

Young girl provides feedback at a Ramadan picnic at Mississippi Gateway Regional Park.  
Image Credit: Three Rivers Park District



## RESEARCH PROJECTED USE

Mississippi Gateway Regional Park is positioned to serve some of the more dense areas as well as some of the most racially diverse and economically challenged communities of Suburban Hennepin County. The master planning purposefully included engaging community groups that were underrepresented in current park visitation. By engaging underrepresented community groups and implementing the recommendations they helped develop, it is reasonable to expect that overall visitation will increase and be more representative of the communities the park is hoping to better serve. It is also reasonable to expect that for many existing users, their visitor experience will be improved possibly leading to more frequent and longer duration visits.

### HOST COMMUNITY

Mississippi Gateway Regional Park is located in Brooklyn Park - a vibrant, young community. It is the 6th largest city in Minnesota and one of the most racially diverse. In fact, about half of its residents are people of color. About one in five Brooklyn Park residents were born outside the United States and one in four speak a language other than English at home. Its residents are young: three in ten residents are under the age of 19 compared to 2.5 in ten nationwide and within Hennepin County and the median age is 32 compared to 37 for the nation and Minnesota.

Within five miles of the park, 34 percent of residents are people of color and 16 percent of residents are below the 185 percent of federal poverty level. The demographics of the schools that currently participate in park programming also speak to the level of racial diversity, language challenges and economic hardship. Current school program participants of Mississippi Gateway Regional Park are 61 percent students of color, 18 percent English language learners and 57 percent receive free or reduced lunch. These are all individuals and communities that Three Rivers and Brooklyn Park want to serve better.

### EXISTING & PROJECTED | VISITORS & VISITATION

Mississippi Gateway Regional Park has a current annual visitation of 212,000. Upon completion of the master plan, this

is anticipated to increase to 600,000, and the visitor profile will likely be reflective of the demographics of the area within a 15 minute drive time to the park as well as Suburban Hennepin County (Table 13).

**Table 13:**  
**Demographics of Service Area & Suburban Hennepin County**

Source: Three Rivers Park District

	15 minute drive time		Suburban Hennepin County	
	# of People	% of People	# of People	% of People
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	156,933	49%	401,231	49%
Female	163,339	51%	417,607	51%
<b>Age</b>				
Under 5	22,419	7%	55,681	7%
5-9	22,419	7%	51,587	6%
10-17			84,340	10%
18-24	60,852	19%	54,862	7%
25-34	48,041	15%	117,094	14%
35-44	41,635	13%	103,174	13%
45-59	64,054	20%	180,144	22%
60-74	44,838	14%	118,732	15%
75+	16,014	5%	54,043	7%
<b>Race</b>				
African American/Black	51,244	16%	77,790	10%
American Indian or Alaska Native	3,204	1%	3,275	0%
Asian	32,027	10%	59,775	7%
Pacific Islander	0	0%	< 818	< 1%
White	208,177	65%	642,788	79%
Other/Multiple Races	22,417	7%	35,210	4%
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
Hispanic/Latino/Spanish	19,216	6%	44,217	5%
<b>Annual Household Income</b>				
< \$25,000	48,041	15%	109,724	13%
\$25,000 - \$49,999	73,663	23%	149,029	18%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	67,257	21%	143,297	18%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	48,041	15%	110,543	14%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	54,446	17%	149,847	18%
\$150,000 +	32,027	10%	157,217	19%

**Service Area**

The service area is defined as the area in which 75 percent of park visitors live. It illustrates how far 75 percent of park visitors are willing to travel to obtain the park’s product or services. For Mississippi Gateway Regional Park, the current park service area is based on an average drive time which was 14.1 minutes. This is projected to increase to 15 minutes upon master plan completion and include the communities of Dayton, Champlin, Maple Grove, Osseo, Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, Robbinsdale, Crystal, New Hope, Plymouth and Minneapolis in Hennepin County; and Coon Rapids, Blaine, Mounds View, New Brighton, Columbia Heights, Hilltop, Fridley, and Spring Lake Park in Anoka County (Figure 37).

**Main Recreation Activity**

The main recreation activity of park visitors is anticipated to shift since there will be new, improved and year-round recreation offerings attracting new users and potentially change some activity choices of existing users. According to the 2013 Three Rivers Visitor Study, the main activities visitors participated in the summer included biking (37 percent), hiking (34 percent) and other (13.4 percent). Upon completion of the master plan it is anticipated that hiking and running will increase to 43 percent and become the top recreation activity followed by Mississippi Gateway Center walk-ins at 25 percent and biking at 23 percent.

One item to note is that the only biking currently allowed through the park is a short segment of the Rush Creek Regional Trail - yet 37 percent of summer visitors denoted biking as their main activity. It is reasonable to assume that some of these visitors don’t really ‘visit’ the park, but rather simply pass through it. The new paved trail loop will better serve this visitor base and help make this park a key destination along their biking route.

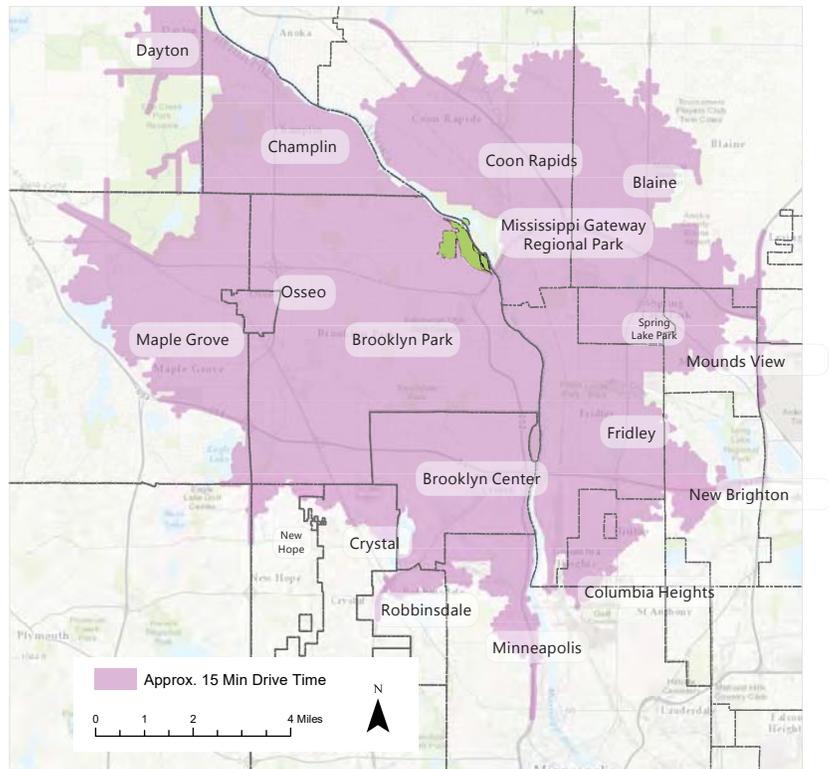
Table 14 shows the projected changes in visitation by activity.

**Length of Stay**

Currently 50 percent of all visitors stay for less than one hour. The length of stay for many of the improved and new activities (picnicking, play area, winter activities, non-motorized boating, programs and fishing) is projected to result in a length of stay of at least two hours or more on average. The length of stay for persons biking as a main activity probably will not increase significantly due to the number of additional paved, bikeable miles within the park; however, it is anticipated that they will have an improved user experience and more likely to return to the park to participate in additional activities than previously.

**Figure 37: Primary Service Area**

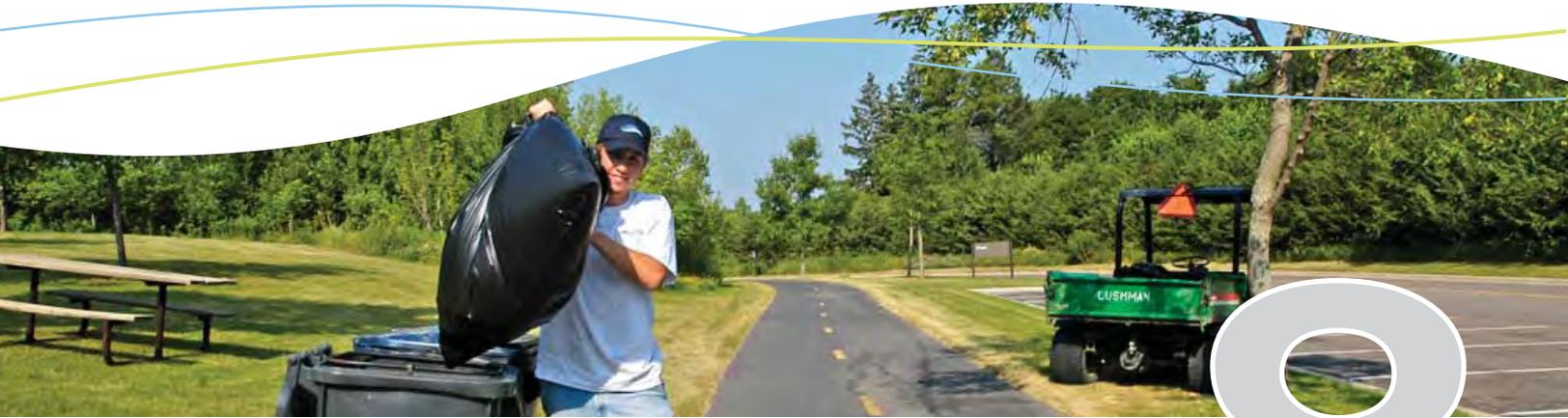
Source: Three Rivers Park District



**Table 14: Projected Visitation by Activity**

Source: Three Rivers Park District

Activities	Projected Annual Visits	Percent of Visitors Participating in Activity
Hiking or Running	260,000	43%
Walk-ins to Visitor/Nature Center	150,000	25%
Biking	136,000	23%
Natural Play Area	70,000	12%
Dog Off-Leash Area	42,000	7%
Instructor-led Scheduled Groups	25,000	4%
Fishing	22,000	4%
Picnicking	20,000	3%
Public Programs	18,000	3%
In-line Skating, Roller Skiing, Skateboarding	5,000	1%
Cross-Country Skiing	4,000	1%
Archery (without instructor)	3,000	<1%
Non-motorized Boating (without instructor)	2,000	<1%



Three Rivers maintenance staff at work.  
Image Credit: Three Rivers Park District

# 8

## OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE PLANS & DETAILS

The operations and maintenance vision for Mississippi Gateway Regional Park is that, from a user's perspective, it is maintained seamlessly across the whole park and consistently with Three Rivers greater regional park and trail system – regardless of the underlying ownership. For purposes of the master plan, the operation and maintenance plan assumes that Three Rivers will take the lead operating and maintaining the whole park through a future collaborative agreement with Brooklyn Park.

In the event a mutually beneficial operations and maintenance agreement is not realized, the outlined operation and maintenance plan will be adjusted to reflect the agreed upon arrangement.

### OVER-ARCHING OPERATION CONSIDERATIONS

Operations and programming at Mississippi Gateway Regional Park includes a strong focus on introducing people to nature and outdoor recreation and transitioning novice park users into environmental stewards.

Three Rivers will operate Mississippi Gateway Regional Park using a wide variety of professional staff and in accordance with Three Rivers policies, guidelines and ordinances. The ordinances provide for the safe and peaceful use of the parks and corresponding facilities; for the educational and recreational benefits and enjoyment of the public; for the protection and preservation of the property, facilities and natural resources; and for the safety and general welfare of the public. The current Three Rivers ordinances define regional park hours as 5 AM to 10 PM.

