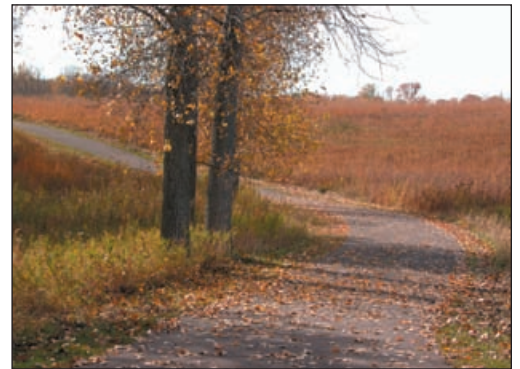


ST. CROIX VALLEY REGIONAL TRAIL MASTER PLAN



WASHINGTON COUNTY PARKS

MAY 2005

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL APPROVAL STATEMENT

OVERVIEW

The following is the official comments and approval of the plan by the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and Metropolitan Council.

Special Metropolitan Council Meeting

Wednesday, December 7, 2005

Council Chambers

4:00 P.M.

Part I - Narrative

Members present:

Peter Bell, Chair; Roger Scherer, Tony Pistilli, Jules Smith, Mary Hill Smith, Russ Susag, Peggy Leppik, Annette Meeks, Lynette Wittsack, Natalie Steffen, Kris Sanda, Georgeanne Hilker, Chris Georgacas, Rick Aguilar, Song Lo Fawcett, Daniel Wolter

Members absent: Brian McDaniel

Call to Order and Approval of Agenda

A quorum being present, the Chair called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council to order at 4:00 p.m. It was moved by Scherer seconded by Pistilli to approve the amended agenda. Motion carried.

Business

Committee Consent List

[2005-327 - St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Master Plan Review, Washington County, Review File 19563-1](#)

It was moved by Steffen and seconded by Susag:

"That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan (Referral No. 19563-1). However, only one alignment—not branch alignments that parallel each other—would be eligible for regional funding. As the plan is implemented, a proposal on which branch is the “regional trail” should be submitted for Council review and approval prior to or concurrently with any regional funding to acquire or develop that trail section.
2. Encourage surmountable curbing (Minnesota Department of Transportation Curb and Gutter Design No. S524, or equal) where trail construction requires road curbing.”

Motion carried.

**MEETING OF
METROPOLITAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION
November 14, 2005**

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Barb Schmidt, Glen Skovholt, Gary Botzek, Robert Wicklund, Michael Rainville, Emily Barbeau, Daniel Shlaferman, Lars Erdahl, Richard Jabs

ABSENT: Natalie Steffen, Metropolitan Council Liaison to the Commission

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Skovholt called the Meeting of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to order at 4:00 p.m. on November 14, 2005.

BUSINESS:

St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Master Plan Review, Washington County - Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks

Jim Luger, Washington County Parks gave a PowerPoint presentation of the St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Master Plan submitted to the Metropolitan Council for review and approval.

Luger discussed talks with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) that involve running the trail through Afton State Park as an alternate route to St. Croix Trail on County 21.

Shlaferman asked about the abandoned railroad between Quadrant Avenue and the river in Denmark Township. Luger stated that private landowners purchased it by outbidding the DNR.

Schmidt asked if ideas for local trails come from the locals. Luger stated that some did and noted that some landowners were offering right of ways but were not publicly advertising it for fear of being ostracized by neighbors.

Schmidt commented that Afton Alps would benefit with cross country ski trails. Luger stated that they are opposed because of liability issues in the summer due to the Golf Course (balls hitting trail users).

Botzek asked about acquisition costs. Luger explained that there would not be any as the areas are publicly owned with the exception of one small link in southern Denmark Township.

Shlaferman asked if there is conflict with snowmobiles. Luger stated that there are new laws limiting snowmobiles on trails (cannot be on pavement) and noted that they can be within the corridor. He stated that as urbanization comes, rules are becoming stricter.

Skovholt asked if the St. Croix Regional Trails along County Road 21 will happen for sure. Luger stated yes, it will be the primary route, as far as Metropolitan Council dollars are concerned. He stated that they will work with Denmark Township for additional trails funded through grants, etc.

Schmidt asked where will the project start. Luger stated at the south end. He noted that they are working with Trust for Public Land on easements with the two private land owners.

Schmidt commended the planning for additional trails before land in the township is developed.

