Resolution 2015-230

Resolution Accepting the Non-Appointed Citizen Advisory Committee Recommendations and Approving the Concept Plan for Trail Improvements Along Minnehaha Parkway at Lyndale Avenue

Whereas, The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) is a steward of the Minneapolis parks;

Whereas, The Met Council appropriated $550,000 from their Parks and Trails Fund for non-motorized trail improvements along Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail at Lyndale Avenue;

Whereas, The Board approved the formation of a non-appointed citizen advisory committee (CAC), through the Community Engagement Plan, with the charge to provide design recommendations for trail improvements along Minnehaha Parkway;

Whereas, The Board desires broad and representative stakeholder involvement in decision making when constructing or redeveloping park facilities;

Whereas, The MPRB selected Aune Fernandez Landscape Architects, with experience and expertise in trail design, to perform design, engineering and construction administrative services for this project;

Whereas, The Board, through its acceptance of the Community Engagement Plan for the project, has approved the formation of a non-appointed citizen advisory committee (CAC) to provide design recommendations for the Minnehaha Parkway trail improvements;

Whereas, Input from the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), including representation from the Bicycle Advisory Committee and Pedestrian Advisory Committee helped guide design recommendations for these trail improvements;

Whereas, The project team reviewed and incorporated comments received during community engagement to develop a concept plan which strives to improve trail use and safety all within project budget parameters; and

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

RESOLVED, That the Board of Commissioners accept the non-appointed CAC recommendations and approve the concept plan for trail improvements along Minnehaha Parkway at Lyndale Avenue; 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: Planning Committee

FROM: Michael Schroeder,

DATE: June 17, 2015

SUBJECT: Resolution Accepting the Non-Appointed Citizen Advisory Committee Recommendations and Approving the Concept Plan for Trail Improvements Along Minnehaha Parkway at Lyndale Avenue

BACKGROUND

This resolution considers acceptance of the recommendations of a non-appointed citizen advisory committee to approve a concept plan for trail improvements within the Minnehaha Creek Regional Park along Minnehaha Parkway at Lyndale Avenue and Minnehaha Creek as prepared by Aune Fernandez Landscape Architects. Trail improvements were proposed as part of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) 2015 capital improvement program (CIP).

Within the Minnehaha Creek Regional Park, which extends from Lake Harriet to Lake Nokomis, the bicycle and pedestrian trails are combined and separated in various trail segments. At this particular segment within the park the trails are divided, the bicycle trail crosses at grade at Lyndale Avenue, while the pedestrian trail runs along Minnehaha Creek, passing underneath the recently reconstructed Lyndale Avenue Bridge. A steep, wood boardwalk provided a pedestrian connection down the embankment along the creek, but the boardwalk was closed in 2014 due to unsafe conditions.

Bike access to Lyndale Avenue is important as it provides a connection to the Lyndale Avenue business corridor and the City's array of on-street bike facilities. At the western end of this trail segment, near Garfield Avenue, both the pedestrian and bike trails become shared use.

Meeting Summary

At the first public meeting the community reviewed project information and discussed opportunities and constraints associated with this segment of trail. Feedback was provided asking the following questions:

- How often do you use this segment of trails? What type of user are you (runner, walker, and/or cyclist)?
- What do people generally think works well or needs improving?

Discussion was mixed on the topic of shared trail use versus separated trial use. Some common themes expressed at the first community meeting revolved around:

- Enhancing signage and striping
- Improving the Lyndale Avenue bike crossing
- Creating a safer trail intersection at Minnehaha Parkway and Garfield Avenue
- Protecting vegetation
- Reducing the speed of cyclists

Feedback received from those in attendance at the first meeting, returned comment cards and notes for the Project Advisory Committee meeting, were used to develop design concepts that were prepared and presented at the second public meeting.

At the second public meeting the following designs were presented:

- Shared use trail option from the parkway along the creek and under the bridge
- Two variations of a separated pedestrian and bike trail from the parkway, along the creek and under the bridge

The shared use trail option required the construction of a 14 foot wide bituminous trail, and a series of retaining walls on both sides of the path that would have negatively impacted the character and natural setting of the creek.

Both of the separated use trail concepts proposed preserving the current alignment of the bicycle path and the crossing at Lyndale Avenue. The first separated trail option replaced the wood boardwalk with an 8 foot wide ADA-compliant bituminous path. In order to construct this segment of path, as with the shared trail option, retaining walls would be required on the creek side of the path. The second separated trail concept proposed replacing the existing boardwalk with a new boardwalk which would also be ADA-compliant. The boardwalk would provide the least disturbance to the existing topography and vegetation. Both of these concepts propose a landing and overlook at the trail intersection near Garfield Avenue. The landing would create a safer connection for pedestrians to the path at Minnehaha Parkway, where the trail becomes shared use.

At the conclusion of the meeting the proposed separated pedestrian trail option with the enhanced boardwalk received the most support, but it was not unanimous. In the end the trail concept recommended by this resolution best fit the following design directives:

- Improve pedestrian and bike safety
- Reduce the impact on the existing vegetation and steep slopes along the creek.

- Provide a design concept that is within the project construction budget.

The final concept was presented at the design and engineering committee of the Minneapolis Bike Advisory Committee. Although the committee preferred a combined trail underneath the Lyndale Avenue Bridge, they responded favorably to the design given the need to preserve the creek bank and vegetation and deliver a solution that is within the project budget.

FUNDING SOURCES

Sources		**$550,000.00**
2015 MN Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment	$550,000.00	
Uses		**-$113,000.00**
Surveying	($11,000.00)	
AFLA Consultant PSA	($69,000.00)	
MPRB Planning Staff	($33,000.00)	
Available Balance		**$437,000.00**

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Board accept the Non-Appointed Citizen Advisory Committee recommendations and approving the concept plan for trail improvements along Minnehaha Parkway at Lyndale Avenue.

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

Vision Theme 3: Dynamic parks that shape city character and meet diverse community needs.

Goal: Parks shape an evolving city.

Goal: Park facility renewal and development respects history and focuses on sustainability, accessibility, flexibility, and beauty.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Boardwalk Concept (PDF)

Prepared By: Jonathan Duesman, Construction Project Manager, Design and Project Management

Review:
Cliff Swenson Completed 06/04/2015 9:20 AM
Michael Schroeder Completed 06/04/2015 9:53 AM
Jayne Miller Completed 06/07/2015 6:57 PM
Planning Committee Pending 06/17/2015 5:20 PM