The park will be operated year-round and provide a variety of self-directed and instructor led outdoor recreation and natural resource education opportunities. The main recreation areas of the park will serve as a hub of activity and programming and see the greatest investment in programming and maintenance. The level of activity and programming will taper to almost nothing in the farthest and most remote areas of the park. In these areas, investment will switch from programming and maintenance to natural resource restoration and management.



Mississippi Gateway Regional Park's operations and programming includes a strong focus on introducing people to nature and outdoor recreation and transitioning novice park users into environmental stewards.

Source: Three Rivers Park District

Regional park staffing levels will fluctuate to account for the desired level of activity and programming in the various park areas as well as seasonal use patterns, maintenance requirements, resource goals and available funding.

## BASIC OPERATION SERVICES

The new Mississippi Gateway Center will follow a new model merging visitor and nature center functions. The more typical visitor center functions (bathrooms, park information, rental, concessions, gathering space, etc.) are included in the Basic Operation Services narrative whereas the programming functions are included in the Education Programming narrative.

### Basic Operation Services Plan

The Mississippi Gateway Center will be open for public use year-round and is envisioned to have extended, staffed hours to best meet community and park user’s needs. However, hours may fluctuate from season to season. The Mississippi Gateway Center will include a gear library providing cross-country skis and snowshoes in the winter and possibly fishing gear, GPS units (geocaching), walking sticks and activity backpacks in the non-winter months. Kayak/canoe and bike rental is desired at the park and may be offered directly by Three Rivers or a third party service provider – in either case, the Mississippi Gateway Center will support these rental services.

Basic Operation Services   Equipment & Supplies	
<b>\$100,000 (one time, plus supplies)</b> Cross-country skis, snowshoes, concessions, kayaks, paddle boards, equipment and similar.	
<b>\$14,000 (annual)</b> Equipment repair/replacement, supplies and similar	

Basic Operation Services   Staffing	
<b>\$323,000/year</b>	<b>\$18,000/year</b>
<b>Full Time Employees (6.5)</b> 1.0 FTE Facility Supervisor 2.5 FTE Secretary 1.5 FTE Receptionist/Attendant 1.5 FTE Rental/Concessions	<b>Seasonals</b> Up to 4

## EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

The key component of all programming at Mississippi Gateway Regional Park is to connect people to the Mississippi River and its dynamic ecosystem and its role in our region’s natural and cultural history. To do so, all programming will incorporate one or more of the following interpretive themes:

- The Mississippi River is ever changing and ranges from a developed, working river to a passive, scenic river.
- The Mississippi River is a water-based superhighway from Lake Itasca to the Gulf of Mexico.
- The Mississippi River has been and continues to be an important part of the region’s cultural fabric.
- The Mississippi River is an ecological marvel and prime example of river ecology.
- The Mississippi River corridor is a place to recreate to enhance human health.
- Our actions impact the health of the Mississippi River.

This will be done using a wide variety of education tools and best practices including passive, self-guided and active, instructor led opportunities both on and off-site.

## Education Programming Plan

Mississippi Gateway Regional Park is planned to be one of the core education programming centers at Three Rivers. The programming plan consists of hosting group education (primarily school groups) opportunities twice a day or more Monday through Friday and as needed on the weekends during the school year coupled with public programming offered at various times throughout the entire week – including nights and weekends. The group education focus switches to a multi-day public programming (primarily summer camps) approach during the summer. Programming will include both nature education and outdoor recreation offerings.

Programming will also be done off-site utilizing a mobile learning model which will enable educators to bring the “park to the people.” This flexible approach provides a bigger and more convenient platform for programming participants as it helps alleviate some barriers to programming participation including: transportation, cost, time and programming space. As envisioned, off-site group education programming will offer multiple programs each weekday as well as programming on the weekend and evenings to meet demand and Three Rivers’ programming goals. Off-site programming can occur almost anywhere, but the highest priority will be placed on parks and facilities that serve the first-tier communities and/or where Three Rivers has a vested interest.

For those desiring a more passive or self-guided approach to nature education, improved and enhanced exhibit space as well as nature interpretation nodes throughout the park will help meet their education needs. These spaces are intended to be interactive and updated seasonally, yearly or bi-yearly to stimulate repeat visitation. Educators will play a key role in developing these sites to ensure the education messages are consistent with the broader education goals of the park.

In addition, the programming plan calls for the continued growth of large community events that help build awareness, provide a desired level of activity to new users and promote the park as community and regional destination. These are anticipated to occur seasonally or more frequently if warranted by demand and may be a combination of Three Rivers and/or partner led events.

Education Programming   Equipment & Supplies	
<b>\$250,000 (one time, plus supplies)</b> Cross-country skis, snowshoes, kayaks, paddle boards, equipment and similar	
<b>\$40,000 (annual)</b> Equipment repair/replacement, supplies and similar	

Education Programming   Staffing	
To become a main programming center - staffing and associated costs will need to roughly double from current staffing.	
<b>\$865,000/year</b>	<b>\$62,400/year</b>
<b>Full Time Employees (11.6)</b> 1.0 FTE Park Operations Supervisor 5.0 Outdoor Educators (on-site) 5.6 Outdoor Educators (off-site)	<b>Seasonals</b> Up to 8

**MAINTENANCE**

Three Rivers will maintain the park in a safe, clean and usable manner. Maintenance is as important as basic services operation and education programming in respect to providing high-quality customer service and meeting park user’s expectations.

Since this park maintains the operation of Coon Rapids Dam and will provide a hybrid of nature and outdoor recreation education and host large community events seasonally or more, it is anticipated that there may be some customized maintenance procedures, equipment and staffing needs.

**Maintenance Plan**

The maintenance plan for Mississippi Gateway Regional Park calls for maintaining it consistently with other regional parks. This generally includes a combination of routine maintenance, seasonal condition assessments and inspections and specialized maintenance. Typical, routine maintenance includes mowing, sweeping, snow-removal, custodian services and trash clean-up and specialized maintenance includes small building construction, non-paved trail repair, grooming, some resource management and dam operations.

Condition assessment and inspections will address possible safety issues, vandalism and non-routine maintenance concerns, and extraordinary maintenance will occur in response to storm damage, vandalism or other unplanned circumstances as time and resources permit.

Maintenance   Equipment & Supplies	
The majority of the equipment necessary to this park will be shared with the Elm Creek Work Cluster.	
<b>\$100,000 (one time)</b> Additional maintenance equipment may include an additional vehicle, mower, grooming equipment, trailer, utility cart, pull behind blower and miscellaneous hand and power tools.	
<b>\$37,000 (annual)</b> Supplies, gas and signage.	

Maintenance   Staffing	
Maintenance will be completed by a wide variety of highly skilled and trained maintenance professionals including carpenters, mechanics, park workers, electricians and seasonal staff.	
<b>\$303,000/year</b> <b>Full Time Employees (4.0)</b> 1.0 FTE Crew Chief/Dam Operator 1.0 FTE Technician 1.0 FTE Custodian 1.0 Park Keeper	<b>\$33,800/year</b> <b>Seasonals</b> Up to 2,600 hours

**NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Three Rivers will protect and enhance Mississippi Gateway Regional Park’s natural and cultural resources.

**Resource Protection Plan**

Three Rivers, under the guidance of existing natural and cultural resources management plans, will utilize best practices to minimize any potential negative impacts, work with agency partners to determine how to best protect and manage significant resources and incorporate opportunities to enjoy and interpret the resources present.

A more detailed description of how the resources within the park will be protected, managed and enhanced is provided in Section 6, Park Development Concept.

If the design or construction phases of the park reveal any additional significant natural or cultural resources, Three Rivers will develop a stewardship plan specific to that resource and in accordance with other Three Rivers natural and cultural resource management plans.

Resource Restoration   Equipment & Supplies
The majority of natural resource restoration work will be contracted services, eliminating the need to acquire additional equipment.
<b>\$10,000 (annual)</b> Supplies

Resource   Staffing	
Resource related work will occur by professional forestry, wildlife, water quality and cultural resource experts. This master plan envisions a higher level of natural resources management and restoration than currently provided at Mississippi Gateway Regional Park. No additional cultural resources staff are anticipated to fulfill the vision of the park.	
<b>\$105,000/year</b> <b>Full Time Employees (1.5)</b> 1.5 FTE Technicians	<b>\$25,000/year</b> <b>Seasonals</b> Up to 2



Resource related work will occur by professional forestry, wildlife, water quality and cultural resource staff.  
Source: Three Rivers Park District

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

Three Rivers will provide a safe environment for regional park users, protect the park’s resources and educate park guests on park rules and expectations.

**Public Safety Plan**

Public safety officers will utilize a variety of specialized patrol methods. In addition to routine patrol, Three Rivers’ public safety officers may be dispatched through the Hennepin County Dispatch System to respond to incidences as they occur. Public safety officers will be supported by volunteer trail patrollers which assist with patrol and incident response along the West Mississippi River and Rush Creek Regional Trails that are routed through the park.

While Three Rivers will assume the lead role in providing public safety services to Mississippi Gateway Regional Park, a statewide mutual aid program assists to facilitate assistance and sharing public safety resources from surrounding police agencies in times of emergency or other unusual conditions.

Under this program and as part of the broader envisioned partnership between Three Rivers and Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Park Police will also play a key role in routine patrol, responding to incidents and providing support for large events. This is an essential partnership as Brooklyn Park Police may be better positioned to provide quick routine patrols and timely response in emergency situations simply due to the close proximity of their officers to the park compared to Three River public safety officers.

In addition, Hennepin County Water Patrol will provide patrol and emergency services for any water related event that may occur on or in the Mississippi River.

### Public Safety | Equipment, Supplies & Staffing

Three Rivers' Public Safety is a full-service POST-recognized law enforcement agency comprised of command staff, administrative staff, police officers and campground and large event security. Public Safety staff is supported by a volunteer trail patrol program and the statewide mutual aid program.

Due to the creative deployment of existing Three Rivers' police officers, utilization of seasonal staff, statewide mutual aid program and a successful trail patrol volunteer program, no additional equipment or full-time Public Safety positions are anticipated to serve the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park. As such, no additional operational funds are needed to provide public safety services.



Three Rivers' public safety provide a safe environment for regional park users, protect the park's resources and educate park guests on park rules and expectations. As seen in this photo, local boy scouts conduct survival training exercises with Three Rivers public safety officers.

Source: Three Rivers Park District

## SUSTAINABILITY

The updated 2016 Sustainability Plan guides Three Rivers efforts toward achieving established sustainability goals and targets by outlining broad strategies for organizational implementation.

The following goals provide guidance and intent to Three Rivers' sustainability efforts in respect to regional parks:

- Manage and operate parklands and facilities in a manner that ensures the ecologic, financial and social integrity of the park system in perpetuity.
- Reduce dependence on fossil fuels to minimize GHG emissions and reduce public expenditures.

- Reduce the amount of waste sent to the incinerator and landfill to minimize costs and reduce GHG emissions.
- Preserve groundwater and surface water resources to ensure current and future water needs can be met.
- Reduce Three Rivers environmental impacts to demonstrate or model Three Rivers' commitment to sustainable environmental stewardship.
- Provide opportunities for public education and involvement in Three Rivers sustainability initiatives.
- Design and plan park facilities, amenities and trails to maximize the public's ability to use non-motorized transportation and to meet Three Rivers' goal of sustainable environmental stewardship.

Three Rivers strives to utilize appropriate sustainable best management practices and guidelines such as the Minnesota Sustainable Building Guidelines (B3 Project) and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Development (LEED) Rating System on construction projects. For regional parks, best management practices may include utilizing porous pavement, rain gardens, recycled construction materials, using native plant materials, smart and responsible water consumption, connectivity to the regional trail system as well as mass transit and using sustainable building techniques.

