

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
Cedar lake and Lake of the Isles Master Plan
Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting #4

1/25/2021 6:00-8:00pm
Zoom Online Video Call

MPRB Staff and Consultants Present: Emma Pachuta (Project Manager), Adam Arvidson, Madeline Hudek, Alyssa Gilmore, Rachael Crabb; Maura Rockcastle (TENxTEN), Erica Christenson (TENxTEN), Jason Naber (EOR), Tiffany Schuafler (MCWD)

CAC Members Present: Win Rockwell (CAC Chair), Aaron Shaffer, Adam Braun, Alice Lehman Anna Eleria, Ben Surma, Drew McGovern, Jim Romlin, Laura Kinkead, Lilia Theisen, Linda Mack, Michaela West, Nan Dreher, Will Stensrud (Alternate), James Reid (Alternate), Constance Pepin (Alternate)

Public: Throughout the evening approximately 40+ members of the public joined the meeting

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Emma started the meeting by thanking everyone for joining the fourth Cedar-Isles Master Plan Community Advisory Committee Meeting (CAC #4) and seeing that it was the first CAC meeting of 2021, thanked everyone for being part of the process. Emma explained that the topic of the meeting was Resilience, and that project staff and consultants would be providing a broad overview before the CAC began digging into the discussion. Madeline posted the meeting resources in the chat, which CAC members are encouraged to look at before the meeting.

[[CAC Meeting #4 Resources](#), [Cedar-Isles Project Page](#)]

Win Rockwell (CAC Chair) also welcomed everyone to the meeting, and thanked Project Staff and other CAC and Community Members for their contributions on the Cedar-Isles Walking Tours [*Staff Note: the virtual tours can be found [here](#)*]. Win explained that the tours are set up so that they can be done on folks own time, to give them a better idea of the project area. Win encouraged folks to keep in mind that the tours were intended to come out before winter snows, and that the project area has a different feel in winter. He hoped that everyone would do some of the tours and revisit once spring and summer arrive.

CAC Members all introduced themselves, and L. Kinkead gave a Land Acknowledgement statement, with some background about the importance of honoring the history of Indigenous people and tribes and their contributions both past and present. She noted that in addition to the removal of Indigenous peoples, the history of racial covenants and redlining in Minneapolis all impact access to the lakes and surrounding parkland to this day.

Adam Arvidson, Director of Strategic Planning at the MPRB then spoke to the CAC's role in relation to the master planning process. He explained that the CAC was getting to the end of their informational meeting series and that the next phase of a master planning process is typically Design, but the CAC is not going to be expected to design the park. The primary role of the CAC is to inform the Park Board and Consultants on how to bring forward concept designs. The job of the consultants is to take what they've heard, and they will produce several different drawings/options for the park. The design portion is an iterative process, where there are a few initial concepts that are continually refined through conversations with the CAC. Adam explained that the CAC has quite a lot of power and say over the process and that the CAC's recommendation will eventually go to the Board of Commissioners for approval. Adam thanked the CAC for bringing their guidance and expertise to the table during the creation and development of this concept plan.

- (CAC Member *in chat*) Thanks, that explanation is really helpful!

Emma explained that even after a year of meeting digitally it is still a work in progress. She explained that during the meeting, Project Staff would be trying new techniques (breakrooms and chat box functionality) for discussion facilitation, working to replicate in person discussion as best as possible. Emma explained that the goal of these meetings is to provide space for the CAC members to discuss some of the more critical issues and opportunities for the project site, and these strategies were being tried out to elevate CAC members discussion.

Emma also explained that the Vision and Discovery phase, typically would be coupled with intensive in person engagement across the city; however due to COVID there has been very little ability to do in person engagement. Emma said that from a staff perspective, not all the engagement goals for the project have been hit because of the various challenges going virtual offers. She explained that in the future CAC members will have conversations around how to continue to create an inclusive process and how to move forward.

