

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
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DATE: January 30, 2012

TO: Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

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

SUBJECT: (2012-xxx) Rice Creek West Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment, Anoka County
(Referral No. 50020-1)

INTRODUCTION

Anoka County has submitted an amendment to the Rice Creek West Regional Trail master plan. The amendment incorporates the 15 acre Manomin County Park as part of the Rice Creek West Regional Trail as proposed in the *Updated 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. The park would be a trailhead/ access to the Rice Creek West and Mississippi River Regional Trails. The plan proposes acquisition of a $\frac{3}{4}$ acre parcel at an estimated cost of \$281,000 and rehabilitation of existing facilities in the park (parking, trail/paths, restroom, fishing pier and picnic area) at an estimated cost of \$655,000. This memorandum analyzes the master plan against the criteria for reviewing regional park master plans. It recommends approving the master plan amendment because it is consistent with applicable portions of the *Updated 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. It also recommends cost sharing of the $\frac{3}{4}$ acre parcel acquisition with the entity that operates the Banfill Center for the Arts so that park funds are spent on outdoor recreation purposes.

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*)

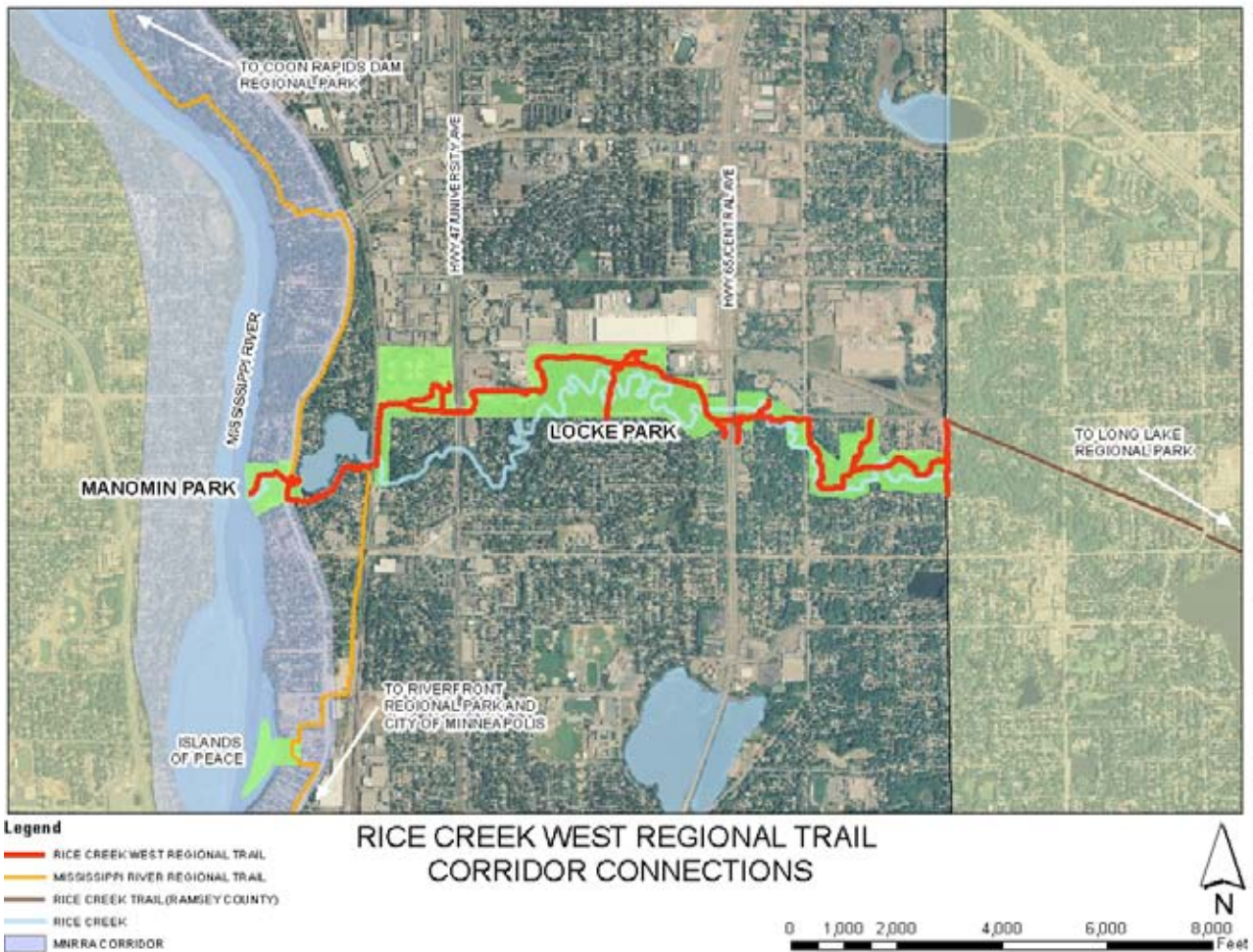
Minnesota Statute 473.313, Subdivision 2 authorizes the Metropolitan Council to review, with the advice of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, master plans for the regional park system. Plans are reviewed for their consistency with the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. If a master plan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