In addition, Three Rivers has an active solid waste management plan geared toward reducing waste and increasing recycling and compost. At which time Mississippi Gateway Regional Park generates enough organics that the benefits outweigh the impact of commercial organic waste (i.e. additional truck traffic/trips), the park will evaluate moving toward a zero-waste facility model. In the meantime, garbage and waste will be collected and disposed of in accordance with best management practices and all applicable laws. Garbage and recycling bins will be located throughout the park to make participation convenient and easy.

## PUBLIC AWARENESS

The Marketing & Community Engagement Department manages a centralized marketing communications function that oversees Three Rivers' website, public relations, marketing, media relations, social media, brand management, event planning and promotion. A number of effective marketing and outreach tools are used to promote Three Rivers, including but not limited to events calendars, maps, digital and social media, direct mail, press releases, a centralized reservation system, brochures, advertising and on-site promotion. Promotional pieces will highlight how to get to the Park via foot, bike, transit and car.

Three Rivers collaborates with a wide array of community, business and government organizations to promote its facilities, programs and services, and to educate the public about its resources. Three Rivers also works with the Metropolitan Council Regional Parks System, the State Office of Tourism and other partners to leverage shared opportunities for creating awareness and visibility. Additionally, a focus is placed on developing partnerships and programming opportunities that allow Three Rivers to better serve all residents of Suburban Hennepin County, especially those with less access to its facilities and programs.



Master Plan calls for significant improvements to offerings and increased service to park users.  
Image Credit: Three Rivers Park District



## IMPLEMENTATION ESTIMATED COSTS & FUNDING

While Mississippi Gateway Regional Park already exists and is open for public use, the master plan calls for significant improvements to its natural resources and recreation development offerings and increased basic and educational service to park users. This robust vision is something that will take time, resources and partnerships to fully realize.

The capital improvements have an estimated cost of \$25.5 million with an estimated annual operation and maintenance cost of \$1.8 million including the costs associated with a staffing team comprised of 23.6 FTE and 16 seasonal staff members.

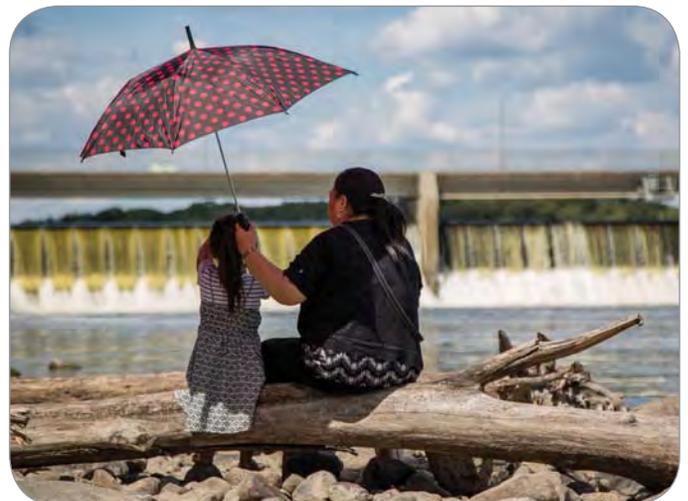
This chapter lays out the associated responsibilities for both Three Rivers and Brooklyn Park, as well as estimated costs and funding plan.

### PARTNERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

At the time the master plan was prepared the general premise of the Three Rivers and Brooklyn Park partnership is that each party will be responsible for resources and facilities located on land in which they own and at their own cost. If at a future date, the parties agree to approach implementation and operation in a more collaborative manner, the intent would be that each agency would still be responsible for costs associated with the parkland in which it owns.

There are a few exceptions to this understanding:

- Three Rivers will be responsible for all work and costs of the new maintenance facility except for any costs associated with maintaining Brooklyn Park’s parkland.
- Three Rivers will be responsible for all work and costs of realigning Rush Creek Regional Trail.
- Three Rivers and Brooklyn Park will split costs associated with the Rush Creek Regional Trail grade separated crossing of West River Road. The parties will determine the appropriate implementation party at which time this becomes a viable, funded project.



Increased river programming and access is a major goal of the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan.

Source: Three Rivers Park District

## ACQUISITION

Mississippi Gateway Regional Park is fully acquired; however, Three Rivers and Brooklyn Park intend to enter into a long-term lease or similar agreement in order for Three Rivers to locate the maintenance facility on land owned by Brooklyn Park and reconfigure existing regional trail easements over Brooklyn Park land to align with the planned realigned route. The respective master plan boundaries would be amended as appropriate to include affected property at which time the property rights are conveyed.

No significant costs are foreseen for either the long-term lease or regional trail easement work; however, in-kind services may be provided to offset the value of the long-term lease.

The long-term lease and reconfiguration of regional trail easements will occur at which time the respective project is planned for construction.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS & FUNDING PLAN

Substantial natural resource restoration and complete redevelopment is envisioned at Mississippi Gateway Regional Park. The majority of its infrastructure is dated, at the end of its useful life and/or no longer meeting the community's and region's needs. Natural Resource restoration and complete redevelopment will require a long-term commitment and a viable funding plan.

A summary of capital costs by area and agency is located in Table 15, following page. The costs outlined are for projects only (prairie restoration, trail construction, etc.) and do not include the costs associated with maintaining or operating these investments.

While there is interest by both parties to move forward with implementing the master plan, there are not adequate funds to do so immediately. Three Rivers and Brooklyn Park intend to continue to work together to secure funding for this park through grants, fundraising and partnerships.

### Implementation Timing

Pavement reconstruction and improved river access within the East Unit are planned for construction in 2018 - 2020. All other development will occur as funding becomes available and at the discretion of Three Rivers Board of Commissioners and Brooklyn Park City Council.

### Implementation Partners

Mississippi Gateway Regional Park provides amenities and opportunities at the regional, state and national level due to its location within the Mississippi National River Recreation Area. Three Rivers and Brooklyn Park will explore partnership opportunities which support implementation of the master plan. Potential partners include the National Park Service; the US Fish and Wildlife Service; the Federal Transportation Administration; the State of Minnesota; the Metropolitan Council; the West Mississippi Watershed Management Commission; Hennepin County; Anoka County; Anoka-Hennepin School District; local municipalities; non-profits; community groups; businesses and other partners.

## OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

Operations and maintenance costs for the East Unit as well as the maintenance facility and Rush Creek Regional Trail will primarily be funded through Three Rivers' Operating Budget. The Operating Budget's primary source of funds are property taxes with some revenue from the State of Minnesota as part of the Operations and Maintenance Fund allocations from the Metropolitan Council. Operations and maintenance costs for the West Unit will primarily be funded through Brooklyn Park's Parks Operations and Maintenance Budget. The Operating Budget's primary source of funding is property taxes.

Ultimately all operating and maintenance costs – including staffing are subject to the normal operational budget preparation administered by Three Rivers and Brooklyn Park and adopted by their respected governing bodies.

A summary of the total costs by agency is provided for quick reference (Table 16, following page). A detailed operations and maintenance summary is available in Section 7 Operations & Maintenance Plan.



Increased river programming and access is a major goal of the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan.

Source: Three Rivers Park District

**Table 15: Capital Improvement Costs by Area & Agency**

Source: Three Rivers Park District

THREE RIVERS		
<b>Main Development Area</b>		
<b>Upper Recreation Area</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mississippi Gateway Center</li> <li>Welcome &amp; Event Plaza</li> <li>Mini Mississippi Play &amp; Education Feature</li> <li>Nature's Highline Trail &amp; Tree House</li> <li>General Picnicking</li> <li>Nature Interpretation Nodes</li> <li>Nature Play Areas</li> <li>Site Work, Parking &amp; Bathrooms</li> <li>Natural Resource Restoration</li> </ul>	\$14,410,000	
<b>River Flats Area</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Picnicking</li> <li>ADA River Access &amp; Outdoor Classroom</li> <li>Nature Interpretation Nodes</li> <li>Drop-off, Temporary Parking &amp; Non-motorized Boat Launch</li> <li>Fishing Improvements</li> <li>Site Work, Trails &amp; Bathrooms</li> </ul>	\$1,100,000	
<b>Recreation Area   West Unit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintenance Center &amp; Outreach Hub</li> <li>Regional Trail Realignment</li> <li>Grade-Separated Crossing (cost share with Brooklyn Park)</li> </ul>	\$2,810,000	
<b>Transition Area</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field Learning Stations</li> <li>Nature Interpretation Nodes</li> <li>Fishing Improvements</li> <li>Trails</li> <li>Natural Resource Restoration</li> </ul>	\$1,895,000	
<b>Natural Area</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>South Pond Learning Lab</li> <li>Nature Interpretation Nodes</li> <li>Trails, Bathrooms &amp; Signage</li> <li>Natural Resource Restoration</li> </ul>	\$1,060,000	
<b>Three Rivers Total</b>		<b>\$21,275,000</b>

BROOKLYN PARK		
<b>Transition Area Projects and West Unit Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reservation Picnicking</li> <li>Archery Range</li> <li>Dog Off-leash Area</li> <li>Picnic Play Area</li> <li>Interior Trails</li> <li>Parking Lots &amp; Road Access</li> <li>Nature Interpretation Nodes</li> <li>Grade-Separated Crossing (cost share with Three Rivers)</li> </ul>	\$4,210,000	
<b>Brooklyn Park Total</b>		<b>\$4,210,000</b>

**Table 16: Operation & Maintenance Costs by Agency**

Source: Three Rivers Park District

	Park District	Brooklyn Park	Subtotal
<b>Basic Operation Services</b>	\$355,000	---	\$355,000
<b>Education Programming</b>	\$967,000	---	\$967,400
<b>Maintenance</b>	\$320,000	53,800	\$373,800
<b>Natural Resources</b>	\$120,000	\$20,000	\$140,000
<b>Public Safety</b>	---	---	---
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,762,400</b>	<b>\$73,800</b>	<b>\$1,836,200</b>

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# APPENDIX A

## RELEVANT METROPOLITAN COUNCIL POLICIES

# A

Policy	Description
<p><b>Recreation Activities and Facilities Policy</b> Provide a regional system of recreation opportunities for all residents, while maintaining the integrity of the natural resource base within the Regional Parks System.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation Activities and Facilities – Strategy 1: Activities in regional parks must be tied to the natural resources of the parks, but not adversely affect them.</li> <li>• Recreation Activities and Facilities – Strategy 3: Strengthen equitable usage of regional parks and trails among all residents, across race, ethnicity, income, and ability.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Planning Policy</b> Promote master planning and help provide integrated resource planning across jurisdictions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning – Strategy 1: Regional park implementing agencies are required to prepare a master plan for each Regional Parks System facility it owns and/or operates.</li> <li>• Planning – Strategy 2: Promote enhanced multimodal access to regional parks, regional trails and the transit system, where appropriate.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Finance Policy</b> Provide adequate and equitable funding for the regional parks system units and facilities in a manner that provides the greatest possible benefits to the people of the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance – Strategy 2: Capital Improvement Program funds are used for acquisition, development and redevelopment of Regional Parks System units.</li> </ul>
<p><b>System Protection Policy:</b> Protect public investment in acquisition and development by assuring that every component in the system is able to fully carry out its designated role as long as a need for it can be demonstrated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System Protection – Strategy 6: Regional wastewater conveyance facilities and other utilities on Regional Parks System lands should be placed in ways that minimize negative impact on the regional park, its facilities and its users.</li> </ul>

