

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

**DATE:** August 18, 2009

**TO:** Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

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

**SUBJECT:** (2009-XXX) Reimbursement authorization for City of St. Paul regional park projects financed with FY 2011 Parks and Trails Fund appropriation

**Introduction**

The City of St. Paul has three projects that will be financed from its share of the State Fiscal Year 2011 Parks and Trails Fund appropriation. The City would like to begin work on those projects prior to July 1, 2010—which is the start date of State Fiscal Year 2011. The premise for the earlier start date is to align the work on these projects with the City’s calendar fiscal year and to insure that the work would be completed by June 30, 2012—the end date for work financed with the State Fiscal Year 2011 Parks and Trails Fund appropriation.

This memorandum contains a review of the City’s request and uses applicable terms of the reimbursement Strategy 2(f) of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. Staff recommends authorization to expend funds for these projects prior to July 1, 2010 with the stipulation that no grant funds to reimburse the City of St. Paul for these projects will be disbursed to the City until the FY 2011 Parks and Trails Fund appropriation is available and a grant agreement or amendment to existing grant agreements are executed for those projects.

**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**

Last November the voters approved an amendment to the State’s constitution that raised the sales tax 3/8ths percent for the next 25 years. This new revenue is dedicated into four accounts—including the “Parks and Trails Fund”. Revenue in the Parks and Trails Fund must be spent to “support parks and trails of regional or statewide significance.” This can include expenditures to operate and maintain parks and trails, as well as expenditures for land acquisition and capital improvements. These appropriations must supplement—not supplant traditional funding sources.

The 2009 Legislature appropriated \$27,781,000 from the Parks and Trails Fund for the next two fiscal years to the Metropolitan Council for the following purposes:

- An earmark appropriation of \$40,000 for a grant to Hennepin County to plant trees along Victory Memorial Parkway.

- \$2,774,000 for Park Acquisition Opportunity Grants described in the previous section of this memorandum.
- \$24,967,000 for grants to the regional park agencies that is disbursed under a formula in the law. That formula considers each park agencies' population; the amount of park and trails visits and non-local visits each agency hosts per year; the amount each agency spends on regional park system operations and maintenance; and the amount of regional park and trail land each agency manages. Based on this formula, each park agency received a specific appropriation for grants. In this case, Ramsey County's share was \$974,000 for State Fiscal Year 2010 and \$1,170,000 for State Fiscal Year 2011.

### **Reimbursement request analysis**

The City of St. Paul would like to expend its own funds to begin work on the following projects proposed to be funded from the State Fiscal Year 2011 Parks and Trails Fund appropriation:

1. \$923,000 to complete picnic shelter, park road realignment, utilities and lighting at Lilydale Regional Park that was begun with a \$1,455,000 grant in FY 2010.
2. \$610,000 for design and renovation at the Lily Pond in Como Regional Park. The City would like to have restoration of this historic element occur concurrently with the FY 2010 grant of \$250,000 to renovate the Joyce Killmer Memorial Fireplace.
3. \$60,000 for a volunteer coordinator position and \$52,000 for an Educational Coordinator position which the City would like to hire prior to July 1, 2010.

As noted in the City's letter, the City is prepared to advance funding for these projects prior to execution of the FY 2011 grant agreements for these projects with the assurance that expenditures and contract commitments will be eligible for funding under the FY 2011 grant agreements.

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.

These projects are consistent with the terms of Strategy 2(f) for the following reasons:

1. The timing, scale and cost of the projects are consistent with the following Council approved master plans:

The Lilydale-Harriet Island Regional Park master plan approved in April 1993.

The Como Regional Park master plan approved in August 2001

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). In this case, that information is contained in **Attachment 1**.
3. Ramsey County is requesting Metropolitan Council approval for these projects prior to undertaking them.

### **Conclusion**

This review concludes that the City of St. Paul's request to expend its own funds to begin work on projects proposed to be funded from the State Fiscal Year 2011 Parks and Trails Fund appropriation is consistent with the terms of Strategy 2(f). The timing of when the City of St. Paul is reimbursed for its expenditures on these projects is dependent on when the FY 2011 Parks and Trails Fund appropriation is available and on execution of grant amendments or grant agreements for those projects.

### **Recommendation**

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the City of St. Paul to expend funds on the following State Fiscal Year 2011 Parks and Trails Fund projects under the stipulation that the County will not be reimbursed for its expenses from the FY 2011 Parks and Trails Fund appropriation until the appropriation is available and after execution of grant amendments or grant agreements for these projects:

1. \$923,000 to complete picnic shelter, park road realignment, utilities and lighting at Lilydale Regional Park that was begun with a \$1,455,000 grant in FY 2010.
2. \$610,000 for design and renovation at the Lily Pond in Como Regional Park. The City would like to have restoration of this historic element occur concurrently with the FY 2010 grant of \$250,000 to renovate the Joyce Killmer Memorial Fireplace.
3. \$60,000 for a volunteer coordinator position and \$52,000 for an Educational Coordinator position which the City would like to hire prior to July 1, 2010. oration of a 200 acre prairie and oak savannah.

# Attachment 1: Letter from Michael Hahm, City of St. Paul

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION



**CITY OF SAINT PAUL**  
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August 13, 2009

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

RE: FY 2010/11 Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Appropriations from the Parks and Trails Fund

Dear Arne:

The City of Saint Paul is pleased to receive funds from the Parks and Trails fund for projects within the Metropolitan Regional Park System. These funds provide the City of Saint Paul with an opportunity to begin to implement much needed improvements to our regional park system. We understand that the project appropriations for each fiscal year that were submitted to the Legislature will be financed under specific grant agreements administered through the Metropolitan Council. However, in order to align with the City of Saint Paul's improvement phasing plans and staff hiring schedules, the City of Saint Paul requests that the Metropolitan Council grant authorization to expend funds prior to the execution of the FY 2011 projects. The specific project requests are as follows:

- Lilydale Regional Park. The State appropriation level resulted in dividing this project into two fiscal years. FY 2010 includes \$1,455,000.00 for priority site work modifications including site clearing, earthwork, grading and landscape restoration. FY 2011 includes \$923,000.00 for design/engineering/construction documents for picnic shelter, road realignment, utilities and lighting. It may be desirable to prepare both phases of this work concurrently to best coordinate design engineering and construction.
- Como Regional Park. Renovations of historic elements are needed within Como Regional Park. FY 2010 includes \$250,000.00 for the renovation of the Joyce Killmer Memorial Fireplace, which is currently unusable. FY 2011 includes \$610,000.00 for the design and renovation of the Lily Pond in Como Regional Park. It may be desirable to have restoration of historic elements within Como to occur concurrently.



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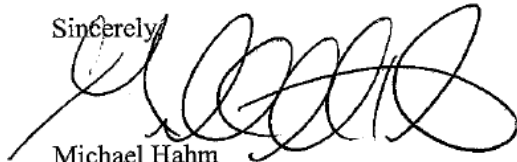
- Regional System Wide Coordinator Positions. Two coordinator positions are allocated with FY 2011 funds. These include a Volunteer Coordinator position to recruit, coordinate, and lead National Resource Volunteers in land stewardship and wildlife monitoring and an Education Coordinator position to develop and implement environmental educational programs. FY 2011 includes \$60,000.00 for Volunteer Coordinator position and \$52,000.00 for the Educational Coordinator position.

The City of Saint Paul requests advancement of these projects and positions so as to accelerate the public benefits of improved parklands, volunteer opportunities and environmental education and interpretation with Saint Paul's regional parks. The City of Saint Paul is prepared to advance funding prior to execution of the FY2011 grant contract with the assurance that expenditures and contract commitments will be eligible for funding under the anticipated FY 2011 contract.

The City of Saint Paul requests the Metropolitan Council's authorization to expend funds for these projects prior to execution of the FY 2011 grant contracts.

Thank you for considering this request. Authorization to expend funds on these projects prior to execution of the grant contracts will enable the City of Saint Paul to achieve the improvements to our park system in a timely and cost effective manner as presented to the Minnesota legislature.

Sincerely,



Michael Hahm  
Director of Parks and Recreation

cc: Jody Martinez  
Alice Messer  
Tom Russell  
Calvin Wheeler