



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

7/12/2022 6:00-8:00pm  
Zoom Online Video Call

**MPRB Staff and Consultants Present:** Emma Pachuta (Project Manager), Madeline Hudek, Elsa Erling; Erica Christensen (TENXTEN), Pat Conrad (EOR), Adam Arvidson

**CAC Subcommittee Members Present:** Anna Eleria (Subcommittee Chair), Drew McGovern, Jim Romlin, Laura Kinkead, Nan Dreher, Constance Pepin

**CAC Members Absent:** Win Rockwell (CAC Chair), Craig Wilson

**Public:** Throughout the evening approximately 9 members of the public joined the meeting

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

Emma welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked the subcommittee members to introduce themselves followed by staff and project consultants. Following introductions, Emma went through a land acknowledgment, the agenda, CAC group agreement, public online forum guidelines. Anna reviewed previously established water quality goals and the purpose of the meeting. Emma outlined where the process stands and upcoming events and meetings.

### **EXISTING GOALS REVIEW**

Emma went through water quality goals and explained revisions.

(CAC) What was the reasoning for changes?

- (Project Staff) Changes came from Park Board staff feedback, to align with Park Board policy and goals.

(CAC, *in chat*) Isn't "within the project area" applicable to all goals?

- (Project Staff) You're right, we are just being specific.

(CAC) Appreciate use of "maintain" in goals and we should use "maintain" anywhere that we intend to "establish."

(CAC) Explain deleting "100%"?

- (Project Staff) It gives some flexibility and 100% was a lofty goal, perhaps outside of our ability.

(CAC) Original language was about “all parkland” rather than “100% of runoff”?

- (Project Staff) Flexibility was needed as we weren’t sure of the amount of lawn space that would be required to meet the goal.

(CAC) Can we make this language more quantitative?

- (CAC) Agree with that. Taking out any number generalizes it.
- (Project Staff) We can add quantitative measure.
- (CAC) In lieu of 100%, we could set a goal of the equivalent of the runoff?
- (CAC) There is a quantitative goal of “all surfaces.”
- (Project Staff) We could make sure the goal refers to “all parkland.”
- (Project Staff) There is a difference between 100% of runoff from parkland and all parkland runoff, because “all parkland runoff” includes runoff that is outside of the scope of the park as it comes from the watershed at large.

(CAC) How are we managing runoff from the geese? Strategies seem not to address it.

- (Project Staff) Improved littoral edge and buffer will be the best help for the geese. It will be both a deterrent for them and a filter for their waste.

(CAC) How is flooding treated in here?

- (Project Staff) Flooding is mentioned in the design, but might be a gap in these goals
- (CAC) Shouldn’t a goal be developed related to flooding?
- (Project Staff) Flood impacts are being dealt with separately. We didn’t include flood reduction in the water quality work we did.
- (Project Staff) Flooding is a water issue but we did not identify it as a water quality issue. Flooding is addressed in the design.
- (CAC) A large part of flooding is due to runoff from the larger watershed. This plan is too small to really work as a flood control strategy on a large level.
- (CAC) The second goal has some space to include flooding, as flooding is part of the “changing climate.”
- (CAC) Like the idea of embedding flooding there.
- (CAC, *in chat*) Formalize a committee with regional community and agency representation to monitor and develop rapid solutions for water quality/quantity in the face of a changing climate
- (CAC) Will including flooding make it more challenging to implement these water quality goals? Some strategies will be impacted by flooding.
- (Project Staff) At the watershed level, quantity and quality have to go hand in hand and are interconnected.

(CAC) Can we get clarification about the second goal and “formalizing the committee”?

- (Project Staff) I received feedback about wanting an advisory committee to inform the Park Board

(CAC) Related to the “citywide” comment, multiple cities are involved in the watershed.

Citywide just refers to Minneapolis but we should possibly name other cities involved.

- (Project Staff) Yes, some nuance can be added to broaden “citywide.”
- (CAC) St. Louis Park is the biggest contributor in terms of the watershed, so it’s not just a Minneapolis issue.

(CAC) Can Theme 2 goals include language about wildlife? Restoration should be in line with needs of wildlife.

- (CAC) The goals should clarify that restoration of native species and controlling invasive species happen together, but they should not be the same bullet point. Each is a broad goal in itself.
- (CAC) Agree. Reestablishing native species must come after getting invasive species out.
- (CAC) There are lots of discussions about milfoil because it’s visible. But the carp, which are less visible, are also contributing to poor water quality and must be dealt with.

**Public comments from the chat:**

- There are no goals that speak to the usability of the lakes for sporting activities. E.g. Cedar is not swimmable today due to Ecoli & Isles is not viable for paddleboard or kayak due to vegetation

**WATER QUALITY STRATEGIES PRESENTATION**

Pat began by discussing the influence of the watershed on the lakes, in terms of phosphorus and sediment. He explained that the proposed strategies seek to remove phosphorus and sediment. Pat reviewed the master plan-level goals. He went into detail on the strategies to address each goal, beginning with the treatment of paved surfaces.

(CAC) With the 25% extra treatment and buffer, I was thinking about encroachment licenses. Do those licenses have any stipulations about using chemicals or any other management restrictions?

- (Project Staff) I do not think so. In some cases, people are maintaining areas that are not encroachments. Environmental impact is considered when licenses are made, but I will look into your question further.

Pat continued to explain the overall strategies for treatment of parkways and parking lots, which included rain gardens, tree trenches, and underground treatments.

(CAC) If there is excavation for rain gardens, would the previous flood control effort to raise and fill in parts of the parkland affect plans for proposed strategies?

- (Project Staff) In order to implement any of these proposed strategies, there will be more impact studies, which would reveal any problems posed by previous soil work.

(CAC) Glad to hear that tree preservation would be a priority.

- (Project Staff) Yes, there is enough space and the ability to naturally include trees in rain garden plans.

(CAC) You did calculations about how much water could flow into the rain gardens and I'm curious about what amount of water the modeling included?

- (Project Staff) There hasn't been a hydrological evaluation yet, that level of detail will come later. Right now, we are focused on the spatial arrangement and simpler models that use roadway surface area.

Pat returned to his presentation and discussed the function of tree trenches. He then explained underground treatment under the parkway roads and the locations where it is needed. He discussed the conversion of pavement into porous pavement but clarified that the proposed underground treatment would use a drain rather than porous pavement. Pat listed some practices for addressing the watershed-level runoff within the parkland area, such as retrofitting Cedar Lake Meadows, marsh restoration on the east side of Cedar Lake, and addressing Lake of the Isles neighborhood pipesheds that could be treated with proposed strategies.

(CAC) About taking out buildup at two marshes on Cedar Lake, isn't that normal maintenance?

- (Project Staff) Normal maintenance at Cedar Lake Meadows does include removing buildup. On the east side, the marsh is natural, but has a pipe that drains into it.
- (CAC) Does anyone know the last time they maintained Cedar Lake Meadows?
- (Project Staff) I believe 2018 and it likely won't need maintenance for another few years.
- (CAC) What is the timeline for the recovery of the wildlife when that maintenance occurs?
- (Project Staff) I don't know offhand, but the maintenance is timed to have the least destructive impact.

(CAC) For Cedar Lake Meadows, there is also a triangular piece of land on the west side of France Ave. Is that area being looked at, as there's a pipe there that drains into Cedar Lake Meadows?

- (Project Staff) We will look at that.

Pat returned to his presentation, picking up with the overland treatment of pedestrian and bike trails using shoreline buffers and littoral edge expansion. He then discussed the goals of stabilizing the shoreline and improving habitat through restoration of natural areas.

(CAC) On the northeast side of Cedar, is there a use for a solar powered pump to spray water from the lake onto prairie?

- (Project Staff) We do use that technology to treat runoff off of certain areas, but I don't know about pumping water directly from the lake.

(CAC) That technology should be considered when we move on to feasibility. About the missing littoral edge on south side of Cedar to the west of South Cedar Beach, why is that not included? Especially given the indigenous significance of the area.

- (Project Staff) We heard concerns about boat traffic and we also evaluated it based on water depth, but we can look at it again.
- (CAC) I walk there daily and the drop off is significant there. The narrowness between path and lake is also a factor, so the littoral edge may be limited by that.

(CAC) What are the drainage plans for the dog park, as it is a potential polluting source?

- (Project Staff) We did not address that specifically. There are some strategies in that area, though.
- (Project Staff) Yes, we may need to address that.
- (Project Staff) Park Board policy calls for looking at ecological impact of new dog parks and retrofitting old ones. The drainage patterns may point back toward the forest.
- (CAC) Could the consultants look at that issue and do a broad assessment of the dog park, as addressing pet pollution is one of our goals?
- (Project Staff) Yes, we can and should do that. I assume there are dog bags there for solid waste.
- (Project Staff) Yes, but there is nothing to address liquid waste.
- (CAC) Will dog park pollution eventually kill trees?
- (Project Staff) Can't speak to that
- (CAC, *in chat*) The soil is very compacted at the dog park. It is very high use which is good. Just how do we manage over time.

#### **Public comments from the chat:**

- Has CAC considered feasibility/advisability of draining and dredging Isles?
  - (Project Staff, *in chat*) My understanding is the feasibility of dredging etc. is part of the lake management plan, so the master plan will not go into that level of detail. Perhaps CAC Member or Project Staff can confirm this.
  - (CAC, *in chat*) It's my understanding as well that in-lake management actions will be covered in a future lake management plan by MPRB.

- By “Underground treatment” under Parkway & Parking Lots, do you contemplate underground holding tanks?
- Much about Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles is not natural. Cedar Lake drained to Bassett's Creek before the railroad filled the swampy area to the NE of the lake. Isles was more swamp than lake. Rather than "restoring" the term should be creating or something similar. From reading documents from when the areas around Isles were filled to address sinking soils the state historic office and the national park service had a lot of control over how the park was altered was that the park needed to resemble the park as it existed around 1910. They had problems with the tree pits (that were supposed to be filled when the trees were gone). They did not allow picnic tables. So wouldn't any changes need to be again approved. Has this file been consulted and/or any staff (current or retired) spoken with? The fill was compacted by piling extra fill (as was done for the 21st Street and Bryn Mawr LRT stations. The fill extended from the bike path to very close to the lake edge.
- (Project Staff, *in chat*) Thanks to the public for weighing in through the chatbox tonight. Just a note that staff do not monitor the chatbox during the meeting, but the comments will be saved and documented. CAC members are invited to ask any questions that they view in the chat if they would like to, as well. Thanks!
- Dog park is below street level, drains east. MCWD objected to location as I recall.

### **CAC DISCUSSION**

(CAC) Master plan has language about maintaining viewsheds, which involves retaining turf, which geese are attracted to. Have we maximized our strategies for littoral edge and shoreline buffer on Lake of the Isles?

- (Project Staff) Yes, we pushed restoration to the maximum.
- (Project Staff) I don't want to contradict you, but I would say on Lake of the Isles, there is the desire to keep the lawns, so we did find a balance and identified the most critical areas for shoreline restoration.
- (CAC) There have to be tradeoffs with our goals and if water quality is first and foremost, the turf grass contributes to poor water quality.
- (CAC) Can you clarify, is it the turf or the geese?
- (CAC) Both.

(CAC) Has any quantification occurred about how much of a problem the geese actually are? The Park Board is already limiting the population of geese through how many nests are allowed, I believe it's two. Maybe we should focus more on dogs, since geese are already somewhat managed. Maybe the park board can enlist the public in understanding why we want to prioritize water quality over the view.

- (CAC) It's possible to have buffer plants that we can look over. There are way more than two families of geese there.

- (Project Staff) We will have to look into our management of the geese.
- (CAC) I also see more geese there.
- (CAC) I am urging caution in attributing too much to the geese. Right now we are seeing invasive species that grow high at Lake of the Isles, so it could be a problem that tall invasive grasses overcome planned plants.
- (CAC) In the last restoration, tall plantings were accidentally planted.

(CAC) About the turf, community has said that the turf is a unique and important aspect of Lake of the Isles. I appreciate that we are figuring out the balance. The dog park is highly used and something we will figure out how to manage over time. It would be unpopular to restrict the dog park.

- (CAC) Yes, I was not suggesting we reconsider the dog park. If we retain all turf grass, can we improve the shoreline on the north finger of Lake of the Isles? While geese are not a significant source of phosphorus, they are a significant source of bacteria.
- (CAC) There are clearly more than two families of geese.
- (CAC) How many families are allowed at Lake of the Isles? There are two at Loring Park and two at Lake Harriet?
- (CAC) I would say there are more like 22 geese families. I'd like to learn more about this program.
- (Project Staff) I will look into it.
- (Project Staff) Around rain gardens at Lake of the Isles, the turf grass has been reduced to make space for native species and other plants.

(CAC) How will these plans be timed? When do we talk about when and what the budget allows?

- (Project Staff) We are writing a 30 year master plan. Funding comes from the Met Council and state about every 4 years and we seek grants in between those times. We have been applying for grants for shoreline restoration and improvement at Lake Nokomis. The CAC can opt to select aspects of the master plan that should be prioritized above others, but our master plans don't slot our plans into particular times or orders, because it depends on grants, and other funding.
- (CAC) I would suggest that water quality should be prioritized, as it is a primary topic.
- (CAC) Agree. The question is what will be our criteria for prioritization? Perhaps a topic for a future meeting.
- (Project Staff, *in chat*) Here are a few implementation chapters from other regional plans that show what prioritization can look like in the document: [Mississippi Gorge](#) and [Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail](#)

(CAC) Seems like Cedar Meadows is one of the most effective purification systems for the lake because of its scope and scale. It doesn't seem that that has been prioritized above smaller things. Is there a way for you to show the most effective to least effective strategies?

- (Project Staff) In the end we're trying to get pounds of phosphorus out of the lake. It's true that the Cedar Meadows does more than the smaller rain gardens, for example, so that is the number one priority. The analysis we did suggested that Cedar Meadows is not performing as well as it should, and there could be some issues and short-circuiting.

(CAC) At previous meetings, we discussed alum treatments but it didn't come up here.

- (Project Staff) The alum treatment is on a smaller scale, part of the in-lake management plans. That takes more specific studies of each lake. But you are correct that that is one of the more effective strategies. This master plan can recommend a lake management plan that includes that treatment.

#### **Public comments from the chat:**

- I came late to meeting and did not hear first part. Has the group addressed the problem of Blue Green Algae?

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT TIME**

Following the discussion, Emma transitioned the conversation to public comment time and explained that it was a time for community members to make comments related to the master plan. 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) The issue of blue green algae is major and I am curious if you have addressed it in your plans.
  - (Project Staff) Blue green algae is complicated because it is very unpredictable. There is a study coming to look at blue green algae citywide and understand what we're seeing and what the solutions are. It's not often directly related to water quality so it is difficult to address directly. Lake Nokomis has also been having issues so there is a citywide effort to study the issue.
- (Public, *in chat*) What about grit chambers? There was a big to do over the one on Isles. Did it turn out they don't work? Does the Park Board have access to the storm water fee?
  - (Project Staff) Regarding storm water fee, the Park Board receives a grant that comes from the storm water fee for environmental education. We don't get capital improvement access to the storm water fee.
  - (Project Staff) High level watershed recommendations are looking to bring back a clean water partnership and work in collaboration with agency partners.

- (Public, *in chat*) Is anything we're talking about that will affect the massive amounts of milfoil in Cedar Lake? I swim from beach to beach to beach frequently, and there are many parts of the lake that are really unswimmable. Can anybody address that?
  - (Project Staff) This question is complicated to answer in a short time, but yes, we have brought up milfoil and it is one of our goals to address it.
  - (Project Staff) There are limitations on the amount of milfoil that we can harvest, because we need a DNR permit to harvest any aquatic plant.
  - (Project Staff, *in chat*) [Harvesting info](#)