

C Community Development Committee

Meeting date: September 17, 2007

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date:	September 12, 2007
Subject:	Murphy Hanrehan Park Reserve Master Plan, Three Rivers Park District (Referral No. 20010-1)
District(s), Member(s):	District 4, Vacant District 16, Brian McDaniel
Policy/Legal Reference:	MN Statute 473.313
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Jan Youngquist Senior Planner– Parks (651-602-1029)
Division/Department:	Community Development/Regional Systems Planning and Growth Strategy, Parks

Proposed Action/Motion

That the Metropolitan Council:

Approve the Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve Master Plan (Referral No. 20010-1), subject to the following revision on page 21 of the master plan:

Replace the following sentence:

“Three Rivers Park District will work with Scott and Dakota Counties to accommodate regional trails with the understanding that paved trails should be located on the periphery of the park reserve pursuant to this master plan.”

With:

“Three Rivers Park District will work with Scott and Dakota Counties to accommodate regional trails.”

Issue(s)

- Is the updated Murphy Hanrehan Park Reserve master plan consistent with the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*?
- Is the Murphy Hanrehan Park Reserve master plan consistent with other regional system/policy plans?

Overview and Funding

Three Rivers Park District has submitted a master plan for the Murphy Hanrehan Park Reserve for Metropolitan Council review and approval. Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve is located in the northeastern portion of Scott County, within the city of Savage and Credit River Township, as well as in the western portion of Dakota County within the cities of Burnsville and Lakeville. The master plan emphasizes the wilderness role of the park reserve in the regional park system, provides long term guidance for natural resources management and recommends recreational development that is appropriate to the park reserve's semi-primitive setting.

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that master plans include information on eleven items reviewed in the "analysis section" below. It also requires that sufficient information be included on the estimated cost of the acquisition and development proposed in the master plan. This review concludes that the Murphy Hanrehan Park Reserve master plan contains sufficient information to meet the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and that it is generally consistent with the requirements of the plan. It also concludes that the plan has no impact on other Council regional system/policy plans.

The total estimated cost to implement the master plan is \$6,097,000 in 2007 dollars. Approval of this master plan does not commit the Council to any funding at this time. Future development funding based on this master plan would be done through the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Council action is required to approve the CIP and to approve specific grants to Three Rivers Park District.

On September 11, 2007, the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission reviewed the master plan and discussed the following issues:

- Jonathan Vlaming, Planning Manager for Three Rivers Park District, explained the challenges associated with constructing a regional trail through the interior of the park reserve, due to the steep topography in some areas, as well as natural resource sanctuaries to be preserved.
- Commissioner Botzek inquired whether there were public hearings associated with this master plan. Mr. Vlaming indicated that no public hearings were held and that public input was gathered through surveys conducted over the course of three years.
- Commissioner Wicklund commented that this park reserve was always intended to be lesser developed than others and that paved roads and trails may not be appropriate for the area. With regard to the recommendation of striking language in the master plan (see Proposed Action/Motion number 1, as written in the attached memo), Wicklund questioned staff's concern of unintended consequences if the master plan language was left as-is. Jan Youngquist, Senior Planner-Parks, clarified that the concern of unintended consequences was not directed specifically to Murphy Hanrehan Park Reserve, but was a broader policy issue. By allowing a park master plan to preclude interconnecting regional trails from entering the interior of a park, a precedent may be set. As the new regional parks and interconnecting trails called for in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy*

Plan are developed, future park master plans may be inappropriately restrictive with unintended consequences to the regional system. These plans could cite the Council's approval of the language of this master plan as a precedent. The intent of the staff recommendation was to protect the integrity of the Policy Plan for future park planning.

- The Commission discussed the two recommendations and moved to forward recommendation 1 to the Community Development Committee and remove recommendation number 2.

There was not a quorum of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. However, the attending Commission members unanimously approved the following recommendation:

That the Metropolitan Council approve the Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve Master Plan (Referral No. 20010-1), subject to the following revision on page 21 of the master plan:

~~“Three Rivers Park District will work with Scott and Dakota Counties to accommodate regional trails. with the understanding that paved trails should be located on the periphery of the park reserve pursuant to this master plan.”~~

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

DATE: July 13, 2007

TO: Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

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

SUBJECT: Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve Master Plan, Three Rivers Park District (Referral No. 20010-1)

INTRODUCTION

Three Rivers Park District has submitted a development master plan for the Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve for Metropolitan Council review and approval.

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* (Chapter 2 – Policies and Strategies, Section D – Planning, Strategy 4A- Master Plans), describes the role of the master plan in the regional park system. The policy requires that any project proposed for funding in the Metropolitan Regional Parks Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) be consistent with a Metropolitan Council approved regional park master plan.

This memorandum contains a review of the Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve Master Plan based on its consistency with the *2030 Parks Policy Plan*.

