Resolution 2013-233

Resolution Authorizing the Start of a 45-Day Public Comment Period for the Draft Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan as Required by the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Whereas, The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) is the steward of the Minneapolis Park System;

Whereas, The MPRB is one of ten park implementing agencies working in coordination with the Metropolitan Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) to develop, operate and maintain the regional park system;

Whereas, The MPRB, through an appointed Community Advisory Committee, has engaged the community to prepared a draft master plan for the Above the Falls Regional Park;

Whereas, MPOSC park master planning guidelines and MPRB community engagement policies identify the need for a 45-day public comment period at the draft stage prior to adoption of regional park master plans; and

Whereas, This resolution is supported by the MPRB 2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan, which envisions "Dynamic parks that shape city character and meet diverse community needs";

RESOLVED, That the Board of Commissioners authorize the start of a 45-day public comment period for the draft Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan as required by the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission; and

RESOLVED, That the President of the Board and Secretary to the Board are authorized to take all necessary administrative actions to implement this resolution.

TO: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

FROM: Bruce Chamberlain, Assistant Superintendent for Planning

DATE: June 19, 2013

SUBJECT: Resolution Authorizing the Start of a 45-Day Public Comment Period for the Draft Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan as Required by the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

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BACKGROUND

This Board action authorizes the start of a 45-day public comment period for the draft Above the Falls (ATF) Regional Park Master Plan, as required by MPRB policy for all regional parks and by the Metropolitan Council's Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Committee (MPOSC).

The draft plan is the result of more than a year of research and community engagement. As an update to the plan *Above the Falls: A Master Plan for the Upper River in Minneapolis* jointly adopted by the City of Minneapolis and the Park Board in 2000, the draft plan is intended to fulfill two main goals:

1) Integrate components of the RiverFIRST vision with the 2000 ATF plan to guide regional park land acquisition, park development and operations; and
2) Meet the Metropolitan Council's requirements for regional park plans as outlined in the policy document *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan 2012* (http://www.metrocouncil.org/Parks/Publications-Resources.aspx)

ATF Regional Park stretches from the Camden Bridge to the Plymouth Bridge along both banks of the Mississippi River. Following the adoption of the 2000 ATF plan, the Metropolitan Council recognized ATF Regional Park. Metropolitan Council policy requires periodic updates to regional park plans, particularly when warranted by changes to local policy.

In March 2012, the Board formally approved *RiverFIRST: A Park Design Proposal and Implementation Framework for the Minneapolis Upper Riverfront* as a vision document. In directing staff to pursue next-steps toward implementation, the Board authorized staff to use "RiverFIRST as a basis for updating the ATF Master Plan (2000) in close partnership with the City of Minneapolis. The updated ATF plan will be a 'small area plan' guiding land use policy to be adopted into the City's Comprehensive Plan. The ATF plan will also be an updated regional park master plan to be adopted by the MPRB and approved by the Metropolitan Council."

The Board received the Community Engagement Plan for this work in March, 2012. Since May

2012, MPRB staff has conducted intensive community engagement around the Regional Park plan in collaboration with the Minneapolis Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED), the Minneapolis Health Department and the Minneapolis Riverfront Partnership. Community engagement was enhanced significantly through a Health Impact Assessment conducted by Health Department staff in parallel to the Regional Park planning process.

The RiverFIRST vision emerged from an international design competition and the subsequent Mississippi Riverfront Development Initiative (MR|DI) led by MPRB in collaboration with the Minneapolis Parks Foundation. Community engagement for MR|DI in 2011 included:

- Community Input Survey by more than 600 people
- Participation in more than 30 community events
- 7 paid part- and full-time MR|DI "youth ambassador" interns at more than 35 community events; and
- 3 large public meetings.

Community engagement for the ATF planning process in 2012 included:

- Three (3) large public forums between June and December 2012, each attended by approximately 70-80 people;
- Postings to MPRB and City web sites throughout the process;
- Informational articles in community newspapers;
- More than sixty (60) outreach meetings with stakeholder groups (community organizations, churches, schools, seniors, etc.); and
- Multi-lingual outreach meetings, one in Lao and one in Spanish.

Throughout the ATF planning process, the long-standing Above the Falls Citizen Advisory Committee (AFCAC) served as the Board's appointed project Community Advisory Committee (CAC). With staff, AFCAC members co-hosted community forums, assisted outreach and reviewed plan drafts. AFCAC comprises the following representatives:

AFCAC composition	
10	Northside neighborhood appointments
7	Greater-Minneapolis neighborhood appointments
1	Watershed at-large appointment
1	North/Northeast business caucus appointment
1	Environmental caucus appointment

AFCAC has expressed support for the draft ATF Regional Park Master Plan's "continuation of the vision to integrate continuous parks and trails along the riverfront." AFCAC will write a formal letter of comment for the Board's consideration.

To date, the majority of comments received by the City and MPRB regarding the 2013 update to the 2000 ATF Master Plan focus on these topics:

- Support for the ATF Regional Park plan's principles and recommendations;
- Concerns over specific areas of the City's proposed land-use guidance; and
- The importance of using, as a minimum, the ATF Regional Park boundary established in 2000, particularly within the City-owned Upper Harbor Terminal. The City's draft 2013 ATF Master Plan update proposes a narrowing of the Regional Park boundary in this area.

Following are excerpts from the draft ATF Regional Park Master Plan.

Principles

- Retain core parks-related ATF Master Plan Guidelines; integrate RiverFirst principles and parks projects as well as elements from the 2006 ATF Phase I plan;
- Create a continuous riverfront parks and trail system along both sides of the Mississippi to bring people from all neighborhoods and backgrounds to the river;
- Focus ongoing Regional Park land acquisition and trail easement efforts on engagement solely with willing property owners;
- Integrate stewardship of natural and cultural resources with park and trail design; and
- Foster cooperation among public agencies as well as partnership with private sector organizations and institutions.

Near-term Priorities

- In the near future, MPRB will focus resources on properties it already owns, including but not limited to the following:
- Continued programming and stewardship of existing park land within ATF Regional Park;
- Park development on the Scherer Bros. site including a gravel beach for river access, and restoration of Hall's Island;
- Partnership with the City of Minneapolis to transition the 48-acre Upper Harbor Terminal from industrial uses to parks and other uses, including phased development of West River Parkway;
- Improvements to Sheridan Memorial Park, including a veteran's memorial and trail connections;
- Construction of the East Bank Trail segment between Boom island Park and the BNSF railroad bridge;
- Improved, accessible riverbank access points; and
- Continue development of ADA-compliant Public Water Access points.

Implementation Strategies

Among the visions cast by the 2000 ATF Plan was a dense west-bank neighborhood of new high-rise, mixed-use buildings with a formal, hardened promenade along the river's edge. West River Parkway was shown as separate and inland from these blocks. Implementation was to come via massive public buyout programs and eminent domain, making way for simultaneous infrastructure investments and large TIF-funded private redevelopment projects. Existing land uses in this area include large, established industrial operations; many of these uses depend on river access for barge transportation and will be extremely difficult to relocate.

This 2013 ATF Regional Park Master Plan recognizes that such sweeping visions and implementation strategies are not viable given the funding and tools available to MPRB and the City of Minneapolis. Instead, this plan returns to the parks development model championed by H.W.S. Cleveland at the creation of the Minneapolis park system: to secure public access and stewardship of natural amenities such as lakes and rivers by surrounding these natural assets with parks, and to allow private economic development to evolve independent of yet strengthened by the amenities that such parks create. Implementation of the ATF Regional Park Master Plan will be a long-term, incremental prospect requiring patient relationship-building and consistent policy-making. Property and easement acquisition for parks and trails will require the on-going cooperative efforts of the MPRB, the City, private land owners, non-profit partners and the Metropolitan Council.

FUNDING / COST SUMMARY

The draft Regional Park master plan was prepared by staff with a Consultant.

Sources		**$ 36,000**
General Fund (Planning Operating Budget)	$ 36,000	
Uses		**$ 36,000**
Consultant fee	$ 25,000	
staff time	$ 11,000	
Balance		**$ 0**

RELATED BOARD ACTIONS

2000 The Board adopted the plan *Above the Falls: A Master Plan for the Upper River in Minneapolis*.

2006 The Board approved the plan *Above the Falls: Phase One – West Bank*, and approved continued pursuit of land acquisition and parks development in ATF Regional Park along both banks of the Mississippi River.

03/14/2012 Resolution #2012-133 approved the report *RiverFIRST: a Park Design Proposal and Implementation Framework for the Minneapolis Upper Riverfront* and authorized using RiverFIRST as a basis for coordinating with the City of Minneapolis to update the ATF Master Plan …

03/21/2012 The Board received the Community Engagement Plan for the ATF Regional Park Master Plan.

06/20/2012 Resolution #2012-211 designated the existing AFCAC as the formally appointed CAC for the 2012 ATF Regional Park Master Plan update.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends authorizing the start of a 45-day public comment period for the draft Above the Falls Regional Park Master Plan as required by the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission.

This action is supported by the following vision and goal statements in the MPRB 2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan:

Vision Theme 2: Dynamic parks that shape city character and meet diverse community needs

Goal: Parks shape an evolving city.

Goal: Through outreach and research, park and recreation services are relevant today and tomorrow.

ATTACHMENTS:

- draft ATF Executive Summary 2013-06 (PDF)
- draft ATF Regional Park Master Plan 2013-06 (PDF)

Prepared By: Andrew Caddock, Project Manager, Design and Project Management
Review:
Cliff Swenson Completed 06/05/2013 2:12 PM
Bruce Chamberlain Completed 06/06/2013 9:50 PM
Jayne Miller Completed 06/11/2013 8:42 PM
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Pending