



Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail Master Plan

April 24, 2019, 6:00 – 8:00pm

McRae Recreation Center

CAC members present: Bill Shroyer, Caitlin Ross, Cory Schaffhausen, Devin Olson, Francesco Marraffa, Frank Burton, Jim Tincher, Jonathon Heide, Lesley Lydell, Martha Grant, Mary McKelvey, Michael Jishke, Michael Torres, Rebecca Johnson, Richard Duncan, Richard Nyquist, Ryan Seibold

CAC members absent: Betsy Brock, Jessica McKenna

Approximately 39 members of the public attended the meeting.

Staff, consultants, and speakers present:

Adam Arvidson (MPRB), Madeline Hudek (MPRB), Vanessa Dikuyama Zapata (MPRB), Bryan Harjes (Consultant-HKGI), Jody Rader (Consultant-HKGI), Rita Trapp (Consultant-HKGI), Sarah Evenson (Consultant-HKGI), Tiffany Schaufler (MCWD)

Notes:

What is the Corridor-wide Vision?

- What does “sensitively incorporate recreation” mean?: for example- tennis is popular in certain areas, so you can’t blanket say getting rid of tennis courts is an aim- you have to be thoughtful about what types of recreation you maintain, add, where it goes, etc.
- Like #4 but like the idea of a natural oasis being for wildlife and humans (include wildlife)
- Don’t see art explicitly (and would like to). Could fit into #4 or #6
- #2 Safe routes *within* the corridor. Important to reflect the fact that the creek is an end unto itself- not just a way to get places. Take issue with use of “through.”
 - Like “to” especially. The creek is a destination and we should be working to get people there.
- Sensitivity to the needs of people who live along the Creek should be more explicitly stated, especially when it comes to safety
- #5 *balance* the desires of region-wide visitors, local users, and residents
- #4/#1 concern about flood mitigation- maybe state more explicitly
- #2 talk about inviting/safe entry points
- #7 explicitly mention water management



What should be the approach for water access?

- Some areas where water access is proposed don't currently have trails. It was confirmed that there will be trails proposed to provide access
- Concern about how much car parking per access- what is the right number?
- Safety – tubing, kayaking and fishing – could they be in the same location? Areas where creek is wider or slower are more appropriate for fishing or tubing, but these may not be compatible
- Access in winter time – cross country skiing, fat tire bike – can that be provided/addressed?
- Clarification of how built water access would be – do we really need this since it is already happening? Informal access points may still exist, but formally identified access points would be maintained by MPRB for safety and have informational signage/wayfinding.
- Concern about safety – communications about creek flow (too fast or too low), clearing of trees, take out points should be available via signage and digital information (online updates)
- Designated points of entry help to clarify where to put in versus where restoration occurs – helps to protect the bank.
- Designated access helps users figure out where to get out – both in pre-planning and when they're on the creek. Signage on the creek and online would reinforce this.
- It would be helpful to have street names on bridges and wayfinding at entry points for loops/destinations
- Specialized tubing designation areas make sense – tubing access should be on wider, slower segments of the creek, with access to playgrounds and gathering areas, and clearly marked signage. Try not to interfere with neighbors who are close by.
- Make sure access points equate to where people are trying to access the creek now
- Define usage etiquette- must provide certain things when formalizing/encouraging access
- Ten is too many if these are going to have impacts on the natural beauty
- Concern about cost of maintenance – anything we build
- Access points should coincide with bus routes and public transit
- How will design of the bike trails accommodate electric bikes?

How much new activity should be included?

- Fulton/Lynnhurst/Armatage didn't like paved paths. Generally less interest in formal recreation. Emphasize benches, access points, but no additional pavement. No paved paths west of Lynnhurst.
 - Feedback was more nuanced than that. Continue to focus on areas where there are already active features.
 - Putting things in the appropriate places is the key. Need enough space, parking, to consider noise pollution, safety, etc.
- Any discussion about off-leash dog parks? No not as part of this plan.
- Natural means a lot of things, so using that word means different things to different people
- Hammocking is very popular with older kids- what is the MPRB's policy? Plant trees that will handle hammocking well and safely... Education and signage should be promoted.
- Missing link in the sidewalk between Morgan and 54th.