AUTHORITY TO REVIEW

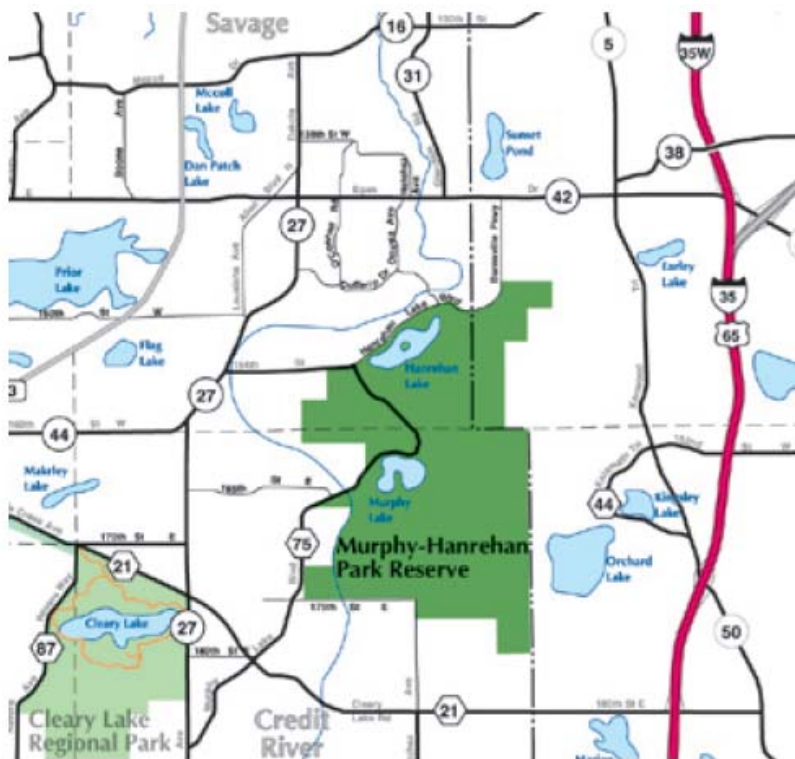
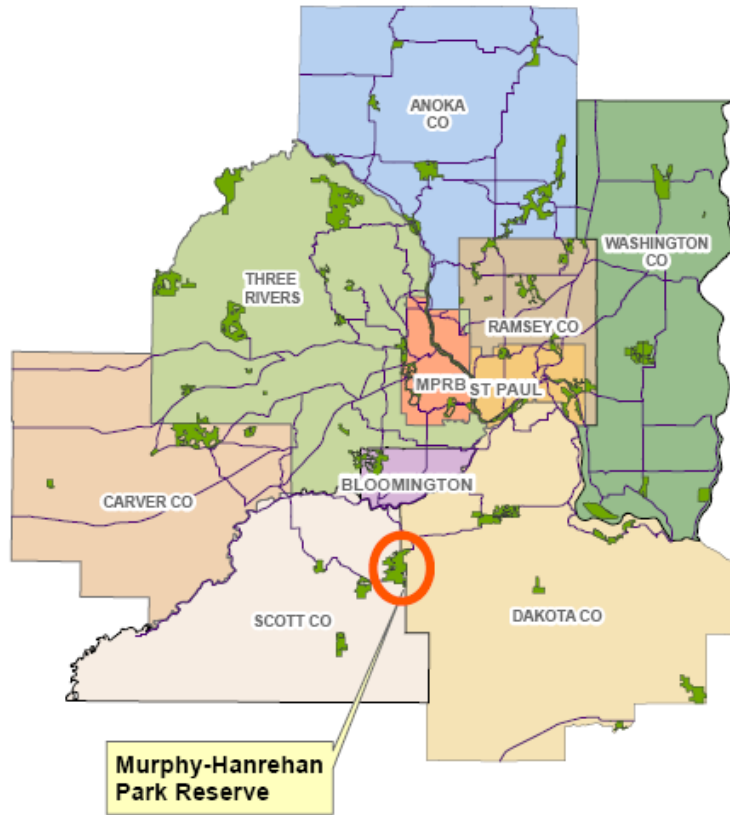
Minnesota Statute 473.313, Subdivision 1 requires Regional Park Implementing Agencies to, “prepare, after consultation with all affected municipalities, and submit to the Metropolitan Council, and from time to time revise and resubmit to the council, a master plan and annual budget for the acquisition and development of regional recreation open space located within the district or county, consistent with the council’s policy plan.” (i.e., the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*)

Minnesota Statute 473.313, Subdivision 2 authorizes the Metropolitan Council to review, with the advice of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, master plans for the regional park system. Plans are reviewed for their consistency with the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and other Council policy plans. If a master plan is not consistent with Council policy, the Council should return the plan to the implementing agency with its comments for revision and resubmittal.

BACKGROUND

Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve is located in the northeastern portion of Scott County, within the city of Savage and Credit River Township, as well as in the western portion of Dakota County within the cities of Burnsville and Lakeville. The master plan emphasizes the wilderness role of the park reserve in the regional park system, provides long term guidance for natural resources management and recommends recreational development that is appropriate to the park reserve’s semi-primitive setting. The location of the park reserve is depicted in Figures 1 and 2.

Figures 1 & 2—Location of Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve



ANALYSIS

1. Boundaries and Acquisition Costs

Visioning for Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve began in 1973, under a joint powers agreement between Three Rivers Park District (known as Hennepin Parks at the time) and Scott County. Three Rivers Park District purchased the land and managed the park reserve. The joint powers agreement was terminated in 2005; the agreement recognizes the Park District as sole owner and operator of the park reserve.

The City of Burnsville provided a \$300,000 loan to the Park District in 1974 to help begin land acquisition, which has since been repaid. The majority of the property for the park reserve was acquired in the 1970s.

