truss bridges) is estimated to be \$5 million.
3. Once final design/construction plans are completed, the Park District will allow each city along the trail 30 days to review/comment on the final design. The District will then consider development options based on those comments.
4. The Park District intends to enter into a 20 year lease with the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority which owns the trail right of way in order to proceed with trail development. The right of way may be converted later for transit uses. At this time it is not proposed for transit development in the Council's *2030 Transportation System Plan*.
5. The Commission discussed concerns about the trail in the City of Minnetonka Beach, where there is support and opposition to the trail. The Commission was informed of past Metropolitan Council actions in the review of the City's current comprehensive plan. The Metropolitan Council required the City to acknowledge the future regional trail in its comprehensive plan in order to be consistent with the Regional Parks Policy Plan.

Approval of this project for an estimated \$648,644 in Metropolitan Council funds at this time does not commit the Council to finance this project ahead of other projects in the regional parks CIP. This reimbursement would be considered and ranked by park unit with other projects when preparing the 2008-2013 regional parks CIP. The timing of when the Park District is reimbursed is dependent on when this project is funded in a capital improvement program. However, the Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.

The Commission unanimously approved the recommendations.

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
390 North Robert Street, St. Paul, MN 55101
Phone (651) 602-1000 TDD (651) 291-0904

DATE: November 21, 2006

TO: Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

FROM: Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst- Parks (651) 602-1360

SUBJECT: (2006-388) Request for reimbursement consideration in a future regional parks CIP for Dakota Rail Regional Trail design/construction plans, Three Rivers Park District

INTRODUCTION

Three Rivers Park District has submitted a request that the Metropolitan Council consider reimbursing the Park District up to \$648,644 in a future regional parks capital improvement program for final design/construction plans of the Dakota Rail Regional Trail under the terms of Strategy 2(f) of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. (See **Attachment 1**, a letter from Boe Carlson).

This memorandum contains a review of the request for reimbursement authorization under applicable terms in Strategy 2(f) and recommends approval of the reimbursement request.

AUTHORITY TO REVIEW

Minnesota Statute Section 473.315 authorizes the “Metropolitan Council with the advice of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to make grants from any funds available to it for recreation open space purposes to any municipality, park district or county located wholly or partially within the metropolitan area to cover the cost, or any portion of the cost, of acquiring or developing regional recreation open space in accordance with the [*2030 Regional Parks*] *Policy Plan*”.

BACKGROUND

The Dakota Rail corridor is 44 miles in length and runs from Wayzata west around the northern bays of Lake Minnetonka, past Lake Waconia in Carver County and terminates at Hutchinson in McLeod County. In 2001, the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) acquired the Hennepin County portion of the Dakota Rail Corridor. Carver and McLeod County Regional Rail Authorities acquired their respective portions as well. The intent of the purchase is to preserve the corridor for future transit operations. The Park District submitted a trail development master plan to the Metropolitan Council for approval, which was approved by the Metropolitan Council on March 8, 2006. The master plan describes the proposed development and operation of the Dakota Rail Regional Trail, a 13.5-mile multi-use path that will be managed by the Park District. The trail will originate in Wayzata and follow the Dakota Rail Corridor through Wayzata, Orono, Minnetonka Beach, Spring Park, Mound, Minnetrista, and St. Bonifacious. The point of termination lies at the Hennepin County border; however, the trail is intended to continue 31.5 miles through Carver and McLeod Counties to the city of Hutchinson. Carver County is currently preparing a trail master plan for its section of the trail. That plan will be submitted for Metropolitan Council review.

When, the Metropolitan Council approved a development master plan for the trail on March 8, 2006 it also requested the Park District to submit construction plans detailing the exact location of the trail and any other pertinent information to the Council’s Environmental Services (MCES) to ensure that the proposed construction will not interfere with the operation of any MCES sewer interceptors.

REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST ANALYSIS

The Three Rivers Park District Board has authorized its staff to proceed with final design development and construction plans for the Dakota Rail Regional Trail. The estimated cost of this project is \$648,644. The Park District would finance the project with its own capital funds.

Strategy 2(f) of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* states:

Strategy 2(f): Reimbursement

Reimbursement will be considered for development provided the project in question is consistent in timing, scale, type and cost with an approved master plan, that all information required for a development grant is submitted to the Council prior to the regional park implementing agency undertaking the project and that the Council approves the project.

This project is consistent with the terms of Strategy 2(f) for the following reasons:

4. The timing, scale and cost of the final design/construction plan project are consistent with the development master plan approved by the Metropolitan Council in March 2006.
5. Enough information has been submitted in this request regarding what would be financed with a Council grant to meet the requirements of Strategy 2(f).
6. The Park District is requesting Metropolitan Council approval of the project prior to proceeding.

Approval of this project for an estimated \$648,644 in Metropolitan Council funds at this time does not commit the Council to finance this project ahead of other projects in the regional parks CIP. This reimbursement would be considered and ranked by park unit with other projects when preparing the 2008-2013 regional parks CIP. The timing of when the Park District is reimbursed is dependent on when this project is funded in a capital improvement program. However, the Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.

In compliance with the March 8, 2006 approval of the development master plan, the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Division needs to review the construction plans detailing the exact location of the trail and any other pertinent information to ensure that the proposed construction will not interfere with the operation of any MCES sewer interceptors.

CONCLUSION

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that requests for CIP reimbursement are consistent with the terms of Strategy 2(f). This review concludes that the reimbursement request for the final design/construction plans for the Dakota Rail Regional Trail is consistent with the terms of Strategy 2(f) of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. Approval of this project for an estimated \$648,644 in Metropolitan Council funds at this time does not commit the Council to finance this project ahead of other projects in the regional parks CIP. This reimbursement would be considered and ranked by park unit with other projects when preparing the 2008-2013 regional parks CIP. The timing of when the County is reimbursed is dependent on when this project is funded in a capital improvement program. However, the Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.

The Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Division needs to review the construction plans detailing the exact location of the trail and any other pertinent information to ensure that the proposed construction will not interfere with the operation of any MCES sewer interceptors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Metropolitan Council:

2. Approve the request to consider reimbursing Three Rivers Park District up to \$648,644 for final design development and construction plans for the Dakota Rail Regional Trail in a future regional parks capital improvement program. However, the Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.
3. Request Three Rivers Park District to submit construction plans detailing the exact location of the trail and any other pertinent information to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) to ensure that the proposed construction will not interfere with the operation of any MCES sewer interceptors.

Attachment 1: Electronic version. Original on file at Metropolitan Council office



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November 7, 2006

Arne Stefferud
Metropolitan Council
Mears Park Centre
230 East Fifth Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Arne:

Three Rivers Park District Board of Commissioners has approved proceeding with final design development and construction plans for the Dakota Rail Regional Trail. This work will be performed by a consulting engineering firm and the cost for this phase of the project is estimated at \$648,644. Upon approval of the final design plans by the Board of Commissioners, the Park District would proceed with development of the Regional Trail.

On March 8, 2006, the Metropolitan Council approved the master plan for the Dakota Rail Regional Trail. At this time, the Park District is seeking eligibility for future consideration for reimbursement for the planning and design phase of this project.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Boe Carlson".

Boe Carlson
Governmental Relations Administrator

BC/ac

cc: Douglas Bryant, Superintendent
Don DeVeau, Planning and Development Administrator

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Promoting environmental stewardship through recreation and education in a natural resources-based park system