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# APPENDIX B

## RELEVANT THREE RIVERS POLICIES

# B

Policy	Description
<b>Policy IV</b> <b>Establishment of the System:</b> Balanced System	The Park District will endeavor to create an equitable distribution of park resources and facilities designed to serve outdoor recreation needs and interest of its constituents, taking into consideration existing and planned local, regional, state and privately-owned park resources and facilities within and impacting its jurisdiction so as not to unnecessarily duplicate the efforts of other agencies.
<b>Policy IV</b> <b>Establishment of the System:</b> Needs and Interests	The planning, acquisition, development and operations of the Park District will reflect the changing outdoor recreation needs and interests of the people balanced with the need to protect and preserve natural resources.
<b>Policy IV</b> <b>Establishment of the System:</b> Parkland Classification	Regional Parks provide a diversity of nature-based resources that can accommodate a wide variety of compatible outdoor recreation uses. Access to water bodies suitable for recreation is particularly important. The minimum park size is 100 acres of land, with a preferable size of 200 acres or more acres of land. Regional parks are not subject to the 80/20 percent development policies as established for park reserves; however, active recreation areas in regional parks should be developed in a manner that maintains sufficient natural areas to ensure quality outdoor recreation experience.
<b>Policy VI</b> <b>System/Master/Project Planning:</b> Master Planning	Every park reserve, regional park, regional trail and special recreation feature will have a Board approved master plan. Each Park District unit's master plan will establish the appropriate parkland classification, natural resource management zones and objectives, and outdoor recreation development and operation concepts. All changes to an existing master plan will be reviewed and approved by the Board. Pursuant to the Metropolitan Council Parks Policy Plan, master plans and subsequent changes will be submitted to the Metropolitan Council when required. Opportunity for review of master plans by affected political subdivisions or by other agencies as required by law will be provided. Master plans should be updated to reflect approved changes.
<b>Policy VII</b> <b>Land Acquisition:</b> Park Boundaries	To protect parkland from undesirable encroachments or negative environmental impacts, park boundaries, whenever possible, will coincide with natural or existing features such as roads, water bodies and/or delimiting topography or vegetation.
<b>Policy VIII</b> <b>Natural Resource Management:</b> Parkland Restoration and Management	The Park District will preserve parklands consistent with parkland classification. Appropriate management techniques will be utilized to create, restore and/or maintain natural and other desirable landscapes, including prairies, woods and wetlands using native species where practical. Exotic or invasive plants may be controlled to protect native habitats for the health and safety of the public.
<b>Policy VIII</b> <b>Natural Resource Management:</b> Wildlife Management	The Park District will provide for preservation of native wildlife within its holdings consistent with the parkland classification. Appropriate management techniques will be utilized to restore, maintain or control selected wildlife populations.
<b>Policy VIII</b> <b>Natural Resource Management:</b> Water Resources Management	The Park District will preserve and protect the ecological and recreational quality of lakes, streams, wetlands, and surface and groundwater resources within and contiguous to its holdings. Appropriate management techniques will be utilized in accordance with a Water Resources Management Plan.
<b>Policy VIII</b> <b>Natural Resource Management:</b> Resource Planning and Land Use Zones	The Park District plans and manages its land using a system of three land-use zones: lakes and wetlands, recreation development areas and natural areas. Each land-use zones has specific development guidelines.
<b>Policy IX</b> <b>Recreation Use:</b> General Interest Recreation Activities – Regional Park	Activities for which major developments or facilities may be provided includes: picnicking, golf, swimming, camping, boating, fishing, trail uses, creative play, off-leash dog exercise, archery and low organized field games. Regional parks may also provide areas for a diversity of other active outdoor recreation uses.
<b>Policy IX</b> <b>Recreation Use:</b> General Interest Recreation Activities – Outdoor Education	The Park District will provide a program of environmental education to teach school children and others, and impart to the public, the need to preserve and protect parklands, as well as the natural environment. In addition, the Park District is committed to providing recreational and educational experiences aimed at increasing the public's understanding, awareness and appreciation of the natural environment and encouraging the public to develop outdoor recreation skills. Appropriate areas of program services to accomplish these goals include: natural and cultural history interpretation, natural resources management, agricultural education, energy conservation, outdoor skills, individual outdoor pursuits, arts, crafts and program-related entertainment.
<b>Policy X</b> <b>General Operations:</b> Accessibility	The Park District is committed to full application of the Americans with Disabilities Act to the services, programs and activities of the Park District. The Park District will inform the public of the accessibility levels of programs and facilities when appropriate, and will apply the concepts of universal design, wherever feasible, in development and redevelopment of areas and facilities.

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# APPENDIX C

## PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT | EVENTS

Activity [2015]	Park Users	General Public	Underrepresented Populations	Agencies
Tater Daze – June 20				
Earle Brown Days – June 27				
External Advisory Team – June 29				
CRD Walkway Reopening – July 1				
Brooklyn Center Students – July 16				
CRD Summer Porch Series – July 16				
Multicultural Kids Network Listening Session – July 17				
Zanewood Park Summer Splash – July 17				
CRD Saturday Morning Park Outreach/Family Rafting – July 18				
CRD Saturday Morning Park Outreach – July 25				
Brooklyn Park Movie in the Park – July 31				
Brooklyn Center National Night Out Kickoff – August 3				
Brooklyn Park National Night Out – August 4				
Champlin Farmers Market – August 5				
CRD Wednesday Afternoon Park Outreach – August 5				
Anoka County CRD Park Outreach – August 13				
Brooklyn Park Senior Living Social Activities – August 17				
Brooklyn Park Farmers Market – August 19				
CRD Summer Porch Series – August 20				
African Health Fair – August 22				
Coon Rapids Summer in the City – August 25				
Elm Creek Park Outreach – August 27				
Brooklyn Park Community Engagement Gathering – August 27				
Twin Cities African Meet Up Listening Session– August 29				
Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth Listening Session – Sept. 17				
Brooklyn Park Multicultural Advisory Committee – Sept. 17				
Brooklyn Park Dog Expo – September 19				
Champlin-Brooklyn Park Academy Listening Session – Sept. 21				
Coon Rapids Dam Celebration – October 3				
Brooklyn Center Seniors Listening Session – October 5				

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# APPENDIX D

## PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT | SUMMARY



This section of the document summarizes the input on different topic areas regarding park use and activities. The first part of this section includes comments from the public. The second part of this section includes comments and feedback from agencies with an interest in the park.

### Community Input & Feedback

Below is a summary of the findings from the community engagement activities. The project team collected in-person and online feedback from community members and park users. Stakeholders were asked to provide information about preferred nature-based recreation activities, barriers to park use and preferences for improvements related to specific activities (fishing, picnicking, canoeing/kayaking, etc.). The following sections summarize key input received categorized by topic. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of responses received for each item. This information was used to aid in the development of the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan.

1. **Favorite place in the park/what makes the park special.** Current park users value the dam, river, and wildlife. People who visit the park today appreciate the trails and that the park is a quiet and wild place in the middle of the city.

2. **Preferred nature-based recreation activities:**

**Currently enjoy**

- Walking on paved trails (94)
- Biking on paved trails (89)
- Children's play (63)
- Nature viewing (62)
- Hiking (68)
- Picnicking (54)
- Fishing (54)
- Running (40)
- Nature centers/programs (40)

**Want to see more**

- Biking on paved trails (45)
- Canoeing/kayaking (55)
- Nature centers/programs (41)
- Archery (49)
- Children's play (43)
- Off-leash dog area (49)

3. **Primary barriers to visiting the park**

- People aren't aware of the park
- Limited hours at the visitor center
- Existing activities and programs don't draw people to the park
- No playground or attractions for kids and families
- Park name is confusing
- Transportation can be an issue for youth, seniors, and others with limited access to a vehicle or bicycle
- People do not have equipment for park activities and rental equipment is not available
- Lack of benches and accessible features can be a barrier for seniors and people with limited mobility
- The park doesn't appeal to the diversity of residents: language barriers, lack of activities that attract different cultures and make people comfortable in nature
- Some new immigrants find it hard to justify the time to visit the park when they are just getting settled in the US
- Current park activities do not seem like a leisure activity to many cultural communities: people do not want to walk around a park after working hard all day

4. **What is not working at the park**

- Nature center hours are too limited
- Perception that the park is overgrown/not maintained
- Trail signs: map orientation is confusing
- Litter/garbage in park
- No play area
- Fishing is not wheelchair accessible

## 5. How to make the park better, preferences for improvements related to specific activities

### Biking

- Provide basic services: bathrooms, water, parking, etc. (93)
- Provide maps with suggested bike loops and distances (85)
- Develop paddle/pedal loop: shuttle and rental service to allow people to canoe/kayak downstream and bike back to the park (71)
- Develop additional paved trails (71)
- Add bike racks (53)
- Improve signage on the trails: where water, bathroom, fix-it stations are on the trail
- Provide something to see along the trail: people would be more interested in walking/biking if they had a destination
- Improve sightlines at trail crossing
- Shorten the crossing of West River Road

### Big Idea to make the park a unique destination

- Zip line (177)
- Tree houses (111)
- Biking on paved trails (104)
- Archery (102)
- Kayaking/canoeing (93)
- Disc golf (78)
- Rafting trips (76)
- Fishing (75)
- Parkour (67)
- Hang-out spot outside (66)

### Picnicking

- Play area near picnic area (79)
- More shaded areas to picnic (56)
- Fire pits (52)
- Grills (46)
- Variety of seating (39)
- Food vendors/food trucks (38)
- Nature interpretation near picnic areas (37)
- Additional picnic tables (31)
- Picnic tables where you can view the river/dam
- Accessible restrooms with running water near picnic area

### Kayak & Canoe

- Rent canoes or kayaks (125)
- Provide places downstream to get out of the water and rest, fish, explore (58)
- Van shuttle back to the park from a location downstream (58)
- Canoe and kayak lessons (50)
- Develop paddle/pedal loop: shuttle and rental service to allow people to canoe/kayak downstream and bike back to the park (53)
- Improve trail from parking lot to river (44)

### Play Area

A nature-based play area was preferred by 367 respondents. A standard play area was preferred by 174 respondents. Several respondents also noted the lack of swimming areas in the area and suggested developing a swimming area or splash pad for children to swim.

### Fishing

- Keep the river's edge clean/free of garbage (112)
- Create fishing platforms along the river (99)
- Sell bait at the park (87)
- Improve walking access to the park (72)
- Improve canoe/kayak portage and launch (64)
- Sell fishing licenses at the park (61)

### Dog-related improvements

- Provide drinking fountains for pets (87)
- Provide a swim area for dogs (62)
- Expand dog park (53)
- Provide shaded areas for people and pets (53)
- Additional trails to walk dogs (50)
- Provide dog waste bags (50)

### Nature/wildlife-related improvements

- Plant a wildflower garden
- Improve view of osprey nesting area
- Binoculars mounted so you can see the osprey
- Plant identification along trails
- More wildlife viewing

### Improvements to park facilities and visitor center

- Accessible restrooms
- More drinking fountains
- More lighting in parking lot
- Bathrooms along the trail
- More trash cans
- Indoor room surrounded by park views
- Place to do crafts in the park
- More animals in visitor center

## 6. Suggestions for park programming & operations

Many park users and community members suggested new park programs, rental services, and operations changes to encourage more people to use the park. These suggestions are summarized below.