The park reserve currently consists of 2,482.8 acres. Past master plans included 11 private inholding parcels totaling 159.7 acres with a 2006 tax assessed value of \$2,609,300 and a 121 acre parcel owned by the City of Burnsville.

The master plan update process examined the variety of strategies that could be employed to meet the master plan goals while minimizing acquisition costs. Each inholding parcel was evaluated based on its impact to natural resources goals, recreational development goals and the interior integrity of the park reserve. Subsequently, each parcel was assigned a rating of Critical, Significant Benefit or Low Value, as defined below:

Critical—Inholdings whose exclusion from the park reserve would be in significant conflict with the master plan goals. Purchase of these properties is very important.

Significant Benefit—Inholdings that hold significant benefit to the park, but whose primary benefit may not require direct purchase. Trail easements, conservation easements, or other protective covenants on these properties may suffice.

Low Value—Inholdings where purchase or protective covenants are not needed to meet the master plan goals. The recommended action is to adjust the park reserve boundary to exclude these inholdings.

Figure 3 shows the rank, acreage and tax assessed value of each inholding property. The parcels designated as Significant or Critical Benefit Value are recommended for acquisition (Parcels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). Parcel 2 is a 100 acre site, with the eastern border along the Credit River. The recommended goal of the master plan is to acquire as much of the property as possible, with a priority on the land adjacent to the river. The cost will dependent on the amount of land acquired.

Parcel 7 is land owned by the City of Burnsville. The City has developed the north edge of the parcel as a community park. Previous master plans recommended that the parcel be “acquired” through a no-cost lease agreement with the City. The City has indicated a desire to retain control over the land and wants to coordinate natural resources management in conjunction with the Park District’s management of the park reserve. This master plan update recommends removal of this parcel from the park reserve’s boundary.

Parcels ranked Low Benefit Value are recommended to be removed from the park reserve boundary (Parcels 8, 9, 10, 11, 12). These five parcels total 28.5 acres and have a 2006 tax assessed value of \$1,275,300.

Figure 3—Inholding Evaluation and Recommendation

Parcel & Benefit Value	Acres	2006 Tax Assessed Value
Significant		
1	2.5	\$25,000
2	100.0	To be negotiated
Critical		
3	2.6	\$203,000
4	4.6	\$227,300
5	4.7	\$273,200
6	16.8	\$505,500
Not Applicable		
7	121.0	N/A
Low		
8	5.0	\$376,600
9	4.7	\$252,000
10	1.7	\$110,000
11	3.5	\$292,200
12	13.6	\$344,500
Significant Benefit Subtotal	102.5	\$25,000*
Critical Benefit Subtotal	28.7	\$1,209,000
<i>Low Benefit Subtotal-Removed from Boundaries</i>	28.5	\$1,375,300
<i>Publicly Owned (#7)—Removed from Boundaries</i>	121.0	N/A
TOTAL TO BE ACQUIRED (Significant and Critical Benefit Parcels)	131.2	\$1,234,000*

* Does not include costs for Parcel 2, which is to be negotiated

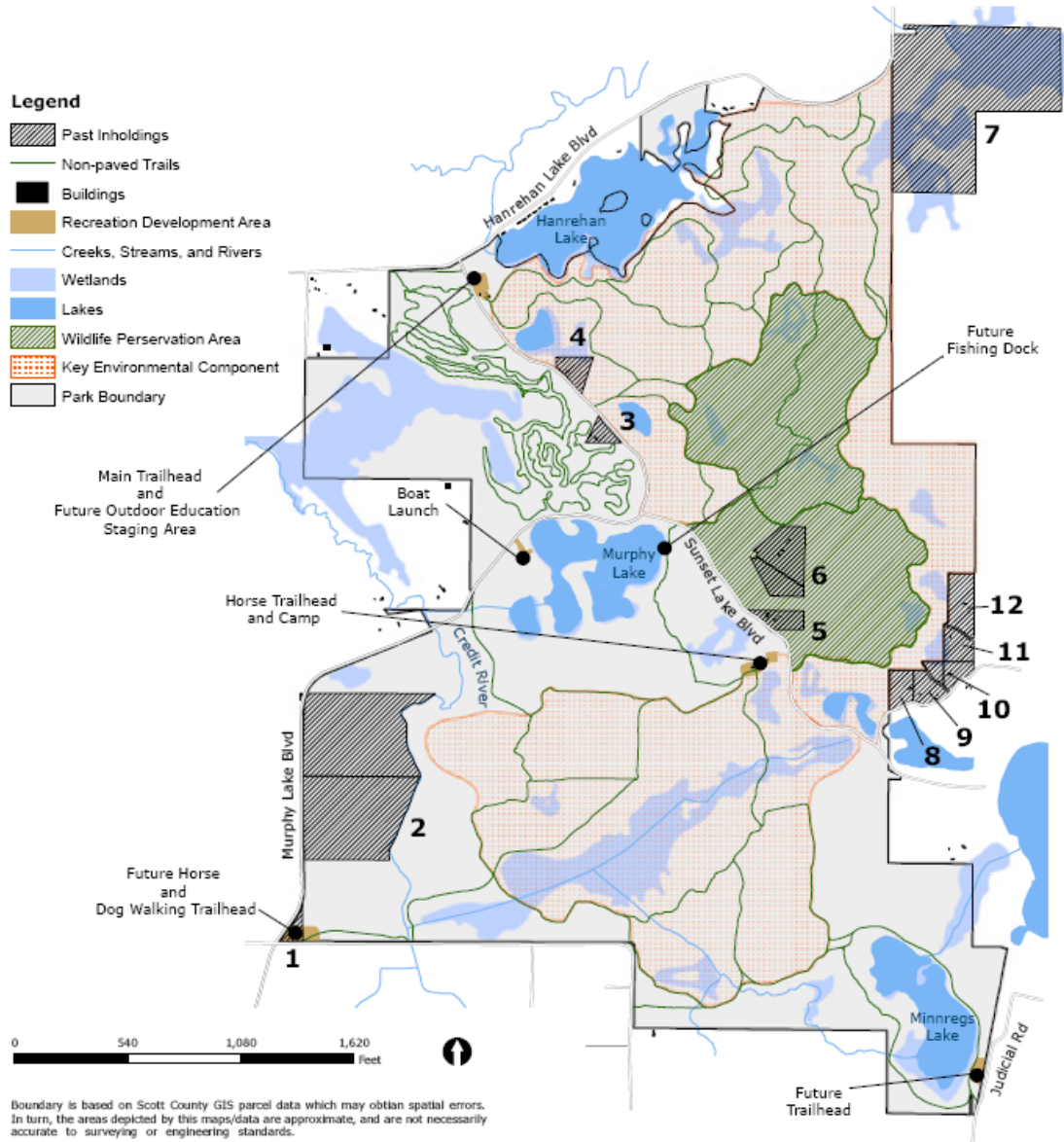
The updated master plan boundary includes the 2,482.8 acres of land currently owned by Three Rivers Park District and the 131.2 acres of inholding parcels to be acquired, for a total of 2,614 acres with an acquisition cost of \$1,234,000 (in 2006 dollars). Additional acquisition costs for all or part of the 100 acre inholding Parcel 2 will be dependent on the total acreage acquired and the result of negotiations. Acquisition of less than 100 acres will affect the total master plan acreage of the park reserve.