Emma went through the ground rules and public online forum guidelines, explaining that for this meeting, unlike previous ones, in order to make sure the conversation stays on topic the chat box settings would be changed during the CAC discussion time. She assured folks that they would still be able to utilize the chat box and that comments would still make it into the meeting notes, but the goal is to make sure the conversation stays in the verbal space. She said that Resilience was the topic of the meeting because Project Staff have heard from both CAC and community that this is an important topic to address through this process. Emma assured folks that this conversation isn't about IF resilience measures will be added to the project site, but HOW. The conversation was meant to ground the CAC in information to help them make informed decisions. She mentioned that there had been questions about how some of the other kinds of plans interact with the Cedar-Isles Master plan and pointed folks to an [infographic on the project page](#) that helps provide more guidance about that.

Emma then gave a broad overview of some of the challenges and changes Minnesota is facing related to climate, explaining that it is getting both warmer and wetter. Emma explained this trend of more intense and frequent rainfalls has direct effects on park land (ex. water quality, flooding, impact on people and animals that use the park). These changes are important to hold in mind when thinking about planning for the future of the area.

Emma paused for questions from the CAC members and hearing none moved into Public Comment time.

PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

Emma explained that the public comment time was meant for community members to be able to make comments related to the master plan, that it is not a question and answer period, but that Project Staff would try to answer questions in future meetings as much as possible. Emma asked folks to write 'yes' or their name in the chat box if they wanted to share feedback verbally. Folks could also write feedback in the chat box during this time (recorded below).

- (Public *in chat*) Hi, can you update us on the SWLRT tunnel?
 - (Public *in chat*) Folks learned last week that the SWLRT will pump water from the tunnel into the sanitary sewer system; wondering if this will have any impact of the lake water levels.
- (Public *in chat*) My main concern is the ecological health of Cedar Lake. Would like to see Cedar Lake remain UNPAVED and as natural as possible.
- (Public *in chat*) Thank you for the opportunity to comment, though it feels more helpful to do a public discussion after the presentation (previous meeting structure).
 - (Project Staff *in chat*) Thanked her for the feedback, said that the meetings could go back to having comment at the end if that seems to work best.
- (Public) Live near Cedar Lake, would like to draw folk's attention to the most recent water quality report for the lake (2019), where Cedar Lake is at on the trophic state index has become extremely concerning. Would like to see an expanded trendline that shows the Alum treatment at Cedar Lake (in the late 1990s). Currently in an environmental crisis and public health crisis. Implore the CAC and MPRB to discuss as part of strategic planning effort to intervene and improve water quality. Stated that if the trophic state index continues to decline (to hyper-eutrophic) that all other ideas are for not because water quality issues pose such serious repercussions.

- (Public *in chat*) Agreement with focus on water quality. Also, value the opportunity to walk on a dirt path along Cedar Lake, this is a rarity in our city. Please keep this area natural.
- (Public *in chat*) Access is so important for Cedar Lake as mentioned by some of the CAC members
 - (Public *in chat*) Asked what he meant by “access”
 - (Public) Spoke to his chat comment. This evening has heard people talk about how they enjoy the winter aesthetic of the park, and the ability to walk and cross country ski on the east side of Cedar Lake and through the Kenilworth Channel; would like to see that design continued throughout the year, not just winter.
- (Public) When looking at one of the amenity inventories in EOR’s presentation, one of the things that struck her was that most of the inventory was built/hardscape amenities. Felt like there were a number of nature based recreation activities that were not reflected in the inventory (i.e. birdwatching, environmental education, nature observation, plant identification) and would like to see those activities which reflect different priorities and interests included in the documents.
 - (Project Staff) Pointed to an additional inventory that was taking at the project site, the [Natural Resources Inventory](#) put together by EOR. [Staff Note: this is also included in the [meeting presentation](#) and the [video overview](#) from EOR]

Emma asked if anyone else would like to speak or if there were any more comments to add to the chat, then waited 60 seconds before the team of consultants began their presentation. Maura Rockcastle introduced herself and her colleagues, including Jason Naber from Emmons & Olivier Resources (EOR) who gave an overview of the slides that were included in the longer video created.