### Ideas for park programs

- Free family day to try out different activities every six weeks
- Special events to introduce people to the park
- Educate about history, river, water quality
- Affordable events and camps for kids and parents
- More home school classes
- Joint programming with Zanewood Recreation Center
- Joint programming with high schools
- TRPD-run nature club for teens
- Joint programming with senior centers and senior housing
- Fishing classes
- Survival skills camps
- Garden clinics
- Bike safety classes
- Camping events
- Walk/run club
- Bike club
- Bike repair clinic
- Outdoor fitness programs: yoga, tai chi, zumba
- Signage promoting upcoming events

- Host community events and festivals
- Concerts in the park
- Singles events
- Night market
- Farmers market
- Wine tasting events
- Tours inside the dam

#### **Rental equipment suggestions**

- Snowshoes
- Canoes
- Kayaks
- Bikes
- Wheelchairs
- Voyageur canoes
- Cross-country skis
- Water bikes

#### **7. Suggestions to improve park operations**

- Expand visitor center hours
- Expand park hours to allow fishing after dark
- Make the park a place to go year-round
- Allow mountain biking on unpaved trail
- Free busing to the park
- Remove thorny plants
- Clean restrooms and keep open in the winter
- More park police/improve safety

#### **8. How to address barriers and welcome underrepresented populations to the park**

- Provide activities that introduce people of all ages to nature and outdoor recreation: children, teenagers, adults and seniors
- Provide benches along the trails
- Provide seating that is senior-friendly: benches and chairs with backs and arms, seating that is not too low or deep
- Make people aware of the park through partnerships, advertising, signage and programs
- Hold multicultural events to introduce people to the park: music, food and dancing
- Translate signs and information into multiple languages
- Rent equipment and host programs so people can try and learn new activities (canoe/kayaking, camping, etc.)
- Provide free or low-cost activities and rentals
- Reconfigure the entrance and building to be inviting and welcoming
- Have a greater year-round presence
- Create an activity hub and gathering space amidst the park and natural environment

#### **Agency Input & Feedback**

Three Rivers staff engaged the project External Advisory Team (EAT) as part of the first phase of the project. The first EAT meeting included representatives from TRPD, the Cities of Brooklyn Park and Champlin, Metropolitan Council, National Park Service, Hennepin County, and Anoka County. Agency representatives were asked to provide feedback on challenges and opportunities at the park, based on their experience related to this park and park/recreation planning in the region. Below is a summary of the feedback received from agency staff:

#### **What is working at the park**

- Neighborhood access is good via trails
- Lots of good regional trail access
- South area of park is really special – floodplain forest
- Rookery on large island
- Can touch the river – easy and safe access down the river bank
- Fat tire bike use in winter
- Park is unique because of river access in area with mostly private riverfront

#### **What is not working at the park**

- People in Brooklyn Park are not aware of this park or the river
- Entrance needs to be more welcoming from the river and street side of the park
- Feel cut off in visitor center – not connected to the river
- Trails are not very connected to the river
- Need to be more strategic with fishing spots and river overlooks – people are using many informal spots today
- Litter problem – need public education
- Area north of the dam: it is not managed and has lots of poison ivy, but a really neat spot with a lot of potential
- Invasive species in the play area
- The layout of the Brooklyn Park Nature Area is not currently well-planned: brush dumping area at entrance by trail
- Lower picnic area not as well used – no water, long walk, only a pit toilet
- Security: vandalism, illegal activity at park:
  - Biggest problem has been fires along shoreline and tagging
  - Don't have much of a park police presence
  - No security cameras
  - No emergency box / phones currently
- Big problem with invasive species, but if we take everything out, would not be able to use to teach for 10-20 years. The park is considered a "lost cause" in terms of invasive species, but needs some natural resource management

### **Ideas and opportunities to make the park better**

- Floating boardwalk/outdoor deck to teach from in pond area
- Keep maintenance area away from visitor center
- North side of park: could be a beautiful vista & picnic area
- Create early childhood appropriate space for nature preschool. Schlitz Audobon Center in Milwaukee is a great example of a nature preschool.
- Install rocks as platforms to concentrate fishing use
- Concern about pushing out natural space with too much development

### **How can we better serve the surrounding communities – are there partnerships or opportunities to expand park access?**

- Partnership with Anoka County - cross marketing
- Need to make sure not to replicate what other nearby parks offer
- Fill gaps in regional trails
- Ranger programs via National Park Service

### **What recreational needs are you seeing in the surrounding communities and the region?**

- Need a connection to the river and natural resources
- Desire for large group gatherings/picnic shelter
- Decrease in use of park facilities that require reservations
- Equity between formal and informal use:
  - BBQ/Picnicking
  - Fishing
- Watching others recreating

### **What could TRPD/Brooklyn Park provide to better serve these needs?**

- Early learning center space
- Paddling/pedaling loop along the river
- Canoeing/kayaking
- Improved accessibility to river
- Reduce pedestrian - vehicle conflicts
- Shift active users to Brooklyn Park property - allow more of a natural resource focus along the river
- Ranger-led programs
- Community/National Park Service involved programs for invasive species
- Workshop spaces
- Stronger relationship between visitor center and river
- Flexible multi-use spaces for people of various ages & cultures

### **How can we better reach out to populations that are underrepresented in regional parks?**

- Branding
- Transportation
- Reach out to leaders of cultural groups
- Reach out to religious groups: Brooklyn Area Ministers Association (BAMA)
- Partner with schools: ISD 279, Athlos Academy
- Partner with Salvation Army

- YMCA Programs
- Create relationships to build community
- Kids programs to educate and bring information back to parents
- Focus on larger community and region vs. just adjacent residents
- Some members of underrepresented groups are not very interested in nature-based activities – could be a conflict with natural resource based parks.

### **Preliminary Master Plan Considerations Based on Community Engagement**

Based on the input gathered through Phase 1 community engagement, TRPD staff developed the following preliminary considerations for the master plan. These ideas were presented to the public during Phase 2 community engagement and refined based on public input.

#### **Introduce people to nature**

- Host a variety of programs to introduce people to nature and nature-based activities
- Provide rental equipment so people can try new activities
- Provide a variety of active and introductory recreation opportunities
- Host a big special event once a season to introduce people to the park
- Provide a space for special event group camping
- Make people aware of the park through partnerships, advertising, signs, and programs
- Use technology to create self-guided tours

#### **Make the park a welcoming place for new visitors and experienced park users**

- Construct a new visitor center that is vibrant and active with a view of the dam
- Improve signage and park entry to make the park more welcoming
- Improve wayfinding signage within the park
- Focus the development of new activities and facilities near the dam/river
- Keep the southern portion of the park undeveloped

#### **Enhance connections to the river, dam and nature**

- Develop a hierarchy of trail loops with play nodes, seating, interpretive nodes, river views and activities for different ages/ability levels/interests/comfort
- Provide water opportunities focused on the river: create a wading bay or a mock river for splashing, wading and learning about the river and dam
- Develop river vista/connection points to the river: opportunities to fish, picnic, and view the river
- Construct a bridge or catwalk to the islands in the river
- Provide edible landscaping

**Provide opportunities for children to play and learn about nature**

- Develop a nature-based playground with a water feature that mimics the river
- Construct smaller play areas on a circuit around the trail system
- Develop 3-5 education zones throughout the park with self-interpretation and space for nature programs
- Build a nature-based preschool

**Make the park a welcoming place for seniors**

- Provide an accessible walkway from the visitor center to the river
- Host programs that cater to seniors
- Create a short trail loop that is senior-friendly: flat and smooth surface with benches and drinking fountains
- Create a place that allows for informal socialization (similar to Silverwood Café)

**Make the park a welcoming place for people of all cultural backgrounds**

- Host multicultural events to introduce people to the park: music, food and dancing
- Translate signs and information into multiple languages
- Partner with schools and community organizations to introduce people to the park
- Include public art from different cultures into the design of new park facilities

**Make the park a paddling destination**

- Develop a paddle/pedal loop: shuttle system so park users can canoe or kayak downstream & bike upstream
- Rent canoeing and kayaking equipment
- Provide canoe and kayak instruction and guided tours
- Improve access/portage route to River, improve boat launch, and consider secondary launch south of 'rapids area' and additional launch onto the recreational pool

**Create opportunities for high adventure**

- Build a zip line
- Construct a lookout tower near the same level as the osprey nest
- Develop a canopy tour with opportunities to learn about different zones of the canopy
- Build tree houses connected by a net system

**Facilitate year-round park use**

- Host winter programming: hiking, snowshoeing, winter camping and education about winter wildlife habitat
- Keep the visitor center and restrooms open year-round
- Develop a ski loop
- Provide winter rental equipment

**Improve opportunities for picnicking**

- Develop an additional large picnic shelter with river views
- Provide small first-come, first-served picnic shelters
- Provide a restroom and running water at large picnic shelters

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# APPENDIX E

## PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT | EVENTS



COMMUNITY   PARTNER GROUP	EVENT DATE
External Advisory Team	November 9, 2015
Brooklyn Center Multicultural Advisory Committee	November 24, 2015
Isaack Walton	November 24, 2015
Brooklyn Park Rotary Club	December 30, 2015
Brooklyn Park Lions Club	January 4, 2016
West Unit Neighbor Meeting	February 29, 2016
African Challenges	April 1, 2016
Open Houses	April 13 & 14, 2016
Brooklyn Center Multicultural Advisory Committee	May 24, 2016

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# F

## APPENDIX F PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT | MARKET SUMMARIES

Existing Users Market Summary	
<b>Profile</b>	<p>Current visitors value the dam, Mississippi River and wildlife, appreciate the trails and like that the park is quiet and a wild place in the middle of the City.</p> <p>The demographic profile of summer visitors at Mississippi Gateway Regional Park is very different than the visitor makeup at most other Three Rivers parks. There are fewer children using the park, more people of color and more people with household incomes less than \$50,000/yr.</p> <p>Mississippi Gateway Regional Park use is heavily influenced by Rush Creek Regional Trail. Because of this influence, two-thirds of current summer visitors enter Mississippi Gateway Regional Park by bike or foot, and the primary activities for over 80 percent of park visitors is walking, biking or viewing the Mississippi River.</p> <p>The park has a very popular shoreline fishing area, with an estimated 10,000 fishing visits annually. Picnicking is a secondary activity for many of the fishing visitors, along with relaxing in park open spaces. Few visitors currently choose Mississippi Gateway Regional Park for picnicking by itself.</p>
<b>Community Engagement Recommendations</b>	<p>Existing park users offered the following recommendations regarding a centralized building facility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand building hours</li> <li>• Provide accessible bathrooms and drinking water</li> <li>• Provide more animals in visitor center</li> <li>• Provide a gathering space</li> <li>• Separate program space from public exhibit space</li> <li>• Desire updated and changing exhibits on the river/park</li> <li>• Desire a place to obtain more information (maps, Q/A, etc.) on the park</li> </ul>
<b>Building Goal</b>	The building's main purpose is to serve as a comfort and information station.
<b>Building Development Components</b>	<p>Comfort and Information Station Components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADA/Family restroom</li> <li>• Multi-stall bathrooms</li> <li>• Small privacy room</li> <li>• Park information/reception/gathering area</li> <li>• Modest nature interpretation area focused on the river</li> <li>• Modest programming space</li> <li>• Staff offices, break room and storage</li> </ul>
<b>Recommended Additional Site Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rush Creek Regional Trail: pave, separate regional trail from park road through park and future grade-separated crossing of West River Road</li> <li>• New park road to River Flat area with short-term and ADA parking</li> <li>• New paved trail/ADA access through park interior and along/to river</li> <li>• Improved shoreline fishing and support facilities: fishing cleaning station, grills/ picnic spots along river, defined/developed access points and similar</li> <li>• Reconstruct parking lot</li> <li>• General picnicking with new first come, first serve shelters</li> <li>• Year round bathroom throughout the park</li> <li>• Modest dog off-leash area</li> <li>• Archery</li> <li>• Paved and non-paved trail system: minor improvements to non-paved trail where seasonally wet, new crossing of south creek and new paved trails</li> </ul>