The current boundaries of the park reserve and the location of inholding parcels are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4—Park Reserve Boundary and Inholding Analysis Map

Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve

Inholding Map



2. Stewardship Plan

Stewardship activities include preserving and restoring native plant and wildlife communities, maintaining existing facilities and infrastructure, identifying and protecting cultural resources and developing recreation facilities appropriate to a semi-primitive park reserve. Specific stewardship activities within the park reserve include seasonally closing portion of the park reserve to protect sensitive breeding species, improving the nonpaved trails and incorporating best management practices into planning, design, construction and maintenance of all facilities and property. Each recreation facility will have specific design elements that strive to incorporate sustainable principles.

3. Needs Analysis

Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve is located in one of the fastest growing portions of the metropolitan area. Metropolitan Council estimates show that the park reserve currently serves 96,380 households and that an additional 94,810 households will be located in the park reserve’s service area by 2030, representing an increase of 98 percent. The growth in population will create an increased demand for recreational facilities. Cleary Lake Regional Park will help meet the demands for classic outdoor recreation with its swimming beaches, picnic grounds, golf course, and off-leash dog area. The regional park is located in close proximity to the park reserve. Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve will help provide recreational diversity with its more advanced camping opportunities in remote areas, more challenging hiking trails and more wilderness-like surroundings.

The park reserve had an estimated 24,400 visits in 2005 and 29,000 visits in 2006. When fully developed as envisioned in the master plan, Three Rivers expects to have approximately 72,000 annual visits.

4. Development

Current amenities at Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve include a horse trailhead and camp; a boat launch on Murphy Lake (gas motors or augers are not allowed; electric trolling motors are permitted); a single track mountain bike trail that opened in 2007; snowmobile trails, cross-country ski trails and hiking trails.

Figure 5 outlines the proposed recreation development and associated costs from the master plan.

Figure 5—Proposed Development and Estimated Costs

Development Area	Estimated Costs (in 2007 dollars)
Backpacking (4) and Canoe (2) Campsites	\$50,000
Main Trailhead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking lot for 50 vehicles - \$350,000 • Parking lot: pervious pavement and rain gardens - \$200,000 • Sanitary sewer/water - \$250,000 • New building (3,000 sf with plumbing) - \$1,200,000 	\$2,000,000
Murphy Lake Boat Launch Improvements	\$10,000
Murphy Lake Fishing Pier <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stairs - \$10,000 • Parking lot for 5 vehicles - \$50,000 • Fishing pier - \$30,000 	\$90,000
New Horse/Dog-Walking Trailhead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking lot for 30 vehicles/trailer - \$500,000 • Vault latrines - \$45,000 • Drinking water/well - \$25,000 	\$570,000
Minnregs Lake <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADA-compliant fishing pier and trail - \$230,000 • Parking lot for 10 vehicles - \$100,000 • Picnic shelter 24’ x 36’ including site work - \$175,000 • Vault latrines - \$45,000 • Drinking water (assuming well is needed) - \$25,000 • Lake aeration system - \$20,000 	\$595,000

Internal Trail System Improvements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of at least 10 bridges/boardwalks/ or culverts, realigning trail segments, rebenching the existing trail tread, improving signage, and other trail improvements 	\$750,00
TOTAL	\$4,065,000

The master plan also identifies five natural resource development projects. The projects are outside the scope of existing staffing levels, so specialized services may be contracted with outside firms and collaborated with partners such as the University of Minnesota and state and/or federal government. Figure 6 outlines the natural resource development project and estimated costs.