- Like that the concepts have minimized active recreation in areas where that is important. Formalized recreation should go in places where there is already a built element to the environment. Make sure that areas that feel natural now don't lose that.
- Goal to have places where you can enjoy the creek without simply using it as a thoroughfare. Passive destinations are forms of recreation (for birders especially). Good balance/mix. Hammock groves, play lawns seem natural but also suit the needs of passive users.
- Interface of the creek, neighborhood park at Lynnhurst is really neat. Provides active recreation along the Creek and connects with a school. That pairing is great.
- Geometry is helpful to determine prime places for active park amenities- use wider sections of the corridor to introduce active uses (like food trucks), or gathering spaces
- Runners really like dirt trails, but they do get muddy and impassable at times. Suggestion for a narrow, crushed rock path that helps with traction and controls for drainage.
- It's hard to not feel like you're trespassing west of Lynnhurst, so formalizing some sort of path would indicate that you're in a public space
 - Minnetonka Trail from Minnetonka to Gray's Bay is a great example
- Underneath I-35, light, art would make people feel safer. Chicago Ave bridge too.
- Minnehaha Creek corridor relates to the neighborhood parks- we should complement the recreation provided there. Lynnhurst and Nokomis are major active recreation hubs. Encourage passive recreation in between.
- Wayfinding should be provided to and from parks
- Art doesn't have to be permanent. Ephemeral art means different art can pop up at different times. Could be a continuous attraction.

How "Wild" should the corridor be?

- Many wild areas today have invasive plant species, erosion, and flooding. General direction is good because those areas need care in the form of some management.
- Long-term plan. What's the benefit of having any unmanaged areas? Maybe they don't need extensive management right now, but they should be cared for.
- Managed areas should be better defined- maybe a scale of management intensity? You have to keep managing turf with frequent mowing, but prairies and forests eventually become self-sustaining with fewer instances/ different types of active management.
- Could there be an adopt-a-highway for pollinators/creek? Volunteers could help seed, clean the creek.
 - Certain existing managed areas have volunteers and others assigned to maintain, for example, a prairie habitat. Stewardship is the difference in the existing condition and the managed natural area. (intent)
- Don't remove/clear all untended trees. Don't manage too much- certain wildlife need those types of places for habitat. Could be managed too much. Needs a balance.
- Don't want to see just unfunctional grass areas- pollinator lawns are great
- Don't want to remove trees if avoidable
- Encourage native plantings and a feeling of being out in nature
- Managing could mean taking out buckthorn, maintaining a certain habitat, providing for wildlife, etc.



- Management with a purpose is good. Managed turf areas and managed prairie/woodland/pollinator areas require and are trying to achieve different things.
- The closer the “wildness” gets to the creek, the greater the risk of dropped branches etc.
- Scared of the amount of managed areas replacing the wild areas, especially at the gorge. Should be sensitive to clearing and losing the feeling of wildness. Needs to be replaced if taken away for remeanders.
- Element of time is important. This is a Long-term plan. Some areas may just need a few years to regrow wild feel, others may take much longer.

What should the role of the Parkway be in the corridor?