New Users Market Summary	
<b>Profile</b>	<p>The general public represents the full range of potential park users. While Mississippi Gateway Regional Park is a regional park and is intended to have a regional draw, many of its visitors are anticipated to come from within the Suburban Hennepin County communities near the park, including Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center and Champlin.</p> <p>Demographic projections indicate that future population growth will largely be driven by increases in racial and ethnic minorities and new immigrants. These groups constitute an important growth market for future users of the park.</p> <p>Many of these community members are not Mississippi Gateway Regional Park users. The results of the 2015 community engagement work partially attributed this phenomenon to the lack of the park's appeal and awareness to the diversity of residents. By incorporating many of the community engagement findings, it is anticipated that Mississippi Gateway Regional Park will become a major destination serving both local and regional residents.</p>
<b>Community Engagement Recommendations</b>	<p>Themes often heard from persons that do not currently visit the park include a desire for a higher level of social interaction such as big community events and features that incorporated play, water and a higher-level of comfort than currently provided.</p> <p>Additional themes, recommendations and considerations directly from the engagement process are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong desire for programming that offers and provides the necessary equipment and instruction to participate in outdoor recreation</li> <li>• Limited hours</li> <li>• Facility/activities/programs don't appeal/draw people to the park</li> <li>• Lacks the level of amenities to support the community</li> <li>• Relevance to many cultural communities</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions for addressing barriers and welcoming new users – especially persons currently commonly under-represented at Three Rivers parks and trails:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide activities that introduce people of all ages to nature and outdoor recreation: children, teenagers, adults and seniors</li> <li>• Hold multicultural events to introduce people to the park: music, food and dancing</li> <li>• Rent equipment and host programs so people can try and learn new activities (canoe/kayaking, camping, etc.)</li> <li>• Provide free or low-cost activities and rentals</li> <li>• Reconfigure the entrance and building to be inviting and welcoming</li> <li>• Have a greater year-round presence</li> <li>• Create an activity hub and gathering space amidst the park and natural environment</li> <li>• Encourage, improve and support access to the park via bus, bike and foot</li> </ul>
<b>Building Goal</b>	<p>In addition to serving as a Comfort and Information Station, the building's goal is to provide a vibrant, year-round education and recreation hub introducing people to the Mississippi River, nature and outdoor recreation in Minnesota.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support group events and increased public programming</li> <li>• Provide equipment rental/check out</li> <li>• Provide a comfortable space to transition people from the built to natural environment</li> </ul>
<b>Building Development Components</b>	<p>Welcome and Gateway Center Components: All of the components identified by existing users, along with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipment rental (potentially kayaks/canoes, snow shoes, cross-country skis, bikes and similar)</li> <li>• Expanded and enhanced exhibit space with live animals and animal care area</li> <li>• Recreation classroom ("dirty/working" room)</li> <li>• Programmable plaza/entry space</li> <li>• Expanded indoor entry gathering space</li> <li>• Large deck overlooking park/river</li> <li>• Main gathering space</li> <li>• Additional bathrooms, office space and storage</li> </ul>
<b>Recommend Additional Site Development</b>	<p>In addition to the site development components identified for existing users, the following components are recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved non-motorized boat launch/access</li> <li>• New beginner cross-country ski trail system</li> <li>• New nature nodes</li> <li>• New nature-based play area</li> <li>• New Mini-Mississippi River play and education feature</li> <li>• New tree canopy walk</li> <li>• Enhanced dog off-leash area: 10 acres, incorporate natural areas, shade structures and access to drinking water</li> <li>• Enhanced and reconfigured archery</li> <li>• New large group reservation picnicking: two shelters with sinks and fridges and modest playground</li> <li>• Expanded paved trail system between residential neighborhoods &amp; Rush Creek Regional Trail (West Unit)</li> </ul>

## Group Education (Existing & Expanded Users) Market Summary

<b>Profile &amp; Background</b>	<p>Mississippi Gateway Regional Park currently serves groups through leader-lead outdoor education programs and off-site learning. School groups are undoubtedly the biggest and most frequently served group type at the park. Over the last three years school group programming at Mississippi Gateway Regional Park doubled from about 300 programs/year to over 650 programs a year. During this timeframe, 12 groups ranging in size from 18 to 120 participants were turned away. Currently, the park provides programming for ten schools on site with multiple visits by most schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An average of 61 percent of students at these schools are students of color;</li> <li>• An average of 18 percent of students at these schools are English language learners; and</li> <li>• An average of 57 percent of students at these schools qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch.</li> </ul> <p>Mississippi Gateway Regional Park has a long-standing partnership with Champlin Brooklyn Park Academy (CBPA), a K-5th grade school. Through this partnership, students meet with a naturalist either on-site or at their school once a month throughout the school year. Schools like CBPA typically desire to bring an entire grade when visiting the park which often means 75-100 students. This number is anticipated to increase to 100-125 students in the near future. Field trip planners prefer a facility that can accommodate students inside in case of poor weather. The existing park facilities can only accommodate about 20 students comfortably, and as such, some school groups elect to not come or are turned away. To better accommodate school's requests, staff have been improvising with the use of tents and picnic shelters which has resulted in significant growth in group programming over the last two years (see below), but still some groups are turned away.</p>
<b>Group Education Partner Feedback</b>	<p>Educators, school groups and other group education participants and potential participants have provided the following feedback for improving group education offerings at Mississippi Gateway Regional Park:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need indoor space to accommodate larger group sizes (75-125 participants) including school groups</li> <li>• Desire space and program flexibility to break large group into smaller, more manageable learning size (20-25 participants)</li> <li>• Need additional bathrooms and ADA accommodations</li> <li>• Desire bathrooms near outdoor education spaces (especially important for young participants)</li> <li>• Need improved storage capacity and storage capacity near education areas</li> <li>• Need to accommodate participants that may not be fully prepared for spending time in nature (fear of nature, lacking proper clothing, etc.)</li> <li>• Desire to maximize learning time (keep indoor/outdoor educational areas in close proximity)</li> <li>• Incorporate live animal interpretation featuring the Mississippi River aquatic creatures and park raptors</li> </ul>
<b>Building Goal</b>	<p>In addition to the Comfort and Information Station and Welcome and Gateway Center functions, the building's additional goal is to become the regional group education destination center for all things related to the Mississippi River:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodate groups of 100-125 students/participants with indoor and outdoor accommodations</li> <li>• Interpret nature within nature (i.e. spend as much time outside in nature as possible, incorporate nature and the outdoors into all education spaces, etc.)</li> <li>• Provide an educational space and format that responds to a wide variety of learning styles, incorporates the latest trends in education (technology, STEM, hands-on-learning, etc.) and is easily modified to serve all potential users</li> <li>• Create a building and programming model that serves as a comfortable transition from the developed to the natural world to all participants but especially those with limited experience in nature or fears related to nature</li> </ul>
<b>Recommended Building Development Components</b>	<p>Mississippi River Group Education Center Components. All of the components identified by existing and potential users, along with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 additional classrooms with nature interpretation</li> <li>• Programmed use of the recreation classroom</li> <li>• Additional storage</li> </ul>
<b>Recommended Additional Site Development</b>	<p>Learning Stations: add several places throughout the park to promote and provide group education of the parks natural and cultural resources (Could be simple overhead shelter to modest building depending on future identified need):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South Pond Learning Lab: Add a basic four season classroom structure and improved outdoor teaching spaces at the pond, creek and Mississippi River; and</li> <li>• Bus accommodations: add bus parking and drop off near the main building and bus drop off area at the south end of the park near the pond education site.</li> </ul>

## Off-site: First-tier Communities User Market Summary

<p><b>Profile &amp; Background</b></p>	<p>Three Rivers' physical presence in the fully-developed Hennepin County communities is limited due to the rapid development of those cities a half-century ago. These communities are often thought as being "first-tier," in that they developed as the first ring of suburban communities around the Minneapolis core. The first-tier communities include Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, Robbinsdale, Crystal, New Hope, Golden Valley, St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Edina, Richfield and Edina.</p> <p>The first-tier is also home to the heaviest concentrations of demographic groups who have historically been under-represented in visits to Three Rivers' parks and trails - including people of color, persons age 18-34 &amp; ages 60+ and household earning less than \$50,000 a year.</p> <p>To better provide service to first-tier residents, Three Rivers is developing a comprehensive regional trail network, pursuing partnerships to establish regional park facilities and is expanding its successful community engagement program centered around providing environmental and recreational programs within the first-tier communities. The first-tier initiatives occur outside, or off-site, of Mississippi Gateway Regional Park</p> <p>There is substantial Three Rivers growth in off-site environmental and recreational programs already occurring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer camps: 10 (2016); 18 (2017);</li> <li>• Mississippi Gateway Regional Park staff participation at first tier community festivals: 9 (2016) and 25 (2017);</li> <li>• In 2016, Park staff conducted off-site programs to public and private schools, scouts and other groups reaching 7,800 program participants; and</li> <li>• Continued growth is anticipated in 2018 in all three of these efforts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Group Education Partner Feedback</b></p>	<p>The following motivations and barriers were identified in 2013/2014 as part of the park and trail visitor and general population studies, and are applicable to Mississippi Gateway Regional Park.</p> <p><b>Motivations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social activity with family and friends</li> <li>• Opportunity to experience nature</li> <li>• Improve physical fitness and mental health</li> <li>• Low cost of park-based recreation*</li> <li>• Closeness to home*</li> </ul> <p>*Both low cost of park-based recreation and closeness to home were identified more frequently by under-represented groups</p> <p><b>Barriers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No time for participation</li> <li>• No interest in facilities and programs</li> <li>• Location of parks is too far away*</li> <li>• Unaware of parks, facilities, and programs*</li> </ul> <p>*Persons of color identified location of parks is too far away, unaware of parks, facilities, and programs, lack of transportation and parks not accessible by mass transit more frequently compared to white people</p>
<p><b>Building Goal</b></p>	<p>Extend/expand programming and services beyond the physical park boundaries - meeting people where they are at by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnering with organization already serving these communities</li> <li>• Providing a high-quality Three Rivers experience, close to home where people are familiar (comfortable) and where distance and transportation are not barriers</li> <li>• Increasing awareness to potential new users</li> <li>• Converting participants into park visitors</li> <li>• Providing flexibility in programming offerings to meet new communities' needs and interests</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommended Development Component</b></p>	<p>Off-site Learning Hub: Create an off-site Learning Hub as part of the Operations and Maintenance Center in the West Unit. The facility would serve as a home base for mobile programming and include storage, offices, computer lab and parking. Live animal exhibits and care space, provided in the Mississippi Gateway Center would also be used for off-site learning programs.</p>



## APPENDIX G

### PHASE 3 ENGAGEMENT | EVENTS

COMMUNITY   PARTNER GROUP	EVENT DATE
Public Open House	January 9, 2018
External Advisory Team	January 16, 2018
Neighborhood Public Open House	January 16, 2018
Brooklyn Center Multicultural Advisory Committee	January 23, 2018
Brooklyn Park City Council	February 5, 2018
Champlin Parks & Recreation Commission	February 6, 2018





# APPENDIX H

## PHASE 3 ENGAGEMENT |

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

**COMMENT**

Grassfield RC club is looking for a new area to fly remote control planes, drones, etc. We currently have a field we fly at 101st Avenue and 169, but development is closing in. Any help by Three Rivers would be appreciated. We do have over 100 members and give demos to schools.

**RESPONSE**

Existing transmission lines and the park’s location directly centered within the Mississippi Flyway are in directly conflict with public use of parkland for remote control devices. See Pages 18 for general transmission line easement areas and Page 22: Overall Ecological Health Table for Mississippi Flyway reference.

**COMMENT**

1. Please put up signage on the corridor at Oxbow Park turn off where the new path was extended into the subdivision. Many people cross without paying attention to the corridor traffic. Safety concerns.
2. Place signage or blinking light at crossing at Edinbrook for golfers. Drivers are blaring through the crosswalk without concern for golfers. Maybe police patrols to educate drivers.
3. Tunnel at Winnetka on corridor. Traffic Concern.
4. Will cross country path be multi-use for biking in winter?

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Wonderful Parks!