Commissioner Schmidt moved that the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan (Referral No. 19563-1). However, only one alignment—not branch alignments that parallel each other—would be eligible for regional funding. As the plan is implemented, a proposal on which branch is the “regional trail” should be submitted for Council review and approval prior to or concurrently with any regional funding to acquire or develop that trail section.
2. Encourage surmountable curbing (Minnesota Department of Transportation Curb and Gutter Design No. S524, or equal) where trail construction requires road curbing.

Commissioner Barbeau seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**

INTRODUCTION / ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION



The public process was central to developing the master plan.

In June of 2004, the Washington County Board of Commissioners retained Brauer & Associates, Ltd. to collaborate with county staff and local citizens to complete a comprehensive master plan for St. Croix Valley Regional Trail. This document represents the results of the planning process, which was completed in May of 2005.

PUBLIC AND WASHINGTON COUNTY INVOLVEMENT

Given the notable interest in the development of a regional trail, the general public and special interest groups were invited to participate in the planning process on numerous occasions. Through formal and informal meetings, members of the community had direct access to the consultant team and County staff. The public's input throughout the planning process proved very fruitful and strengthened the final plan.

In addition to general public involvement, the Washington County Parks and Open Space Commission provided oversight of the planning process. Being familiar with local conditions and public demand for trails, Washington County Parks staff also played an instrumental role in the planning process.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

An eleven member technical advisory committee was also assembled to provide oversight and input on critical planning issues. The group represented a cross-section of city officials and staff from agencies affected by the master plan. (A listing of committee members is provided under the acknowledgments.)

PUBLIC AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

To ensure congruency between agencies, Washington County invited representatives from the City of Afton and Denmark Township to participate in the planning process. The master plan takes into consideration results of meetings with representatives from these agencies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The consultant team would like to thank Washington County for undertaking an open and constructive public participation process for the project. This approach allowed many perspectives to be considered and acted upon. Through this process, it is believed that a responsible balance between community and personal values was achieved.

The consultant team would also like to thank the Technical Advisory Committee, Washington County Parks and Open Space Commission, and Washington County Board for participating in this project. Their individual and collective insights were instrumental in drawing conclusions that are reasonable, responsible, and insightful.

The consultant team also extends a heartfelt thank you to the Washington staff, especially Jim Luger, Parks Director, and John Elholm, Senior Parks Planner. The openness with which they approached this project paved the way for a constructive public process that considered all opinions to be of equal merit and worthy of due consideration. Their understanding of the larger regional context and how this trail fits into the larger regional park picture was also of high value as final conclusions were drawn.

Finally, the consultant team extends a thank you to the citizens who took the time to attend meetings, write letters, and make phone calls so that we could understand the issues first hand and find solutions that seemed reasonable and workable.

Sincerely,
 Jeff Schoenbauer
 Principal-in-Charge / Project Manager

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS AND OVERSIGHT

WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

District 1 - Dennis C. Hegberg
 District 2 - Bill Pulkrabek, Vice Chair
 District 3 - Gary Kriesel
 District 4 - Myra Peterson, Chair
 District 5 - Dick Stafford

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

District 1 - Margaret Vogel-Martin, Chair / Christopher Ness, Vice-Chair
 District 2 - Charles Burfeind / Kenneth Heuer
 District 3 - Karen Rheinberger / Jackie Ulrich
 District 4 - Janet Norton / Paul Poncin
 District 5 - Don Arnold / Steve Dornfeld

TECHNICAL ADVISORY TEAM

Jim Luger, Parks Director, Washington County Parks
 John Elholm, Senior Planner, Washington County Parks
 Mitch Berg, City Administrator, City of Afton
 Dave Engstrom, Mayor, City of Afton
 Kathy Higgins, Supervisor, Denmark Township
 Jim Fitzpatrick, Executive Director, Carpenter Nature Center
 Cal Kontola, Manager, Afton State Park
 Paul Poncin, Washington County Parks and Open Space Commission
 Randy Thoreson, NPS, Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance (RTCA)
 Suzann Willhite, East Metro Area Supervisor, Trails and Waterways, MNDNR
 Arne Stefferud, Metropolitan Council

CONSULTANT

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 Minneapolis, MN 55435
 (952) 832-2600

(Barr completed the *Maintaining and Enhancing Environmental Quality in Denmark Township* report cited in this master plan.

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