Jason talked about access to the two lakes and the surrounding parkland, noting that Cedar Lake provides access to spaces that feel more natural and immersive, and that Lake of the Isles feels more managed. He talked about the changes to the watersheds which have had the largest impact on the ecology of the site. Historically, Cedar Lake was in the Bassett Creek Watershed, but road/Railroad extensions, dredging and filling of the lakes changed the natural water divide, so now both lakes are in the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. Within the context of the entire watershed, the two lakes make up a small portion and effectiveness of treatments at the project site are limited by the project boundary. [Staff Note: Minnehaha Creek Watershed District created a [video](#) that talks about the watershed context more in depth] Jason mentioned that there have been Park Board and Community initiatives that have addressed flood mitigation, water quality monitoring partnerships, and treating runoff and stormwater. He compared the water quality of Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles to the rest of

the system and said that they are middle of the road in terms of quality that can be expected within an urban system. He explained that they are showing generally stable trends, and that there are strategic opportunities for additional water quality management infrastructure.

Jason talked about soils, explaining that because of the significant soil disturbance and fill soils there are minimal areas of real high-quality habitat. He showed on a map where the altered forest is around Cedar Lake. He explained that restoring habitat on poor soils is challenging and requires significant investment over time. Even so, he and his team were able to identify several high-quality plant community species throughout the parkland. He encouraged folks to look at the Natural Resources Inventory, which includes field notes and photos from the spring and summer months.

Jason talked more about opportunities to improve resilience around the lakes and surrounding parkland and showed a relative cost-benefit analysis of some of the different opportunities in the park.

The consultants had a couple of grounding questions for the CAC conversation that Jason read out loud before meeting participants were broken up into breakout rooms.

BREAKOUT ROOMS

CAC Members were broken out into 2 groups with project staff to do a quick ice breaker activity so that everyone had a moment to adjust to speaking with one another. Project Staff also stayed in the main room with the public to have a conversation around Hopes and Concerns for the project area.

- (Public) Asked for clarification about if the CAC was in the room to hear their discussion
 - (Project Staff) Explained that the hopes and concerns would be documented in the meeting notes and that the CAC was doing their own activity.

Hopes

- Hope that the CAC will evaluate and consider another treatment like an Alum Sulfate intervention for water quality. Expressed that it's hard to talk about resilience when there needs to be remediation first.
- Hope that the Cedar Lake area is kept as natural, wild, and unpaved as possible.
- Hope that the park is easily maintained so that it looks good for many years to come.
- Hope not only to maintain immersive natural spaces, but also expand them especially at Cedar Lake.
- Hope that the shoreline around Lake of the Isles could be reinforced or buffered.

- Hope that off-road bikers have options to travel to and from Theodore Wirth Park (designated trails to prevent shoreline erosion). Would also like to see walkover items (like fences or steps) that clearly delineate where bikers should and shouldn't go.
 - Public *in chat*) The unpaved trails are NOT appropriate for bicycles. Nor is any part of the project area appropriate for unleashed dogs (except the dog park). Both of these are currently illegal and should remain so.
- Hope to minimize erosion on the hills surrounding the lakes.
- Hope that MPRB continues to partner with MCWD to address water quality
- Hope to encourage new visitors to appreciate and protect the natural spaces around the lakes. Encourage Project Staff to look to Gooseberry Falls and other State Parks in MN that are heavily trafficked without destruction, would be an interesting model to consider with the SWLRT bringing more folks to the parkland.
- Hope that there is conversation around water quality improvements for Lake of the Isles as well; has felt the conversation has been centered around Cedar Lake.
- Hope that the Mall is considered as part of this planning process, changes at the Mall affect the Lake of the Isles-Bde Maka Ska Lagoon, don't ignore what might be an opportunity.