**RESPONSE**

1. Not applicable to Mississippi Gateway Regional Park: Comment forwarded to Brooklyn Park

2. Not applicable to Mississippi Gateway Regional Park: Comment forwarded to Brooklyn Park
3. Not applicable to Mississippi Gateway Regional Park: Comment forwarded to Brooklyn Park: An agreement is in place between Brooklyn Park and Three Rivers for the future design/construction of underpass on Rush Creek Regional Trail at Winnetka Avenue
4. At this time the master plan does not envision winter biking on the cross-country ski trail; however, Three Rivers may allow for additional uses if they are determined to be compatible and demand support additional uses.

Thank you!

**COMMENT**

I do see some downside if the plan is fully implemented.

- There will be increased activity, particularly along the planned canopy walkway, river bank and in the River Flats area. That has the potential to disrupt nature viewing (namely birding or birdwatching) and bird nesting simply due to more people and pets. That may be an acceptable tradeoff (given the other public benefits) and perhaps can be mitigated by attention to screening and habitat improvement in those areas;

- There will be an overall increase in impervious area due to new structures, parking lot improvements and pathways or boat launch paving. The effect of the potential rain runoff will probably be evaluated by the West Mississippi Watershed Commission which will suggest or require mitigations (such as increased deep-rooted native vegetation in the water runways). This is particularly important because (as the plan mentions) the river is classified as an impaired water. Some attention should be given to avoiding overuse of salt on sidewalks and

park roads as well. (I hope park personnel get training in best practices in that area);

- It is likely that new outdoor lighting will be installed. Based on public input to the Brooklyn Park master park plans, safety is a driver for a demand in increased lighting in parks today. I suggest the plan deal with this likelihood and specify a goal that new and replacement lighting be designed to direct light downward to avoid adding to light pollution. The night sky is an important natural resource to many of us. (I don't suggest the Mississippi Gateway park will ever be a destination for star or aurora watching, there is a lot of ambient city and freeway light already. But at least avoid making things worse.)

In the plan, I would like to see more emphasis in the goals on the following: Native Vegetation (plants typical of native tallgrass prairie and Oak Savanna biomes). Three Rivers parks already do a good job in the restoration of native plants (I especially enjoy the restoration at the North Mississippi Regional Park), so I was surprised to see little direct mention of this. It is mostly implied in a few general references to "restoration" and the (most welcome) discussion of Oak Savanna restoration in the North end of the East unit. We might see more birds associated with the Western parts of the State (which were previously common in the Twin Cities area) as a result: Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark and various sparrows are possible.

I think the plan should mention some of the reasons for native plant community restoration. This will help inform future priority setting as projects compete for limited funds (and perhaps can drive grant requests as well): Habitat and feed for native birds and pollinators; Improved water quality due to the ability of deep-rooted prairie grasses to absorb rainwater; Education – unkempt Smooth Brome pasture, Buckthorn thickets and Hybrid Cattail monoculture wetlands are not natural to this area. Underserved populations with limited ability to travel to restored habitat get a distorted view of nature as a result.

Thanks.

## RESPONSE

Thank you for your thoughtful comments and passion.

A main goal of the master plan is to make the park more welcoming and accessible to more people. This will result in new uses, visitors and development and this make alter or impact existing uses, visitors and resources. The master plan calls for being sensitive to these relationships and utilizing thoughtful sustainable design practices to avoid, minimize or mitigate potential impacts. Section 6: Design Guidance was enhanced to better acknowledge the intent to utilize thoughtful design consideration and best management practices to protect natural resources during the design phase and at the site scale.

All development will be required to be consistent with water quality and quality regulations, rules and permits to ensure that the Mississippi River is not further degraded by the planned park improvements. In fact, the preliminary

parking lot redesign and reconstruction includes several best management practices to reduce storm water impact on the Mississippi River. The 2019 parking lot project will also replace and improve existing park lighting to be more energy efficient, have less light pollution and provide a more consistent and safe lighting levels across the parking lot and major walkways.

The intent of the long-term park plan is to utilize native vegetation. Language was added in Section 6 to more clearly communicate this intent. In addition, additional language was added to discuss why native vegetation and planned plant communities are important to the overall ecological health of the park. This will be further promoted in the park's educational offerings.

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## Comments

The plan acknowledges that there are no plans for extensive wetland plant community restoration. Given the difficulty and expense in re-establishing the diverse native (broad leaved) cattail/bulrush/sedge wetlands I understand. But perhaps some efforts could be made to encourage muskrat activity to keep at least some of the water open.

Wildlife (migratory, nesting and winter resident)

The park is well known as a good regional resource for birding, especially for waterfowl and warbler migration along the Mississippi Flyway. The dam walkway is especially prized for views of migratory waterfowl in the recreational pool. In addition to the "normal" Canada Geese, Trumpeter Swan and Mallards and typical migrants like Common Goldeneye, people have found species rarely seen in Minnesota there, Long-tailed Ducks and Barrows Goldeneye for example.

The trails along the river allow views in the treetops (and on the islands) for Spring migrant warblers. Olive-sided Flycatchers and Prothonotary Warblers are found most years. These uses should be mentioned so they remain as factors to consider as trails and the boat launch and views of the Heron Rookery are laid out.

Parking lots and picnic areas are usually good birding places in parks and the River Flats area is no exception. The "edge" between the small tree/lawn with woods in the back and river in the front provides a lot of bird habitat diversity. And the latrines and paved path from the parking lot make it relatively easy for older and less-abled people to spend time there. Some attention to the plantings around this area might even make it better.

My demographics (in case it matters): retired, age 66, resident of the Brooklyn Park "Birch Grove" neighborhood (South of 85th). In case it isn't clear, I think the "what" of the plan is in good shape. I'm mostly encouraging making some of the "why's" more explicit.

Thanks.

## Response

Major wetland restoration is not currently planned for this park. Muskrat activity could be considered as a tool to preserve or manage open water at a later date if deemed appropriate by Three Rivers wildlife and water resources staff.

Additional language was added on page 27 and throughout Section 6: Design Guidance to better acknowledge the opportunities for birding along trail corridors, parking lots and picnic areas and importance of considering this activity and wildlife importance when designing and constructing the planned trail system.

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## Comments: MnDOT\*

Table 5, Page 10: US Bikeway (has a strikethrough) 45/ Mississippi River Trail (MRT) US Bikeway 45/MRT is envisioned (USBR 45/MRT is not just envisioned--it is a bicycle route) as a bike route along the entire Mississippi River spanning from Lake Itasca State Park to the Gulf of Mexico. US Bikeway isn't "envisioned", it is a bike route (remove envisioned). Remove the word "trail" and replace with "route". Through the Twin Cities areas, there are several sections of trail (Your call if use the word "trail", but not all of the route is on trail. My preference is to use the word "route". ) located on both the eastern and western sides of the river. The section through Mississippi Gateway Regional Park is shared with the West Mississippi River Regional Trail's designation.

Section 4, Page 11: Underrepresented populations: Often do not have easy access to a motor vehicle. Helpful to address how to attract all users (though especially under represented) to the park via bus/bike/walk. MnDOT found parks are 1 of top 5 destinations in its MN Walks planning. <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/peds/plan/pdf/minnesota-walks-2016.pdf> (page 9).

Section 6, Page 27: Parking & Park Roads - See earlier comment about attracting users who cannot/do not want to drive.

Page 39/40: Public Awareness: Consider making sure people know how to get to the park via bus, bike, walk. Always promote this in event flyers, etc. Let them know there's bike parking, etc. Even consider lending good bike locks. Always highlight all options. Consider safe non-motorized/non-single occupancy vehicle access as part of public safety.

Page 52: Referring to "Big Idea...": Exactly the kind of opportunities that will help bring people on foot/bike vs car. Yes to this (Bike safety classes) and Walk/run club; Bike club; Bike repair clinic.

Be sure to locate prominently and provide industry standard racks that allow multi-point locking. [http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.apbp.org/resource/resmgr/Bicycle\\_Parking/EssentialsofBikeParking\\_FINA.pdf](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.apbp.org/resource/resmgr/Bicycle_Parking/EssentialsofBikeParking_FINA.pdf)

Page 53: Lend bike locks (similar to many public libraries).

Page 59: re Recommended Additional Site Development - There are no USBR 45/MRT navigation signs installed due to mixed ownership/management with Mpls. (previously not allowed due to "branding" concerns). Please contact Liz Walton

liz.walton@state.mn.us if questions or suggestions regarding wayfinding opportunities to include MRT on any future signs--especially if plaque-size.

\*Combined two comment submittals into one, removed redundancies and reordered to correspond with master plan layout.

## Response

Page 10: The word 'envisioned' is removed and 'trail' is replaced with route per MnDOT's preference.

Page 11: The information on page 11 is in reference to the master planning engagement work only. The master plan does include several improvements/recommendations that will make the park more accessible to all persons including those typically unrepresented and without access to a personal motor vehicle. Specifically, the plan calls for better integrating the existing bus stop with park/regional trail systems, a grade separated crossing of West River Road, improving local trail connections and working with the National Park Service to install a paddle-share station to improve access to the Mississippi River for persons without personal watercraft.

Page 27: See comment regarding page 11.

Page 39/40: Park operations and promotional materials will consider promoting non-motorized and non-single occupancy vehicle access to the park especially in conjunction with large community events. In addition, a significant focus of the park is to introduce people to nature and outdoor recreation. With this in mind, it is anticipated that program offerings will include teaching people to bike, walk and hike safely for both recreation and transportation purposes.

Page 52: See comment above regarding page 39/40 as well. Bike racks will be provided at the park. Their exact location and type will be determined during the design phase.

Page 53: We will consider as part of typical park operations and in conjunction with the equipment rental/check out.

Page 59: We will review USBR 45/MRT navigation sign placement during the design phase.

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## Comment

Environmental Area - make small improvements but no playground. More benches. Leave some of it natural.

## Response

The majority of the Brooklyn Park Environmental and Natural Area will remain in a natural setting and improvements will be made to increase access to and enjoyment of the natural areas (Pages 26-27 and 31-34). Examples include paving or reconstructing some trail segments, realigning trails that are seasonally wet and adding benches and nature interpretation nodes.

The playground is envisioned to be small and support the picnic reservation area only. It is not intended to be a major destination play feature as that is planned within the Upper

Recreation Area. Many groups looking for picnic reservation areas seek additional amenities such as playgrounds. Adding this feature will be anticipated to increase reservations and group's enjoyment of the site.

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**Comment**

Thank you for providing the City of Columbia Heights the opportunity to review the draft master plan for Mississippi Gateway Regional Park. The City of Columbia Heights has no formal comments to provide for this plan. Please let me know if you need anything further from the City of Columbia Heights at this time.

**Response**

Thank You.

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**Comment**

"The name is HORRIBLE! 'West Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park' is the best solution."

**Response**

Community members were invited to make and share recommendations for a new park name as part of the master planning process. Those recommendations were narrowed down to three different options based on criteria and guidance set by Three Rivers Park District's Board of Commissioners and then made available for community members to vote for their favorite park name in the fall of 2017.

Mississippi Gateway Regional Park was ultimately selected through a public voting process.

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**Comment**

I am in full support of this plan. It is a great collaboration and an excellent way to bring the river to the forefront.

**Response**

Thank You.

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**Comment**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan. I would like to offer some comments on the "Trail System" section of the Draft Plan found on pages 26 and 27 of the document.

This section talks about "additional trail improvements" that include plans to "improve/reroute non-paved trails where seasonally wet" and "upgrade dirt/turf/mulch trails in transition area to a hard packed aggregate material with binder or pavement". I would like to point out that some hikers, myself included, greatly prefer to walk on true natural surfaces. For us, covering a naturally surfaced trail with manufactured materials or pavement does not constitute an "improvement" or "upgrade" of the trail; rather, they are alterations that destroy the natural character of the trail.