Figure 6—Proposed Natural Resources Development and Estimated Costs

Project	Estimated Costs (2007 dollars)
Deer fence enclosure fencing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 year timeframe • 20,000 linear feet • Average annual cost: \$8,000 	\$120,000
Support for forest research on long-term forest, wetlands and prairie health	\$100,000
Improvements to existing low-quality forests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 164 total acres • 8 year timeframe • 20 acres/year @ \$2,000/ acre = \$40,000 per year 	\$328,000
Disturbed site restoration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grading • Soil enhancement • Planting 	\$150,000
Prairie/wetland enhancement to promote wildlife habitat	\$100,000
TOTAL	\$798,000

5. Conflicts

Hanrehan Lake Boulevard, which is adjacent to the north boundary of the park reserve in the city of Savage, is scheduled to be reconstructed in the next few years. The reconstruction may require acquisition of right-of-way from a small portion of the park reserve as means to improve road safety. The master plan acknowledges the Metropolitan Council and Three Rivers Park District policies regarding conversion of existing park reserve land to other uses.

The Park District supports working with local jurisdictions to minimize the impacts of roads that go through the park reserve. Murphy Lake Road and Sunset Lake Road split the park reserve into three separate areas. These roads are currently gravel and are not designed for significant amounts of traffic. The roads serve local residents and are important for providing access to the existing horse trailer parking lot and the proposed fishing pier on Murphy Lake. The master plan recognizes Scott County's long term transportation plan, which call for development of a major north-south road to the west of the park reserve. The master plan recommends vacating Sunset Lake Road within the park boundaries. In the meantime, the plan encourages maintaining the roads at their current level of development to minimize impacts on the park reserve.

The 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan provides the framework to expand the regional park system and designates linkages between parks trails throughout the system. The Policy Plan identified proposed regional trails in Scott and Dakota Counties that will connect to Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve. During the development of the Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve master plan, staff from each county indicated a desire to place regional trails and a trailhead within the park reserve. The master plan asserts that a paved trail within the interior of the park reserve would conflict with the park reserve’s semi-primitive nature. The master plan states “Three Rivers Park District will work with Scott and Dakota Counties to accommodate regional trails, with the understanding that paved trails should be located on the periphery of the park reserve pursuant to this master plan.”

Council staff appreciates the mission of this master plan—to protect and enhance the natural resources and semi-primitive nature of the park reserve. However, in recognition of the Council’s 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan, and looking at this issue from a broad-range regional policy perspective, staff does not feel that it is appropriate for a park master plan to dictate future regional trail planning, especially that affects two other implementing agencies. Just as the Metropolitan Council does not bind a future Council to provide park funding, a park master plan should not bind future regional trail connection planning. With the large scale expansion of the regional park system proposed in the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan, this is an issue that may present itself again in the future. By potentially binding future trail planning through this park master plan, a precedent may be set with potential future unintended consequences.

Figure 7—Proposed Regional Trails Connecting to Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve

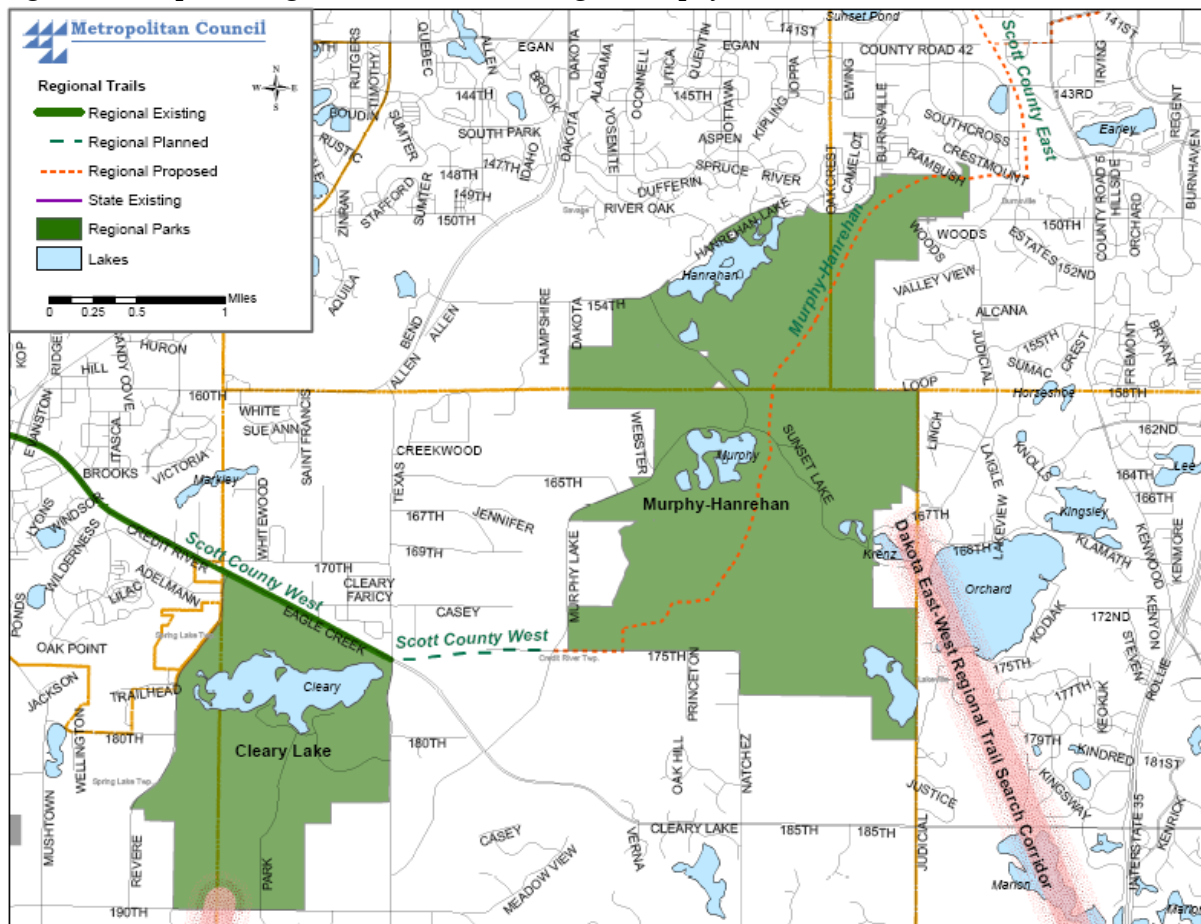


Figure 7 shows the interrelationship between the park reserve and the regional trail system. The proposed regional trail shown by the red dashed line within the park reserve is most likely unattainable, due to the topography and the high quality natural resources in that portion of the park reserve. One option that could be examined for feasibility is incorporating trails at Sunset Lake Road and Murphy Lake Road, since this portion of the park reserve is already disturbed. These roads could provide access to the proposed Scott County West Regional Trail and the Dakota East-West Regional Trail Search Corridor. Redevelopment of Hanrehan Lake Boulevard may provide an option for linking to the Scott County East Regional Trail. Collaborative trail planning efforts may determine that it is not feasible to have trail connections going through the park reserve; however, this master plan should not preclude those discussions from occurring.

Council staff recommends that Three Rivers Park District work with Scott County and Dakota County to examine trail alternatives that meet both the mission of the master plan as well as the mission of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* without necessarily precluding the trails from entering Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve. Council staff suggests that the location of the proposed trails in relation to Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve be determined through the master planning process for the trails.

6. Public Services

Murphy-Hanrehan is one of Three Rivers Park District's most rustic parks. Utilities and public services necessary to operate the park are minimal. Facilities that require electricity are limited to the trailhead and boat launch (Minnesota Valley Electric) and the horse camp (Dakota Electric). Natural gas, sewer and water service are not available within the park reserve at this time. In lieu of municipal sewer and water services, several vault latrines and two wells are located within the park reserve. Additional utilities and public services may be required for several of the proposed development components, including the trailhead facility upgrades. Emergency services are provided by the respective municipalities.

7. Operations

Rules, regulations and ordinances

The Three Rivers Park District Board has adopted a set of ordinances which define the Park District's rules and regulations. A copy of the ordinances is posted on the Park District website. Rules and regulations are also posted throughout the Park District's properties and facilities. Posted information includes park hours, permitted and prohibited activities, fees, maps of the park and/or trail, and emergency contact information. Three Rivers Park District Police and Park Service Officers regularly patrol park and trail property and will enforce ordinances via citations when necessary.

Operations –Public Safety

Three Rivers Park District Safety Section consists of Park Police Officers, Park Service Officers and support staff. To meet the public safety needs generated by the addition of the facilities proposed in the master plan and the anticipated increase in visitation, the master plan recommends adding one full-time Public Safety Officer once the master plan improvements have been developed.

Operations –Maintenance

In order to create an efficient and cost-effective work force, Three Rivers Park District organizes and budgets maintenance services in three geographic divisions. Within each division are two work clusters that typically provide maintenance service for four to six Park District parks, park reserves and/or regional trails. The Cleary Work Unit provides maintenance services for Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve.

Operations-- Sustainability

Three Rivers Park District will consider implementation of green technology such as pervious pavement, rain gardens, geothermal heating, green roofs, and recycled products. The Park District will continue to utilize the guidelines for sustainable development, such as Minnesota Sustainable Building Guidelines (B3 Project) and the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Rating System in project planning and development.

Operations—Solid Waste Management

Three Rivers Park District contracts solid waste removal. Receptacles are located at designated areas in the park system and include recycling facilities for cardboard, aluminum, paper and glass. Additional recycling services are located in nature and visitor centers.

Maintenance Costs

The 2006 annual cost for maintaining Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve is \$83,750. When the master plan is fully implemented and all development is complete, the annual operating and maintenance costs are estimated to increase by \$70,700 to a total of \$154,450 in 2007 dollars.

Public Safety Costs

The current annual cost for public safety services at Elm Creek Park Reserve is approximately \$15,000. Projected public safety costs upon completion of all proposed developments and a 2030 annual visitation level of 72,000 visits is \$50,000 in 2007 dollars. This figure includes the additional recommended public safety staff. There is also a one-time expected cost of \$30,000 for equipment and vehicles.

Wildlife Operating Costs

The current annual cost for wildlife operations at Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve is approximately \$25,000. These costs include prairie and open space management, exotic species control in designated open areas, and control of wildlife.

