

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
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DATE: June 12, 2007

TO: Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

FROM: Jan Youngquist, Senior Planner-Parks (651) 602-1029

SUBJECT: (2007-220) Request for reimbursement consideration in future regional parks CIP for development of Rice Creek North Regional Trail, Ramsey County

INTRODUCTION

Ramsey County has submitted a request for the Metropolitan Council to consider reimbursing the County up to \$145,000 in a future regional parks capital improvement program for developing a section of the Rice Creek North Regional Trail through the former Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP) site. This project will fill a missing gap in this trail. (See **Attachment 1**, a letter from Greg Mack and **Attachment 2**, Rice Creek North Regional Trail – a map illustrating the proposed trail alignment for this project).

This memorandum contains a review of the request for reimbursement consideration under applicable terms in Strategy 2(f) of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* 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 [*Regional Recreation Open Space*] *Policy Plan*”.

BACKGROUND

The Rice Creek North Regional Trail is a pedestrian and bicycle trail running southwesterly along Rice Creek from Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve in Anoka County to Long Lake Regional Park in Ramsey County. (See **Attachment 3**, Rice Creek North Regional Trail map). The portion of the trail through the former Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP) site is a key segment toward completion of the trail.

In January 1999, the Metropolitan Council approved an updated Rice Creek North Regional Trail master plan (Referral No. 16884-1). One of the Council’s actions on the plan was to:

“Encourage the city of Arden Hills, if the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant [TCAAP] is declared surplus property, to work with the Ramsey County Parks Department in establishing a greenway connection for the Rice Creek North Regional Trail Corridor.” (Agenda item A-2a)

In response to this Council directive, the National Park Service transferred 112 acres of the former TCAAP property to Ramsey County under the Federal Lands to Parks Program as part of the Rice Creek North

Regional Trail in 2006. The Metropolitan Council authorized a \$450,000 grant from the 2006-07 Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to construct the Rice Creek North Regional Trail on the TCAAP land (Grant SG-2006-133). The County has completed the design/engineering work for the trail and received a very favorable construction bid on May 30, 2007.

REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST ANALYSIS

Ramsey County has requested that up to \$145,000 of projected expenses related to constructing the trail that would be financed with County funds as shown below as a Funding Gap be declared eligible for reimbursement consideration in a future regional parks CIP.

Estimated costs including contingency for constructing a 12-foot wide paved trail on both sides of Rice Creek, a bicycle/pedestrian bridge and fencing shown on Attachment 2. Costs based on construction bid received on May 30, 2007	\$ 545,000
 <u>Revenues</u>	
Balance of \$450,000 Metro Council grant SG-2006-133 available for trail construction. (Portion of grant used to finance design/engineering costs)	\$ 400,000
 <u>Funding Gap</u> to be initially financed by Ramsey County. This is the amount Ramsey County requests to be eligible for reimbursement consideration by the Metropolitan Council in future regional parks CIPs	
Total	<u>\$ 145,000</u> \$ 545,000

As noted in Ramsey County’s letter, constructing the trail with this bid will save more than 20% in project costs. The 2006-07 Regional Parks CIP included \$145,000 in addition to the \$450,000 grant SG-2006-133 for this project, but that \$145,000 amount was ranked too low to be funded. If the Metropolitan Council approves this reimbursement, the County intends to request it as part of its allocation for the 2008-09 Regional Parks CIP.

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:

1. The timing, scale and cost of this project are consistent with the development master plan approved by the Metropolitan Council in January 1999 (Referral No. 16884-1).
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) which are shown in **Attachment 1** and **Attachment 2**.

3. The County is requesting Metropolitan Council approval of the project prior to undertaking it.

CONCLUSIONS

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that requests for CIP reimbursement consideration are consistent with the terms of Strategy 2(f). This review concludes that the reimbursement consideration request of up to \$145,000 for constructing the TCAAP portion of the Rice Creek North Regional Trail is consistent with the terms of Strategy 2(f) of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. Approval to consider reimbursing Ramsey County up to \$145,000 in a future regional parks capital improvement program for this project does not commit the Council to finance it at this time. 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.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Metropolitan Council approve the request to consider reimbursing Ramsey County up to \$145,000 for constructing the TCAAP portion of the Rice Creek North Regional Trail as shown in Attachment 2 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.

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



Parks and Recreation Department

Gregory A. Mack, Director

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Maplewood, MN 55109-3796

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June 7 2007

Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks
Metropolitan Council
390 North Robert Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

RE: Reimbursement Eligibility For Rice Creek North Regional Trail Construction

Dear Arne:

Ramsey County requests that the Metropolitan Council, pursuant to Strategy 2(f) of the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan, establish reimbursement eligibility for costs incurred by Ramsey County for development of the Rice Creek North Regional Trail Corridor.

The Master Plan for the Rice Creek North Regional Trail Corridor, which was approved in 1998, includes paved bicycle/pedestrian trails in the Rice Creek Corridor Section located within the former Twin Cities Army Ammunitions Plant (TCAAP). In 2006, the National Park Service transferred 112 acres of the former TCAAP property to Ramsey County under the Federal Lands to Parks Program for inclusion of the Rice Creek North Regional Trail Corridor. In accordance with the transfer agreement, Ramsey County is obligated to open the park to public use within five years of the transfer.

The 2006-2007 Metropolitan Regional Park Capital Improvement Program includes funding for the Rice Creek North Regional Trail Corridor under grants SG-2006-133 and SG-2006-136. The County has completed the design and engineering of the trail development within the TCAAP section of the trail corridor. Attached is an aerial photograph of the trail alignment, illustrating the site improvements. The project includes a 12-foot paved trail on both sides of Rice Creek, a bicycle/pedestrian bridge and fencing.

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Mr. Arne Stefferud
Page Two
June 7, 2007

Bids were received for the project on May 30, 2007. The lowest responsible bidder's price is substantially below other bids. Awarding the contract at this time will result in a savings of more than 20% in the project costs. Based on the low bid, the total construction cost, including a contingency, will be approximately \$545,000. Funds available for construction are approximately \$400,000. In order to award a contract, Ramsey County intends to commit up to \$145,000 from other sources as interim financing. Before proceeding with the contract, Ramsey County is seeking assurance that the additional costs associated with this project are eligible for future reimbursement consideration.

The 2006-2007 Metropolitan Regional Park CIP as adopted by the Metropolitan Council included an additional project of \$145,000 for Rice Creek North development. However, this portion of the CIP was not funded. If the construction costs are determined to be eligible for future reimbursement, Ramsey County intends to include the reimbursement request as a high-priority project in the 2008 Regional Park CIP.

Thank you for consideration of this request. Please let me know if you have questions.

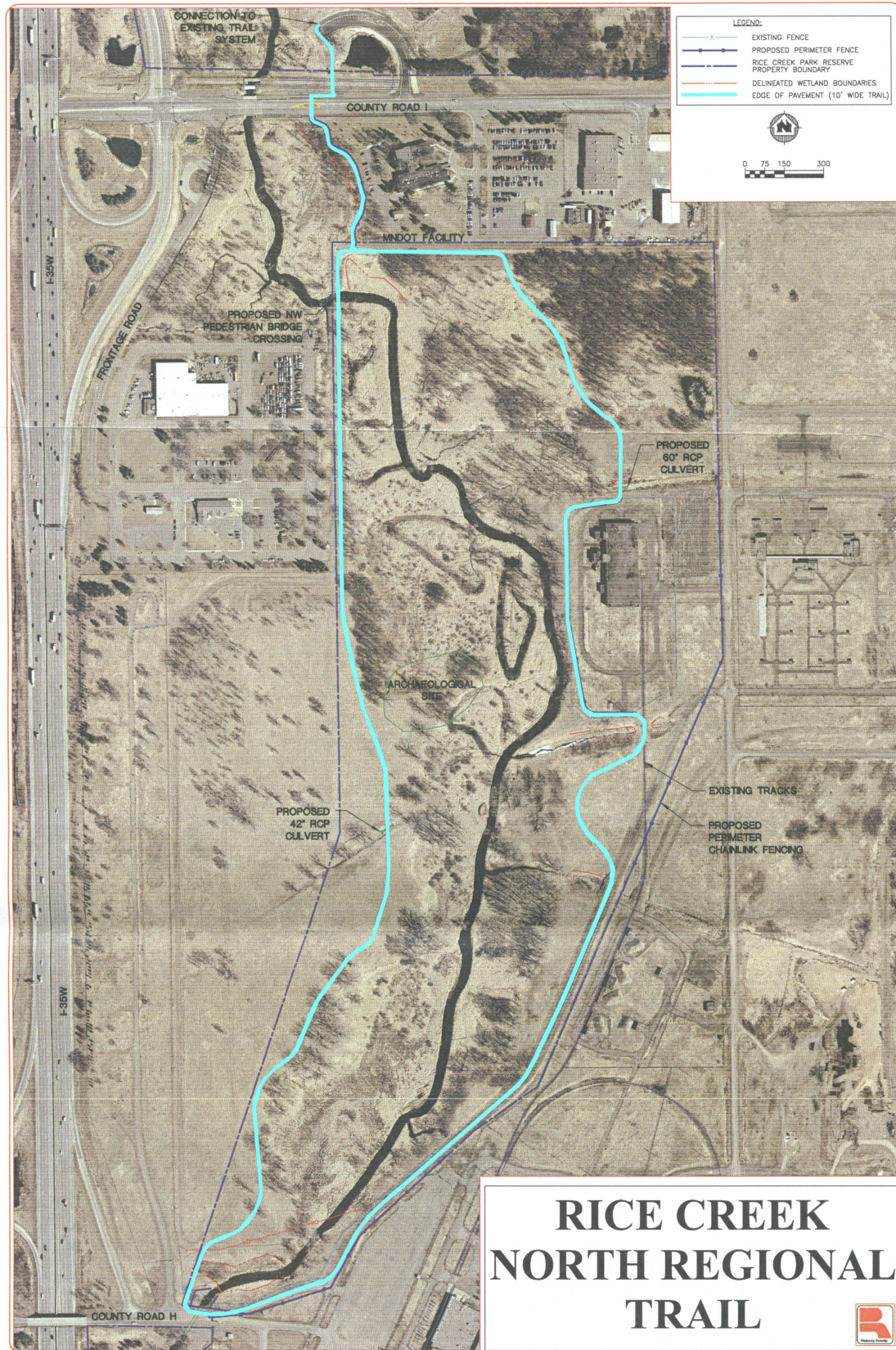
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregory A. Mack', written over a circular stamp or mark.

Gregory A. Mack
Director

GAM:vad

Attachment 2: Rice Creek North Regional Trail –TCAAP project map illustrating trail alignment



Attachment 3: Rice Creek North Regional Trail illustrating trail gap at TCAAP site