MASTER PLAN ANALYSIS

1. Boundaries and Acquisition Costs

A regional trail along portions of Rice Creek is managed by Anoka County (two sections) and Ramsey County (one section). This master plan amendment focuses on the four mile segment from the Anoka/Ramsey County border to the Mississippi River which encompasses 222 acres of trail land and Locke Park which served as the only access to the trail. The trail is shown on **Figure 1: Map of Rice Creek West Regional Trail**.

Figure 1: Map of Rice Creek West Regional Trail



In conformance with the *Updated 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, this plan amendment proposes the inclusion of the 15 acre Manomin Park as a trailhead/access point to the Rice Creek West Regional Trail (shown in red above) and the Mississippi River Regional Trail (shown in tan above). Manomin Park is at the west end of the trail.

An aerial map of Manomin Park depicting its current boundary and existing recreational facilities is shown in **Figure 2: Manomin Trailhead Facility Access and Structures**

Figure 2: Manomin Trailhead Facility Access and Structures



The plan amendment proposes the acquisition of a ¾ acre parcel at the southwest corner of the park. Acquisition of the parcel would occur on a willing seller transaction basis. The parcel’s estimated market value in 2011 was \$160,000. The residence on the parcel had an estimated market value of \$121,000 based on tax records. However the master plan amendment estimates the total cost of acquisition which includes a negotiated purchase price and costs related to acquiring the land (appraisal, property tax equivalency payment, etc.) to be \$281,000. The parcel is outlined in red in **Figure 3: Manomin Trailhead Facility Boundaries and Proposed Acquisition**

Figure 3: Manomin Trailhead Facility Boundaries and Proposed Acquisition



The parcel is proposed for acquisition because it would provide addition riverfront for the park, would provide additional space for the parking lot and entrance drives to the park and the house would be converted to office space for the Banfill Center for the Arts located in the park. Cost sharing of the acquisition with the entity that operates the art center should be done so that park funds are spent on outdoor recreation purposes.

2. Stewardship Plan

The stewardship plan proposes continued monitoring and when necessary removal of trees that become hazardous to park visitors. Anoka County will work with the Rice Creek Watershed District on removal of downed trees that impede the flow of Rice Creek. And the County will remove invasive Common Buckthorn and replace it with native plant materials.

The park is fully developed for outdoor recreation and consequently no interim non-park uses occur there.

3. Demand Forecast

The estimated annual visits to Rice Creek West Regional Trail from 2006 to 2010 have been over 300,000 but have varied on an annual basis due to weather and trail construction as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Annual Estimated Visits to Rice Creek West Regional Trail (2006-2010)

Year	Annual Visit Estimate
2006	335,200
2007	389,900
2008	304,400
2009	364,500
2010	390,500

The trail is the most heavily visited of all Anoka County regional trails.

The master plan amendment notes that Anoka County's population is forecasted to grow 38% in the next 25 years, but that the City of Fridley's population, where the trail is located, is forecasted to remain steady between 2010 and 2030.

The plan cites the MN Dept. of Natural Resources report, *Ten Year Forecasts—Of Minnesota Adult Outdoor Recreation Activities 2004-2014* which states that trail activities such as walking, hiking and bicycling will remain steady or increase over this time period.

4. Development Concept

The plan proposes rehabilitation of existing recreational facilities in the park at an estimated total cost of \$655,000 in 2011 dollars as described below.

Table 2: Rehabilitation and Natural Resource Restoration Costs for Manomin Park

Item	Total Cost (2011)
Design/Engineering	\$ 20,000
Archaeological Survey	\$ 15,000
Wetland Delineation	\$ 5,000
Topographic Survey/Construction Staking	\$ 10,000
Geotechnical Survey	\$ 5,000
Rehabilitate/reconstruct parking lots/drives	\$ 180,000
Rehabilitate/reconstruct trails	\$ 75,000
Rehabilitate/reconstruct restroom building	\$ 125,000
Rehabilitate picnic gazebo	\$ 5,000
Natural Resource Management	\$ 75,000
Fishing location development	\$ 15,000
Lighting	\$ 50,000
Signs/Site Furnishings	\$ 10,000
Permits	\$ 5,000
Sub-Total	\$ 595,000
Contingency and Fees	\$ 60,000
Total	\$ 655,000

A map depicting the location of facilities and the areas of natural resource restoration is shown in **Figure 4: Manomin Trailhead Facility Development Concept**

Figure 4: Manomin Trailhead Facility Development Concept



5. Conflicts

The plan amendment noted that since this is an existing park adjacent to a residential area, concerns from adjacent residents at open house meetings on the plan focused on increased usage of the park and any effect it would have on their safety, security and privacy. A specific concern was vandalism and damage to vehicles. Anoka County Parks Dept. provides ranger patrols and works with local police and the Anoka County Sheriff’s Office on patrolling park and trail properties.

Privacy concerns are common with nearby residents. The plan states that Anoka County staff work with affected residents to minimize impacts. Since the park and trail facilities are currently developed and used, and no additional facilities are proposed, no conflicts with area residents are anticipated. If any arise, a variety of mitigation methods are utilized with the best methods determined by the County.

6. Public Services

The plan notes that no additional public utilities are necessary since existing restroom and visitor facilities are served now.

7. Operations

Anoka County operates and maintains Manomin Park. The annual estimated costs of operations and maintenance is \$40,000. This will be financed with a variety of revenue sources including the Anoka County General Fund, picnic shelter and room rentals, program fees, and park entrance fees, plus the State appropriations passed through the Metropolitan Council to each of the 10 regional park implementing agencies.

8. Citizen Participation

There was extensive inter-agency and citizen participation in drafting and reviewing the master plan, which included:

- Reviews of the plan by the National Park Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MN Dept. of Natural Resources, Rice Creek Watershed District and the City of Fridley
- A community open house on November 22, 2011 to review and comment on the draft plan. Based on those comments revisions to the plan were considered. A summary of public comments is an appendix to the plan.
- Review and approval of the master plan by the Anoka County Parks Commission and Anoka County Board of Commissioners.

9. Public Awareness

The plan notes that Anoka County would work with the Metropolitan Council and the National Park Service on increasing the public's awareness of Rice Creek West Regional Trail and its associated access points including Manomin Park. The County also publishes printed and web-based information materials on its regional parks and trails.

10. Accessibility

All facilities proposed in the master plan will be developed in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. Other local guidelines such as the Minnesota Dept. of Transportation's Bicycle Transportation Planning and Design Guidelines publication will be utilized when developing pedestrian and bicycle trails.

Rice Creek West Regional Trail and the Mississippi River Regional Trail are located near public transportation routes. Plus the Anoka County "Traveler" transit system provides rides to specific locations for a minimal fee.

11. Natural Resources

The master plan includes an extensive inventory of the natural resource features in the park. Restoration of natural vegetation is in progress and includes non-native plant removal and replacement with native species. The estimated natural resource restoration cost is \$75,000 and was included in the development cost estimate.

Water resource management will be coordinated with the Rice Creek Watershed District, City of Fridley, National Park Service, MN Dept. of Natural Resources and the Metropolitan Council's Environmental Services Division.

REVIEW BY OTHER COUNCIL DIVISIONS:

Environmental Services (Anna Bessel)

We are finished reviewing the Rice Creek West Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment. Due to the fact that we do not have any facilities within the general vicinity of this project, we have no objections to the Plan Amendment.

Environmental Services (Jim Larsen)

The plan is complete. I have no comments.

Metropolitan Council Transportation (Ann Braden)

The plan is complete. I have no comments.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. In conformance with the *Updated 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, the Rice Creek West Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment (Referral No. 50020-1) provides details on estimated costs related to land acquisition and development of Manomin County Park as a trailhead access to Rice Creek West Regional Trail and Mississippi River Regional Trail. The master plan amendment is complete and consistent with the requirements for master plans in the *Updated 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.
2. Acquisition of a $\frac{3}{4}$ acre parcel as part of the Manomin Park trailhead is estimated to cost \$281,000. The parcel is proposed for acquisition because it would provide addition riverfront for the park, would provide additional space for the parking lot and entrance drives to the park and the house would be converted to office space for the Banfill Center for the Arts located in the park. Cost sharing of the acquisition with the entity that operates the art center should be done so that park funds are spent on outdoor recreation purposes.
3. Rehabilitation of existing recreation facilities and natural resource restoration at Manomin Park is estimated to cost \$655,000 in 2011 dollars. These costs, plus a portion of the acquisition described in point 2 are eligible for Metropolitan Council Regional Park Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding consideration if the master plan is approved by the Metropolitan Council. However, Council approval of the master plan does not obligate future funding from the Regional Parks CIP to finance those costs. Plan approval only allows Anoka County to seek funding for projects in the plan through the Regional Parks CIP.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Rice Creek West Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment, (Referral No. 50020-1)
2. Inform Anoka County that cost sharing of the $\frac{3}{4}$ acre parcel acquisition with the entity that operates the Banfill Center for the Arts should be done so that park funds are spent on outdoor recreation purposes.