Water Resources Management Operating Costs

The current annual cost for water resources services at Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve is approximately \$5,000. These costs include lake monitoring, well monitoring, aeration-system permitting and operation as well as culvert inspections.

Vegetation Management Operating Costs

Currently \$76,500 is budgeted annually for oak wilt management at the park reserve. A total of \$122,000 is budgeted for the seedling reforestation program throughout the Park District. Of that amount, \$61,000 will need to be directed to reforestation efforts at Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve for up to 23 years. A one-time cost of \$20,000 is required for a large scale deer removal program prior to initiation of planting. Deer removal will continue to occur on an on-going basis and will be funded through annual operating budget. An annual operating increase of \$115,000 in 2007 dollars is required to fund forest management, which would include a full time Forestry Specialist position and seasonal help.

Program and Facility Services Costs

Services are provided to park visitors through naturalists, recreation programmers, facility attendants and supervisory staff to support cross-country skiing, mountain biking, hiking and camping. The total expected facility service/programming costs when all the proposed facilities are operational are \$35,000 in 2007 dollars.

Funding Sources

Annual operating costs are funded through the Park District's general fund budget, with property taxes as the primary source of funds. Revenue is also received from the State of Minnesota as part of the Operations and Maintenance Fund allocation from the Metropolitan Council. Some of the annual rehabilitation costs also may be funded from the Three Rivers Park District Park Maintenance and Rehabilitation Fund, which includes revenues from the State Lottery In Lieu of Sales Tax as well as the Park District's general obligation bonds.

Revenue for this park reserve comes from overnight camping fees, rental fees for the trailhead building, reservation fees for the group horse camp, annual horse trail pass permits, and annual as well as daily cross-country ski pass permits. The existing facilities and fees generated approximately \$5,000 in revenue in 2006. When all facilities in the master plan are fully operational, the combined revenue from user fees, passes and facility rentals is projected to be \$18,000.

8. Citizen Participation

Three Rivers Park District interviewed 382 visitors to Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve in three different visitor studies conducted since 2004. These interviews showed that popular activities in the park reserve include viewing scenery, trail hiking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, mountain biking, and birding. Issues and concerns raised by the interview respondents were addressed in the master plan.

Three Rivers Park District met with staff from local municipalities and counties during development of the master plan. Discussions occurred around collaboration of linking local and regional trails to the park reserve.

Public review of the master plan will be available through the Three Rivers Park District website. The Park District will use its E-lert email network and new releases to alert the public to the master plan and its review period. In addition to having an electronic copy of the master plan, the website will include an online survey and feedback form.

Scott County, Dakota County, Credit River Township and the cities of Burnsville, Lakeville and Savage will have an opportunity to review and comment on the master plan.

9. Public Awareness

Three Rivers Park District Marketing Communications Section oversees public relations, marketing, media relations, the website, brand management, event planning and promotions. Outreach tools that are used to promote the Park District include an annual district-wide map, website, direct mail, press releases, centralized reservation system, feedback phone lines, brochures, ads and on-site promotion.

The Park District collaborates with a wide array of community, business and government organizations to promote its facilities, programs and services. The Park District also works with the Metropolitan Regional Park System and the State Office of Tourism in shared opportunities to create awareness and visibility. Cooperation with county agencies helps to provide information about scholarship programs for those receiving economic assistance.

10. Special Needs

Three Rivers Park District is committed to providing access to all people, including people with disabilities and other special-population groups. In order to meet this commitment, future development will consider accessibility issues and implement accessible facilities and trails where appropriate to meet

ADA standards and guidelines. The park reserve site is challenging from an accessibility standpoint, however, due to its hilly terrain, lack of paved trails and semi-primitive nature.

The Park District has programs to assist in providing access to the park for low income people. The “Parks for All People” program provides free passes for swimming and cross country skiing to qualified recipients of Hennepin County economic assistance programs. Discounted camping, equipment rental and educational programs are also available. There is no entrance fee to Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve.

Participation in activities and use of the park facilities is encouraged through promotional outreach programs with special-interest organizations such as Courage Center and Wilderness Inquiry. Interpreters and alternative forms of printed material can be made available for programmed events, if arrangements are made in advance.

11. Natural Resources

Natural Resources Inventory

Topography at Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve varies dramatically. The northeastern area is characterized by steep and hilly topography. Some of the steep conical hills in excess of 100 feet are a key element in the park reserve’s popular cross-country skiing trails. The southern region of the park reserve consists of a gently rolling landscape of prairie and wetlands.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recognizes five native plant communities within the park reserve:

- Cattail-Sedge Marsh—12.5 acres
- Pin Oak-Bur Oak Woodland—19.6 acres
- Red and White Oak Forest—838.6 acres
- Sedge Meadow—34.1 acres
- Willow—Dogwood Shrub Swamp—58.4 acres

Although the DNR recognizes the pin oak community in the park reserve, it has not been surveyed or observed in any significance by Three Rivers Park District staff. Also, the Park District calculates 1,252 acres of oak forest using aerial photography, field surveys and staff experience.