Concerns

- Appreciate landscape architects designing the vision for the area, but for more complex topics (i.e. water quality) believe that there needs to be additional leadership around engineering solutions (speaking to Alum treatments)
- Concern that there is a lack of urgency around water quality. Would like to see ecological issues (i.e. water quality and declining biodiversity) elevated in the CAC discussions.
- Concern that there will be a lack of maintenance, which won't sustain the design vision for the parkland.

Some conversation about the Mall carried over into the main room once the CAC returned from their breakout sessions. Adam Arvidson spoke briefly to the adoption of the Southwest Service Area Master Plan and then put his contact information in the chat box so that community members could contact him directly with questions and concerns.

CAC DISCUSSION

Emma Pachuta explained that for the CAC discussion, the chat box content would not be visible for everyone, that this period of time was for the CAC to discuss verbally and that comments could still be chatted to Madeline to be added to the Mural Board being managed in conjunction with TENxTEN. The Mural Board displayed discussion notes from the CAC Members as well as chat comments. This method was utilized to capture as much feedback as possible

from both the public and the CAC, while keeping the conversation in one space to minimize distractions and side conversations.

Public comments recorded in the chat:

[*Staff Note:* These comments can also be found on the Mural Board]

- Keep Isles park like and focus on natural area at Cedar
- Cedar Lake could continue adding natural grasses and trees.
- What is going on North End of Cedar Lake with natural resources that is positive?
- Believe that the use of the word “balance” in one of the discussion questions assumes a conflict between nature and recreation and that it should instead be set up in a way to think about the opportunities from both/and.
 - Natural resource opportunities need not conflict with recreation “that people love”
 - examples of this balance at (east) Cedar would be "formal" (maintained) nature trails, natural seating/gathering areas in the woods, protected planting areas surrounding trees at the beach to protect root systems and longevity as well as continuing to clear area immediately surrounding the beach for "lawn recreation" and gathering while maintaining native "buffer" areas along shoreline.
- Winter swimming group meets weekly on cedar
- Think it would be nice to connect Isles with Cedar via walking paths along the Kenilworth channel
 - It doesn't seem like more people want paved paths... most of what we see here are requests to keep the paths dirt/natural!
 - I hope the process does not flounder on the issue of a paved path around the east side of Cedar especially south of the channel. What is best for the lake should prevail, not politics.
- Creating a specific dirt path for mountain bikers in the woods of Cedar would help protect erosion.
- Think having trees close together to allow hammocking would be great.
- I like the rock outcropping along Isles that has been used by fishing people at more points along the lake shore
 - Great point about launching on Cedar, the stone launches on LOI are great.
- Please ensure the consultants and MCWD have full understanding of the planned SWLRT (tunnel) water management as solutions for improve water quality are imagined
 - Cedar Water quality will be impacted by disturbances of nutrient rich sediment (i.e., SWLRT pumping for bridge work and future retaining slopes through the channel)
- It seems there's tension between maintenance/stewardship and improvements (planning)

- If we don't have the good water quality, nothing else matters
 - City tax base depends on clean lakes....Let's get it done !
- Those "'wells" around LOI are NOT for infiltration. They were created to preserve mature trees. And were supposed to be filled in when the trees died.
- Has the CAC been briefed on the lakes as historic resources and candidates for the National Register of Historic Places?
 - The first issue to be discussed should be if the historic status of the lakes is to be respected and framed in those terms
- How will the plan relate to the historic study the Met Council will be doing the lakes, Brownie, and Kenilworth channel (required by the SWLRT MOU).
- Paths around Cedar and in some places around LOI are too close to the shoreline.
- If Cedar Lake Parkway between Cedar Lake Avenue and Ewing was converted to one lane for vehicles and the other for bicycles (both directions) pedestrians could use the bike path and the walking path could be removed or narrowed. This would make room for a buffer.
- Regarding the comment to reduce roadway at the north end of LOI, there is a commitment in the 2555 Franklin letter to have bus routes to 21st St SWLRT station.
- Parking is a large issue on the west side of Cedar. We live on 21st and have zero street parking on any nice day. So boat access has to take this into account.
- No to lights on trail!
 - Trail will self-police with users. Cedar Lake Park does not favor light pollution
- I'd like to see the "forests" replanted following the practices they are using for areas where the top of the mountain has been removed for coal mining. There was an article about this in the Star-Tribune.
- I have lived between these lakes for 32 years and have seen the changes in the land, lake, and people. It would be nice if the neighbors around the lakes could tell the CAC what it is like to live there.
- Maybe split time at the start of meeting for agenda related public comments, and then a bit of time at the end for open public comments

CAC Discussion

The CAC Discussion started with Grounding Question 1, from TENxTEN's portion of the presentation [*Staff Note: slide 33 of the presentation*], "How can we balance natural resource opportunities with the current park-like aesthetic and uses (lawn and recreation) that people love?"

- (CAC Member) Curious about the question, think that the word balance assumes a conflict between the ideas. Seems like there's enough room to add stormwater gardens or buffers to address flooding in areas. Think that people find these amenities appealing (giving Cedar Lake as an example).

- (Project Staff) Didn't intend to position the question as a conflict, trying to parse out what kind of experience and amenities people are hoping for. Feels possible to balance opportunities for open areas, active recreation, and natural amenities. Conversation is more about where and how those elements interact with one another.
- (CAC Member) Agree that there are opportunities to preserve the natural feel of the area without interrupting people's views of the lake, especially if it leads to easier access.
- (CAC Member) There was an ask from other CAC Members for further clarification on the question.
- (Project Staff) Gave the example that there are areas where additional native plantings/natural amenities could be added around Lake of the Isles, but the historically preferred aesthetic for that lake and surrounding parkland has been more of a turf lawn, park feel. Looking for ideas about how "balance" works in an applied way (ex. embedding access points, adding natural resources in an area that heighten experience).
- (CAC Member) Feel strongly that it's a both and.
 - (Project Staff) Asked for the CAC Member to elaborate
 - (CAC Member) Right now, around Lake of the Isles there are a lot of open spaces, there is plenty of room for both natural resource opportunities and recreation/lawn opportunities. More trees and more gardens (gardens with native vegetation/wild gardens) would be welcome.
 - (Project Staff) Asked the CAC to think about if there is a tipping point where restoration would be too much, asked if the passive lawn has to exist to a certain extent.
- (CAC Member) Gave the example of restoration/balance working out well with the addition of the vegetated buffer between the paved walking path around Lake of the Isles and the shoreline. Used to be grass all the way to the waters edge. This is a model of being able to recreate around the lakeshore as well as add habitat.
- (CAC Member) Responding to the question about too much restoration; feels like there are areas where there isn't ROOM for restoration. There are areas within the project site that don't have a lot of space for all the current uses (walking, biking, etc.) Especially now when people want to spread out, there are narrow choke points.
 - (CAC Member) The western side of Cedar Lake has the same issue, there's already too much activity in a narrow space. On the other hand, love what's happening on the north end of Cedar Lake.
 - (Project Staff) Hearing that narrow pinch points are not the appropriate place for additional natural amenities.
- (CAC Member) For balancing and giving people more space to maneuver, perhaps rethink the need of the street/parkway. The parkway could be narrower, that way sacrificing natural habitat for additional trail space could be prevented.

- (CAC Chair) Expressed that addressing the decline of water quality at Cedar Lake is one of his most urgent priorities. He compelled the CAC Members and Project Staff to recommend strong steps to work at improving water quality. He believes that the concerns around areas where there isn't enough room for additional natural amenities are valid, but also believes that there are many areas where there is extra room. Gave idea of pocket wetlands, asked the designers to identify areas where stormwater management infrastructure would be appropriate; asked the designers to come back with strong recommendations that stretch assumptions to improve water quality.
- (Project Staff) Thanked the CAC Chair for his recommendations. Project Staff asked a representative from the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District to speak to water quality improvements within the context of the entire watershed so that the CAC could have an understanding of the impact that is possible within the project site.
- (MCWD) Explained that the two lakes are a small portion of the larger watershed, and that at this point would need to look at what needs to be done in partnership upstream (look at what's coming in from St. Louis Park; Re-envision the clean water partnership under the new conditions and climate regime of the last decade). Need to decipher if is water quality decline is resulting from what's happening in the upper watershed or if it's internal (within the project landscape).
- (CAC Chair) Asked if the MCWD representative would continue to inform the CAC and work in partnership with them.
- (MCWD) Yes, MCWD has been working with the MPRB and City to figure out how to improve water quality across the city. MCWD has also been a part of other master planning processes, gave the example of Minnehaha Creek Corridor, with huge visions to restore water quality. She explained that MCWD certainly intends to restore water quality in partnership on this project. Will continue to bridge the gap in partnership with St. Louis Park, will have conversations about who's doing what and how the work can be accomplished.
- (Public) Expressed that she doesn't feel like it's an either or, not just upstream watershed that needs to intervene, also need measures at Cedar Lake. There are so many things that can be done at both lakes to help with water quality. Agree that upstream communities need to work to reduce nutrients and pollutants.

Project Staff interjected to remind meeting participants that this was a period of CAC discussion.

- (CAC Member) Need to study the different drivers to current water quality in both lakes, looking at both internal and external loading of pollutants into the lakes. Think that there is an opportunity to dive deeper into the data that's currently available, or perhaps do additional testing like sediment testing. Alum treatments have reached their lifespans. Would like to look at it if regional stormwater treatments

are still effective. Agree with the member of the public that it's not an either or, it's both. Believes that the foundation of a sustainable park is the health of the lakes, which has to be addressed in the context of an urban environment. Believe that natural resource opportunities should be prioritized around the lakes, would like to see natural vegetative buffers and reduce the amount of turf grass that goes to the shoreline. May be useful to have a water focused management plan for these two lakes.

- (Project Staff) Pointed out the goals for both Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake on the TSI graphic in the presentation. Shows the lakes TSI's relative to the rest of the lakes in the park system.
 - (CAC Member) Asked if there was information on what the TSI scores were 20-40 years ago. Feels like the lake used to be more pristine with good clarity and low algae, wondering if that is reflected in data?
 - (MPRB Staff) Staff from Water Resources at the MPRB responded to this question saying that there is an annual report that is released every year that shows the last 10 years of data. There's also an appendix included that shows all the data that's been collected since the late 1990s. Explained that after the Alum treatment/clean water partnership, Cedar Lake mostly met it's TSI goals. However, it has been trending toward more algae, especially over the course of the last 4 years. Unsure based on current data if it is a new normal or if a blip in the data because of increased rainfall. Explained that some of the modeling is old and could be updated.
- (CAC Member *in chat*) Project staff read out a question from one of the CAC Members that they asked through the chat, about why Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles had lower goals than some of the other lakes in the system/chain (ex. Lake Harriet)?
 - (MPRB Staff) Staff from Water Resources at the MPRB responded to this question, explaining that the goals were developed in the 1990s and were based on the type and state of the water body, and how much treatment could be done at the time, and the expected outcome. Said that Lake Harriet was anticipated to have the most improvement. Said that Bde Maka Ska and Lake Harriet rarely meet their goals.
 - (CAC Member) Asked if this had anything to do with the depth of Lake of the Isles?
 - (MPRB Staff) Part of it, lake of the Isles is very shallow, dominated by aquatic plants. Also, since it's a dredged wetland, expect there's a lot of phosphorous return from the sediment.
- (CAC Member *in chat*) Project Staff read out a question from one of the CAC members posed in the chat about where some of the existing stormwater management projects are in their treatment lifespans.