- Should not be a thoroughfare for commuters. Roads to the north and south should be the primary routes used. How do you control commuter traffic? Perhaps the Parkway could be closed to vehicles at certain times?
- Emphasis should be on bike and pedestrian traffic, especially to address safety concerns
- Optimize how *to get to* the parkway. 40% of users are not local.
- How would we use/design the creek corridor if the roads weren’t already in place?
 - We would probably provide more parking lots to access key points/destinations and fewer roads right adjacent to the park
 - People do want to drive along the park, though
- Driving on it is something that is a pleasure and allows people to experience the corridor even when time is of the essence or physical ability is limited. Maybe in years ahead with electric vehicles pollution will be less of an issue. People go out of their way to drive on the parkway.
- Driving the parkway provides access to people who may not feel comfortable getting there by bike, and can’t walk/run
- Traffic flow should be smoothed where possible so it doesn’t back up, especially where it’s used as a crosstown passage. Improving traffic flow would mitigate fumes and improve visitor experience.
- Use as a commuter route is a problem, especially where speed and bottlenecks are an issue. Slip roads are hazardous. We should make it a more awkward place for commuters and shortcutters. Use chicanes, speed control, upped enforcement, etc.
- Slowing traffic is good. Need appropriate time/space for vehicles to respond. Right-of-way for peds and bicyclists needs to be prioritized.
- Loops for peds and bikes should be prioritized, potentially at the expense of vehicle ease
- We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to question the dominance of the vehicle
 - Don’t want to limit access of adjacent residents, but should definitely look at how and whether roads play a part in the corridor
- If there wasn’t a 50th street bridge across 35W, that would really change the traffic pattern
 - More realistically, could 50th route north/south somewhere else and not meet the parkway?
 - Make 50th a smooth 25 mph road
- Commuting on a parkway is technically illegal, but can’t really be enforced
- Getting to 50th and getting across Nokomis-Hiawatha are the most key stretches where the parkway is necessary for vehicular use.



- 50th will continue to be a commuter route unless the road is closed.

General Notes and Comments

- CAC nominated 4 individuals to represent this project on the Lynnhurst subcommittee (Michael, Mary, Leslie, Ryan)
- Field Regina newsletter said that the plan had already been released- so commenter was happy to see that that's not the case. MPRB will look up that article and follow up.
- Think about wildlife corridors in the broader context of Minnehaha Regional Park and the Mississippi River. Emphasis on improving habitat is great to see.
- The plan seems to be underplaying the birding opportunities here. Big passive recreational use. Keep that in mind.
- Pay attention to fish, mussels, insects, other food sources for birds.
- Take a specific approach to slope management. Think about this when deciding on management strategies (prairie, versus woodland, versus turf, etc.)
- Opportunity to work with neighbors to promote habitat/pollinators on adjacent properties.
- Want an interpretive plan to emphasize natural and cultural history. Engage with the native communities now.
- Surface water use is tricky. Balance paddle, tubing, fishing access points and site them to work. Consider a formal water trail designation.
- Proactive youth programs, performance art, and other annual budgeting for programming is something to consider. Coordinate program plans with landscape plans.
- Haven't seen a pricetag yet. Concern about how things will be costed. Some projects look very expensive and others look like they'll give you a lot for a little investment. There will be cost estimates for capital improvements and maintenance estimates at the end. The draft document that will go out for public review will include these numbers and they will be reviewed at CAC meetings with public comment periods. This 20-30 year vision will open up funding opportunities in the future that shouldn't be limited by current budgets.
- Suggestion to have printed copies available for public attendees
- Will the public have more time to speak at the next CAC meeting? When the preferred concepts come out, there will be a lot of discussion at the CAC, perhaps at intervals
- Emphasize habitat, wildlife role of the corridor. Don't like large bike park in segment 4- would displace a lot of critters.
- Make sure residents' concerns are taken into considerations, especially with safety and roads
- What is the most pressing need that the creek can address? Remeanders seem very expensive and might not achieve much? MCWD believes remeanders are very valuable because they help with flood mitigation, which is a great benefit. Water quality, flood control, habitat, user safety (peds & bikes) are all the big pressing needs.
- Want more information about pollinator lawns and flood storage underneath. How set in stone are removals of tennis courts, and other recreational additions/subtractions?
- Would just as soon have all the turf gone
- What was data behind water access distances? ¼ mile spacing is typically what an average user will walk.



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- Focus on consolidating activity nodes near public transit access.
- Love watching Burroughs kids use Lynnhurst throughout the day. So much passive use by children- they don't typically need a lot of built features to enjoy.
- Consider combatting nature deficit disorder and provide places for kids to enjoy nature- don't necessarily need built structures/play features