The park reserve has not yet been classified using the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS). It will be incorporated into future planning and development once available. The park reserve is mapped according to Regional Significant Ecological Areas data. The Council, in partnership with the DNR conducted an inventory and assessment of natural resources in the metropolitan region during 2002. The inventory and assessment of natural resources prioritized significant natural resources for preservation and protection. According to this data, approximately 10 percent of the park reserve is of high ecological value and 50 percent is of outstanding ecological value.

Surface Water and Groundwater Resources

The focus of surface water management in the park reserve is the restoration and protection of Murphy Lake, Minnregs Lake and Hanrehan Lake. The Park District will work with the Credit River Watershed Management Commission, local municipalities and lake associations to minimize the impact of urban development on the lakes and on the Credit River.

Park reserve facilities will be set back from water bodies to provide a buffer of natural vegetation. All future development will include best management practices for water management. Wetlands will be protected through compliance with the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act.

Vegetation Management

In recent years, forest management within the park reserve has focused on reducing the impacts of oak wilt through inspection and control programs and monitoring other forest pest activity. The master plan vision efforts include invasive species and pest control, planting/reseeding, protection of seedlings from animal damage, and restoring disturbed sites to original landforms. The five primary areas targeted for vegetation management actions are:

- Regeneration of existing high-quality oak forests (1,182 acres)
- Enhancement of woods (1,725 acres)
- Oak wilt management
- Improvements to existing low-quality forests (164 acres)
- Reforestation of old fields to native woodlands (310 acres)

Wildlife Management

With prairie, wetlands and oak forest habitat in the park reserve, a broad range of wildlife exists, including mink, owls, woodpeckers, foxes, deer, raccoons, skunks, coyotes, wild turkeys, skinks, frogs, toads, salamanders and Blanding's turtles. An estimated 85 to 90 native bird species are found within the park reserve. The park reserve has been designated as an Important Birding Area by Audubon Minnesota.

The lakes support loons, herons and egrets. Wetlands generally support ducks, geese and terns. Recreational development along the southern shore of Hanrehan Lake should be avoided due to the prime nesting conditions for several species.

Deer control, through permitted hunts, is an ongoing management activity. More control may be needed when major reforestation efforts or woodland rehabilitation are underway.

REVIEW BY OTHER COUNCIL DIVISIONS:

Environment & Surface Water Management (Jim Larsen) –No comments.

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig) – This park is situated in the following four communities: Savage, Burnsville, Lakeville and Credit River Township. Currently there is no sanitary sewer service provided to this location. The master plan recommends a 3,000 square foot trailhead building including flush toilets. The Metropolitan Council will need to know which community will be providing the sanitary sewer service for this building and how billing for wastewater services will be performed.

Metropolitan Council Transportation (Ann Braden) – Other than the map on page 11, I couldn't find any reference/discussion about how Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve is accessed from the exterior road network. It's not critical to the master plan, but it might be helpful in describing the regional context of the park. The interchange at Scott County Rd 21/185th Street at I-35 has been upgraded recently, so access from that direction should be improved. Since the horse trailhead is being expanded, are the roads accessing the park capable of handling more horse trailers? I assume the main entrance to the park is from County Rd 75, again that wasn't clear.

Note: In response to this comment, Three Rivers Park District indicated that the following language will be added to the master plan:

Getting to the Park Reserve

There are two primary routes leading to Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve; with County Road 27 to 154th St from the north, and County Road 21 (CR 21) to Country Road 75 (CR 75) from the

south. The primary trailhead is located just off of the intersection of 154th St and CR 75 in the northwestern area of the Park Reserve. The boat ramp at Murphy Lake is also accessed off of CR 75. Sunset Blvd is a gravel road that starts at its intersection with CR 75 and travels east through the middle of the Park Reserve, providing access to the existing equestrian parking lot and group camp. The proposed equestrian trailhead will be located near the intersection of CR 75 and 175th St E in the southwest area of the Park Reserve. The proposed trailhead at Minnregs Lake will be located off of Judicial Rd, which is accessed from CR 21. All of the roads providing access to Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve can accommodate the expected park-based vehicular traffic.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that master plans include information on eleven items reviewed in the “analysis section” above. It also requires that sufficient information be included on the estimated cost of the acquisition and development proposed in the master plan. This review concludes that the Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve Development Master Plan (Referral No. 20010-1) contains sufficient information to meet the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and that it is generally consistent with the requirements of the plan.
2. The estimated cost to implement the master plan, including the development costs of \$4,065,000 the acquisition costs of \$1,234,000 for five inholding parcels, and the natural resources development costs of \$798,000, totals \$6,097,000 in 2007 dollars.
3. The master plan indicates that Three Rivers Park District will work with Scott and Dakota Counties to accommodate planned regional trails at the periphery of the park reserve. Three Rivers Park District should work with Scott County and Dakota County to examine trail alternatives without necessarily precluding the trails from entering Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve.
4. Approval of this master plan does not commit the Council to any funding at this time. Future development funding based on this master plan would be done through the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Council action is required to approve the CIP and to approve specific grants to Three Rivers Park District.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve Master Plan (Referral No. 20010-1), subject to the following revision on page 21 of the master plan:

“Three Rivers Park District will work with Scott and Dakota Counties to accommodate regional trails. ~~with the understanding that paved trails should be located on the periphery of the park reserve pursuant to this master plan.~~”
2. Encourage Three Rivers Park District to work with Scott and Dakota Counties to examine regional trail alternatives without necessarily precluding the trails from entering Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve.