Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
Cedar lake and Lake of the Isles Master Plan
Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting #7, Continued

1/27/2022 6:00-7:00pm
Zoom Online Video Call

MPRB Staff and Consultants Present: Emma Pachuta (Project Manager), Adam Arvidson, Madeline Hudek; Maura Rockcastle (TENxTEN), Erica Christenson (TENxTEN),

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

CAC Members Absent: Lilia Theisen, Drew McGovern, Joshua Christensen, Will Stensrud (Alternate)

Public: Throughout the evening approximately 8+ members of the public joined the meeting

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Emma started the meeting by thanking everyone for joining a continuation of the seventh Cedar-Isles Master Plan Community Advisory Committee Meeting. Reminded people why we are doing new format (increased safety protocols) and that this is a continuation of the Water Quality conversation that started at CAC #7 on January 11th.

Emma then reviewed CAC discussion guidelines. CAC: Cameras on, everyone speaks, raise hands, refrain from chatbox for this discussion. Public: Will have an opportunity to provide comment at the end of the discussion. The chatbox will be open to everyone during the meeting, comments from the public shared sent in advance of public comment time will go on the Hopes and Concerns board.

Following a review of guidelines, Emma provided an overview of what was discussed and the questions posed to MPRB and consultants during the first part of the Water Quality focused CAC meeting that took place on January 11th. (*see presentation for details*)

CAC DISCUSSION

Following the review by Emma, Win (CAC chair) was introduced as the facilitator for the CAC discussion. Win stated the CAC is often asked to weigh in on things that are taste or opinion,

but that water quality is different because it's based on scientific and technical know-how, which requires the CAC to have some working knowledge and meaningful information from consultants and Park Board. Win then asked the group if there was consensus on the water quality focus and if anyone want to challenge or pose another position. *There were no challenging or alternate positions posed.*

(CAC) Going back to water quality information – what's the existing measurement and what's the MPRB goal to that we are trying to reach? Do the consultants believe the proposal meets those goals?

- (Project staff) The data was more detailed in the CAC 04 presentation. We can't say how much these approaches will move the needle, but they will improve it.
    - (CAC, *in chat*): Agreed and how one effort has what impact.

(CAC) Would like to learn more woodland restoration. It appears to be expensive, but consultants feel it's important.

(CAC) Do the pipesheds along Cedar Lake drain right from the road to the lake?

- (Project staff) Yes. (*Brings up pipeshed map from CAC 7 Presentation Part 2*) You can see the different sizes and related outfalls with these different colors and locations of micro-watersheds on the pipeshed map.

(CAC) I want to know about how much natural land treatments can really help.

- (Project Staff) This is why the watershed level strategy is so important.
- (Project Staff) The raingardens and other treatments could help with direct impervious surface run-off
- (Project Staff) Some pipesheds are treatable at the end of pipe because of the size but some are too big and would require cross-jurisdictional work

Water quality goals are revisited through graph from CAC 4 presentation showing the Trophic States.

(Project staff) Here are the goals established by Park board staff and where the two lakes are in relation to their goals. They are low.

- (CAC) I've reviewed the 2020 Water resources report by MPRB, and Cedar Lake hasn't met its goal in 3 years, is this a trend? Know that there have been improvements but wants to understand if it's an average?

    - (Project Staff) Can send more information out as a follow up. But yes, trend is that quality has gone down over the last few years. Park water quality staff believes there are many factors that contribute to the why, but part of the reason is that it has been over 20 years since the original alum treatment and there was not direction to do any follow up treatments.

- (CAC) Recognize again the limits of what Minneapolis park land can do versus partnerships. Plan could recommend that Cedar Meadows be reevaluated and improved so that pollutant removal can be optimized.

    - (CAC) wants to know if CAC with first comment suggesting more water be directed there.

    - (CAC) No, proposing monitoring the system and effectiveness in removing nutrients and assessing if it could be improved. Also, wants to know about Best Management Practices (BMPs) that would address run off from impervious surfaces within the parkland.

        - (Project Staff) Restoration is strategically located to prevent run off near paths, yes. Also, littoral edge would treat run off all upland impervious surfaces

- (CAC) Which parking lots and which streets are getting treatments? Right now, the concepts seem general.

- (CAC) Question related to goals: Are the staff goals right? Do we need to reassess the goals and if they need to be pushed? Good to have watershed scale partnership. Do we know that there's an appetite at the watershed partners?

    - (Project staff) The three big partners are Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD), City of Minneapolis and City of St. Louis Park. Yes, there are ongoing conversations with MCWD – they were very involved with the Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail master plan. Yes, the appetite is there. City of Minneapolis just revised their stormwater ordinance, which now applies to linear projects so they will have to start addressing their own road projects. So also 'yes' to appetite at City. Will need to come back to the CAC on how goals established.

- (CAC, *in chat*) Is sampling occurring and data being collected to gauge whether incoming pollutants are increasing from other pipes/communities as development and impervious areas increase in first-ring suburbs? Do water quality targets need to be informed by such projections/estimates?

    - (CAC, *in chat*): Good point. The goals should be revisited based on current water quality and the different sources and magnitudes of pollution.

- (CAC, *in chat*): Do the initial concepts locate proposed littoral edges near the pipes that are dumping pollutants into the lakes?

- (CAC) If Alum has been effective and the effectiveness is running out, why haven't they been doing more?

    - (Project staff) My understanding from Park Board water quality staff is that the Clean Water Partnership, the partnership and initiative that implemented the original alum treatment, was a short-term relationship first with no plan to continue. So, we are now hearing a recommendation for a long-term plan.

- (CAC, *repeating their questions from the chat*) Is the goal a one time, moment in time? How do you set a goal to respond to the changing context (increasing impervious, more development). Also, is there a connection between pipe outfalls and proposed treatment (littoral edge)?