- (MCWD) The Watershed District maintains the wetlands at Cedar Lake; they are surveyed every 3 years to look at how much sediment is in them. They were last surveyed in May of 2020. The east basin had 38% sediment, and the west had 18% sediment. She explained that the threshold is 50% sediment before the wetlands will need to be dredged to remove the sediment. Wetlands probably have 2-3 more useful years until the stormwater ponds need to be dredged.
- (CAC Chair) Had a question for the consultants about if they would quantify the relative impact of different water quality infrastructure options to help guide thinking and recommendations.
 - (Project Staff) To the best of abilities will try and provide the right kind of parameters for each concept. Typically design on a range/across a spectrum, so that way the CAC can choose where they'd like to be within that, balance different approaches.
- (CAC Member) Still feeling a little confused about the question. Need to start from a place of maintaining natural resources over time, need a healthy starting point.
 - (Project Staff) Balancing things that have been designed over time (i.e. the lawn increasing, marshland decreasing), responding to physical changes that have occurred that limited the presence of natural resources, changed habitat and plant communities, and affected water quality. Evaluating how the changes impact the current park and experience of the area, and what the right balance is moving forward. Trying to give all the layers over time and sort out the priorities.
- (CAC Member) Curious if it's possible to do a study looking at where people are using the areas of open turf grass lawn (groomed areas) and where people aren't. The areas that aren't commonly used could be filled in with native prairie/large scale buffer. Lake of the Isles doesn't have a lot of tree cover, so having native prairie zones may help improve water quality.
 - (Project Staff) More focused study is a great suggestion. Hope that the CAC's combined/collective knowledge about the use of the project area will help inform that as well.
- (CAC Member) Talked about the NE corner of Cedar Lake as an example of an area that could be specifically targeted to address water quality concerns. The lake shore is close to the road at this point and chloride (road salt use) is a contributing factor in water quality decline.
- (CAC Member) Idea related to wetland expansion; encouraged project staff to look at Three River's Park District as a model for how to provide accessible, immersive natural experiences through bridges and walkways through wetlands. Would like to consider using walkways to access wetlands if surface water is converted to wetland,

walkways could have seating. Wetlands could have a significant impact on overall water quality.

- (Project Staff) Not looking at any designs yet, open to thinking big and bold, need to understand that opportunities that could be feasible.
- (CAC Member) Brought up that there have also been advancements made in pervious pavement technologies for roads and sidewalks (both asphalt and concrete that help prevent stormwater runoff). Would like to consider this technology during future reconstruction.

Moved onto the second question, “How does the master plan respond to the increase in new users coming to enjoy natural areas (habitats, water, wildlife) while minimizing impacts?” This question is part of continuing the access conversation, wanted to pose a question that allowed the CAC to think about ecology and access together.

- (CAC Member) One of the increased uses he sees is with the 21st St. station. Thinks there will be a need for wayfinding; having identified, designated paths for biking and walking. There will be a lot more people coming into the neighborhood, have to handle the influx and guide flow of folks.
 - (Project Staff) Some comments that came up in the breakout room sessions were about separating biking paths from pedestrian paths. Also noting erosion from current set up/uses.
- (CAC Member) Voiced the need to reconsider the width of some of the paths, especially along identified pinch points like around the NW corner of Cedar Lake. Area that is heavily used for commuter and recreational uses. There is 2-way vehicle traffic, 2-way biking and 2-way pedestrian traffic, all happening just a few feet from the shoreline. Parking in the area is limited as well. Think about how to expand pedestrian and bikers use of the area (take up less space than a car, could accommodate more people traffic than vehicle traffic). Need to make sure people feel comfortable to come and visit, not squeezed in.
 - (CAC Members) Agreement with this point.
- (CAC Member) Should also consider the different kinds of paths that are needed/present (soft surface paths, paved paths, and their placement). Also, with more people coming from farther away there needs to be more amenities like bathrooms and water fountains.
- (CAC Member) Spoke to making sure that park users feel safe. Noted that there are certainly parts of the lake (especially around Cedar Lake) that feel more rustic/wild, and that for some people that doesn't feel safe to be in alone. Could consider something like the call boxes along the Midtown Greenway; improve safety while maintaining a relatively natural feel. Want to make sure the CAC addresses the issue of people feeling unsafe in sections of the park.

Emma Pachuta intervened in the conversation to let everyone know that there were less than 15 minutes left in the meeting, and encouraged CAC members who hadn't spoken to jump in.

- (CAC Member) Tough to balance safety and usability with how wild and secluded Cedar feels. There are little to no lights on the northside of Cedar Lake. Wonder what the desire would be for lights along walking and biking paths on the North side of Cedar; maybe the lights could just be along the paved trails and not into the wooded areas.
 - (Project Staff) Acknowledged the idea. Also brought up a theme being heard about making sure that everyone has enough space to feel comfortable, making enough space for multiple uses.
- (CAC Member) One thing she's noticed over the past year with folks staying closer to home and utilizing the parks more often is that there is more nonmotorized boat traffic (kayaking, canoeing) on Cedar Lake. As park users increase it would be helpful to identify and create more formal access points for people to get to the water so that the shorelines in those areas can be stabilized and erosion minimized. More users informally accessing the water could increase erosion.
 - (Project Staff) Asked the CAC Members if they also see folks informally accessing the water in the winter for skating? Have observed people getting on the ice on skates all around the perimeter and wanted to know if anyone had thoughts or concerns about this.
 - (CAC Member) Have seen that, think that it's happening in part because the warming houses are closed due to COVID.
 - (CAC Member) Also mentioned that the ice froze uniquely in 2020.
 - (CAC Member) Agreed that they see people putting boats in all around the perimeter informally and that they would like to see something more protective.
 - (CAC Chair) Agree that there aren't a lot of good places other than the docks to put a boat in where the bank isn't eroded. Think that if formalized boat access areas were put in that people would use them.
 - (CAC Member) Mentioned that the dock on the west point of Cedar was damaged by flooding, and that it still needs to be restored. Also mentioned that there is a kayak access point that people use in that same area which is starting to erode.
- (CAC Member) Would like to propose that the CAC NOT respond to the increase in new users by increasing the amount of parking lots. Believe that Lake of the Isles functions well without a parking lot.
 - (CAC Member) Countered this point by saying that parking is more of an issue on Cedar Lake because there aren't as many parking bays on the parkway like there are along Lake of the Isles. People are forced to park in the neighborhood around Cedar Lake.

- (CAC Member) Agree that the CAC should create alternative ways for people to get and around the lakes. With people accessing the parks by the SWLRT there will be additional ways to access the lakes if driving is the main mode of transport (ex. park and ride).
- (CAC Member) Have noticed fear from the public of big change. As we look at this area, there may be push back on changes. Hope that the CAC and the design team have the fortitude to see which concerns are fear of change versus which are actually detrimental to the park and its experience.
 - (CAC Member) Respond to this by saying that communication is important. A lot of the fear of change is in the interest of preserving what is currently there. Think that it's been interesting to learn how the watershed has changed because that changes her view of the natural areas. Appreciate intentionally communicating changes and rational.

Emma asked for final comments from the CAC, and hearing none moved on to close out the meeting.

THANKS, EVALUATION, AND NEXT STEPS

Emma thanked everyone for joining the conversation and for allowing project staff to continue to try out new meeting strategies to make them as productive as possible. Emma invited participants to connect with her directly about meeting feedback and put her phone and email in the chat. She also mentioned that there would be a GovDelivery that would go out about an [open house in February](#) related to the project.