    - (Project staff): Yes, the floating wetlands respond to that, but the littoral edge is a more general response to reduce runoff between the trails and the lake.

- (CAC) Looking at both options, is there a lake that is more at risk? Is the pollution at one of the lakes getting worse faster? Will the lightrail continue to degrade Cedar Lake faster? Should we prioritize one lake over the other?

    - (Project staff) My understanding from Park Board water quality staff is yes, Cedar Lake deteriorates faster and has a lower water quality index because it takes a larger area of run-off compared to Lake of the Isles.

    - (Project staff) Also they are linked, so Lake of the Isles is bearing the brunt of Cedar pollution plus its own making them effectively one water body.

    - (CAC) Cedar is intended to be a swimmable lake whereas Lake of the Isles was historically a marsh and is not swimmable. In the past, Cedar was the cleanest lake of the Chain of Lakes, better than Harriet. So, Cedar's degradation seems more urgent.

        - (CAC, *in chat*): Agree about Cedar and importance to keep it swimmable as it is now.

        - (CAC, *in chat*): Yes, very good point.

- (CAC, *in chat*) Thanks for highlighting what I forgot to mention in my question: Should we be prioritizing Cedar water quality due to the activities typically done in that lake?

(CAC) Can we talk about water quality without talking about milfoil? How are they tied?

- (CAC) Lake of the Isles milfoil removal in summer of 2021 lagged because of equipment trouble.
- (CAC) The question is really maintaining harvesting going forward – is that feasible?
    - (Project staff) Milfoil can come in as an invasive (on a boat) to a lake. MPRB harvests milfoil to improve recreation, it is not an eradiation tactic.
    - (Project staff, *in chat*): MPRB Aquatic Plant Management

(CAC) Milfoil conversation and algae blooms are tied to climate change. Milfoil and algae are affecting the lake ecology.

- (Project Staff) Ecological history suggests that marshland allows for resilience. Native plant buffers help mitigate flooding. New trees and shading help with heat island reduction.
- (Project staff) Because of climate change, there are current studies happening where we are still learning about how to best respond to blue-green algae. A lake management plan would help push those studies.
- (Project staff, *in chat*) MPRB Blue-Green Algae page
- (CAC, *in chat*) Beyond milfoil and other aquatic invasive species, other challenges include climate change and increased risk of toxic algae blooms.
- (Project staff in chat) MPCA Blue-Green Algae page
- (CAC) Agree that we need to think about climate change, not just in water quality. Also, is there a solution to milfoil problems?
    - (Project staff) As noted on the MPRB Aquatic Plant Management, there are MN DNR permit limitations for harvesting milfoil and it's also extremely challenging to manage. MN DNR focus is limiting new infestations because it's so hard to manage.
    - (CAC) Doesn't really make sense to have as a goal to eliminate milfoil.

(CAC) Back to a previous CAC question: What does restoration look like when referring to Oak Woodland/Mesic forest.

- (Project Staff) These are great questions that can't be answered yet but help us focus in on priorities and get more specifics on what it would look like. Reviews the soil quality issues – east side is more degraded so would take a lot more time and money.
    - (CAC, *from chat*) Lots of trees down in that east side, could at least manage that.
- (Project Staff) – (B*rings up Relative Impacts of Proposed Water Quality Treatments chart from CAC 7 Presentation Part 2*) This chart can help to assess relative benefits.
    - (CAC) Anything that provides the most bang for the buck, (*referring to chart*) especially bigger blue than yellow like in-lake treatments.

The discussion concludes with the CAC chair asking for any last CAC comments before Public Comment time.

- (CAC, *from chat*) Thanks for facilitating this important discussion about water quality, which should be central to the CAC's work, both because people agree that this issue is the highest priority for these lakes, and because the health and ecological function of the lakes is at risk, which threatens all "uses" of this parkland.

PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

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 Commissioner Abene) Interested in the subject of water quality and encouraged by discussion of watershed view of this. If you take the pipes off and water transitions naturally, then our proposal does the trick. But we do have to contend with the pipes, so the collaborations are critical.
- (Public, *in chat*) Have you talked about the relationship of structures to water quality?
    - (Project Staff) Yes in general, but not at enlarged level yet. Impervious surface has an impact on water quality – impervious surface that drain to vegetation has less impact. If we add new surfaces/structures, we can mitigate affects if we buffer new surface with vegetation – depends on what it drains to and if we are treating before it gets to lake. Also, those structures are less likely to be salted heavily.

    - (Public, *in chat*) Ok, thank you, Adam. That makes sense. Following Commissioners Abene's comment, could working with other partners be part of the master plan? Or is that outside the scope.

- (Public, *in chat*) But the more impervious surfaces are created, the more mitigation will be required.
    - (Project staff) Yes, existing and new will need to be addressed – so the new proposal suggests a high-level response.
- (CAC, *in chat*) The parkways are directed primarily to the storm sewer system that drain directly to the lake and not towards greenspaces.
- (Public) Is working with watershed partners part of this scope?
    - (Project staff) Putting in recommendations and broad direction to create partnerships.
    - (CAC) CAC can make the recommendations to address partnerships a part of this process
    - (CAC, *in chat*) Since collaboration and partnerships with other agencies are in MPRB's Ecological Systems Plan, what steps have been taken to create the infrastructure/methods to establish and sustain these partnerships?
- (Public) Thanks for the process being open to public. Reference to news about a public agency that didn't listen to public. Encourages the agency to keep listening to public.
- (MPRB Commissioner Shaffer) These are hard questions with no easy solutions. Feels that this is an opportunity to benefit these lakes for generations to come.

MEETING ENDED