I understand and agree with the plan's intent to provide more paved trails in the most developed sections of the park, gradually transitioning to rustic trails in the more remote

areas. With that said, I urge you to keep the non-paved trails truly naturally surfaced.

Use best practices for sustainable nature trail design: ensure that trail slopes are gradual to prevent erosion; grade trails from side-to-side to resolve standing water issues; install boardwalk sections for areas that are consistently wet. Avoid the temptation to simply spread gravel, wood chips, or other fabricated materials on a natural surface trail as a "fix" for these conditions; this does not actually resolve the underlying issue with the trail's design, nor does it result in an "improved" nature trail.

Thank you for allowing me to share this feedback on the Mississippi Gateway Master Plan.

**Response**

Your comments are in line with the intent of the master plan. To better clarify, we've added the following notes on Page 27:

- Improve/reroute non-paved trail where seasonally wet;
- Design and maintain trails in the developed and transition areas to be ADA compliant with hard, packed, stable surfaces;
- Utilize sustainable/natural trail design & maintenance best practices;
- Design trails to be sensitive to their surroundings and not adversely compromise the goal of connecting people to nature;
- Incorporate places to sit – with more places to sit in the more populated/developed area of the park and along ADA routes;
- Provide wayfinding and interpretative signage; and
- Incorporate destinations along trails.

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**Comment**

General Comments

For the last 40 years I have lived one mile downstream of the Coon Rapids Dam, on the Anoka County side of the River. My family and I have spent many hours on the land that you now propose to call Mississippi Gateway Regional Park. We have hiked, biked, skied, birded, bird banded, kayaked, canoed, and simply recreated here. I know the property, the River, the islands, and their wildlife very well.

I am a retired biologist. Most of my career was spent working in the federal Endangered Species Program, so I also know a bit about conservation biology, and about the challenges and importance of working with the public to enlighten them on the value of preserving "nature."

So I am deeply saddened to read your Master Plan. I well know the natural amenities that are on these properties, and I understand how they likely will be adversely impacted by implementing your plan. I had expected Three Rivers Park District to do a better job of preserving existing resources, but

I see only lip-service to that goal in this plan. Mostly the plan is about increasing recreational use of the site.

In summary, what I see in this Master Plan is a noble goal—introducing and teaching about riverine and floodplain habitats—being foolishly implemented by over-developing those habitats so as to make them less intimidating and more accessible, and then offering up the degraded result as an example of what is worth preserving and how to preserve it. Intentionally or otherwise, this Master Plan strongly promotes the “Shifting Baseline Syndrome”. If implemented as described, the result will be that more people will be “educated” to believe that paving trails, adding shoreline picnic areas with grills, building fishing piers, constructing elevated walkways, and increasing public use are all appropriate components of “preserving” important habitats.

I’m disappointed with Three Rivers planners for not realizing what actually could and should be done here. Instead of focusing on making our local wild areas easily accessible and less scary, consider teaching people the importance of preserving and restoring the remaining important habitats and wild areas AS THEY ARE. Why can’t we use this area as an example of how to conduct nature/conservation education WITH MINIMAL OR NO HABITAT DEGRADATION?

#### Specific Concerns With the Master Plan

**Parking Areas, Entry Plaza, and associated areas.** These are too large and cover way too much ground with concrete and asphalt. Those areas look more like a city park than a regional park that hosts important natural resource features. Scale these back. But I certainly approve of moving the parking area closer to West River Road.

**Paved Trails.** These are excessive. While I understand the desire to be more compliant with ADA goals, there is no need to provide paved trail access to the edge of, and even into, the “Nature Area” that the plan states should not be over-developed. Instead, eliminate the southern paved connection to the West Mississippi Regional Trail, and end the paved trail coming from the north at a viewpoint somewhere along the savannah. There should be a clear intent to keep bikes and too much human activity away from the access to the Nature Area.

**Nature Area.** If it is truly viewed as a Nature Area to be used as a proper educational example and opportunity, development here should be kept to a bare minimum, with a goal of zero degradation of the setting. Perhaps the authors of this Master Plan didn’t realize it, but the areas in the immediate vicinity of this creek and its junction with the River provide some of the very best spring and fall birding for migrants that can be found in the Twin Cities area. This includes such sought-after birds as Connecticut Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Prairie Warbler, (southern edge of the savannah), and Mourning Warbler (all seen there by me in recent years). Suggestions to minimize adverse impacts that would degrade bird habitat include:

- Put the warming house and vault toilet a short distance north of the creek, rather than near the pond and in the Nature Area.
- Put only an open-sided shelter near the pond, with a set-back

from the pond shoreline. Shouldn’t Three Rivers be teaching-by-example that shoreline development should be avoided?

- Grade a very primitive roadway to a point near the pond, but cover it with natural-appearing gravel, rather than putting in a paved trail. The roadway should be the most minimal needed to meet the needs of educational programming and access for students.

**Performance Area.** Certainly there is no place for a performance area in a park purporting to promote the value of the natural amenities at this site. At least move this to the West Side acreage; at best, build it at another park where the site has already been developed.

**Non-motorized Boat Launch Area.** I frequently have kayaked this channel, and it’s not suitable for beginning paddlers. I think it’s a mistake to provide easy boat access at this location, and thereby induce novice paddlers to launch here. While the sandy beach looks inviting, during much of the “warm season” the paddler immediately encounters fast-moving shallow water and lots of rocks. Frequent dunkings and worse are inevitable if beginners frequently launch here.

**Nature-Based Play Areas.** I understand the importance of getting kids more comfortable “in nature”, but I’m unconvinced that such play areas accomplish this in a positive way. I wonder if what kids are learning is that it’s OK to manipulate nature (move branches to build forts and teepees, move rocks, dig in the dirt) for one’s own fun and benefit. While manipulating natural stuff in the back yard or vacant lot to build forts is one thing, somehow I can’t accept that such manipulation should be promoted at a nature center. In fact, on my hikes at area parks (including Three Rivers park preserves) I’m increasingly seeing evidence of teepee building at locations well away from the actual nature-based play areas. I don’t think that is something we want happening. I know of several places in one nature-oriented park in the North Metro where the forest floor is now bare of dead branches and small logs, because they have all been used to construct teepees, a practice taught by the park staff. We need to think about ALL the lessons that kids might be taking away and using as they mature.

**Rookery Play Area.** This name seems to indicate the planners (or at least the namers) are at least a bit out of touch with the wildlife of this site. The heron rookery has been gradually abandoned in recent years, and there was no heron nesting at all last year. My best guess is that it was abandoned as a result of disturbance from too much human activity near the rookery. Keep that possibility in mind. (Note: the rookery in Elm Creek Park was abandoned about the time the original Eastman Nature Center was constructed. Again, that possibly was a result of too much human activity.)

**Enforcement.** I didn’t see this addressed in the Master Plan, beyond the related topic of Public Safety. However, the importance of enforcing park use regulations cannot be overemphasized in a park of this type, where high levels of public use are being fostered while protecting a vulnerable “nature area” immediately adjacent. My extensive experience with other Three Rivers Parks is that in recent years trail

patrolling has mostly ceased. As a result, illegal trail and area uses are increasing, including off-leash dog use in leash-only and dogs-prohibited areas, mountain bike use on hiking-only trails, walking and mountain biking on ski-only trails, horse use on prohibited trails, and paint-ball games in the forest. Three Rivers must make a commitment to provide adequate enforcement to minimize unauthorized uses of this park and its amenities.

I hope my comments can be seen as mostly constructive, rather than overly critical. However, please recognize that I know this area better than most people, so I cannot watch silently as an important and vanishing component of our natural environment is misused by a management entity that should, and can, do much better here. I had provided comments on the wildlife and habitat values of this property earlier in the planning process, but I see no evidence that they were seriously considered; thus I may be using more forceful language this time.

### **Response**

Thank you for your thoughtful comments and passion.

Three Rivers operates a system of regional parks and park reserves – each unit of the system serves a unique role and the system, as a whole, provides a wide range of development and operation levels. Within the greater system of regional parks and park reserves, this park is planned to be more developed than it is now and to serve as a gateway to the greater park and trail system to people that currently do not visit Three Rivers parks and trails. This is a change to past development and operation levels.

Mississippi Gateway Regional Park is located near the more densely populated areas of the region and close to many communities that are unrepresented at Three Rivers. These factors in addition to the extensive public engagement findings which are summarized in the plan (Section 4: Input and Appendices C, D, E, F, and G), set the overall tone for the long-term development and operation of the park. The majority of the comments Three Rivers heard/received as part of the master planning work supported and desired a higher level of development, activity and access than currently provided. This plan responds to that feedback while trying to balance the impact on the landscape and resources.

The tension between development and natural resource protection will continue to exist through the design, development and operation phases of the park. As a regional park, a strong emphasis is placed on providing outdoor recreation opportunities within in a natural setting. The vision and goals of this park speak to making the park more accessible to the public and doing so in a manner that is gradual and comfortable to new visitors that have no to little experience in nature.

This will undoubtedly change some of the existing use patterns and alter areas of the park that previously saw little visitation.

The intent is to balance development and natural resource protection. To do this, the plan calls for three distinct areas

of development/natural resource protection. This will allow for a gradual transition from the built environment to the natural environment while still providing some area of the park that are more fully developed and host the majority of the park activity and others that are more resource based with little impact on the landscape and minimal park visitor activity. The intent is for users of varying degrees of comfort in nature to have a spot that meets their needs. For new visitors in particular, the park is also envisioned to serve as gateway facility with the hope of providing positive experiences and fostering an interest in visiting additional Three Rivers parks which have a stronger natural resource and less development focus.

Section 6: Design Guidance already included a thorough discussion on the overall goal and rationale of providing gradual, comfortable access to the park; however, additional language was added to ensure that thoughtful design consideration and best management practices to protect natural resources is carried forward in the design phase and at the site scale.

In addition, as the park is furthered designed and ongoing consideration to protect and enhance resources will occur at a very site specific scale. Park designers will continue to look for ways to avoid, minimize and mitigate potential development impacts on the park and its resources and utilize sustainable, ecological best management practices.

---

### **Comment**

I'm writing to you because I'm concerned about the new name that appears to have been given to the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park. I am writing to ask you to give me a reply about the process that was used for the name change and whether or not there is still time to give input for a different name. Before I jump into this discussion, I want to let you know that I appreciate the work you're doing and have done in our area. The Three Rivers Park District has been an important part of our family. Most of our special family memories involve the various parks in the system and we're glad they are managed and cared for by good stewards.

To quickly introduce myself, my name is ---- and I'm a wife and mother of four. My husband and I have been residents of Brooklyn Park for 15 years. We've lived along the Rush Creek Bike Trail near Coon Rapids Dam Park the entire time; first in our starter home on West River Road and now in our "forever" house at ----.

My husband and I purchased "Mittenwood" (as one of my little girls lovingly named it) in 2010. We chose to live here to get a breath away from "city" life. I grew up in the country as a small child and for me this is "living the dream" of being in the city for my husband's job, but being in the country for my sanity! Our backyard is directly across from a clearing in the park land and when I look out my back windows, I see beautiful trees and sky. It feels just like being in the country to me. We love the park's rustic charm, its natural landscape, and its wild spaces.

We walk through the park and use its trails almost daily. We care, very deeply, about what's going on here. We are active in the programming offered at the Coon Rapids Dam Park from the weekend offerings at the Nature Center to the recent Master Naturalist certification program my husband completed to the children's summer camps. We are working to give our children roots here and a love for this land.

Over the course of the last year we've been watching the planning going on with the park for new development and utilization of the space. We've enjoyed the ability to voice our opinions on proposed changes as they've been presented, whether at different park events or in the lobby at the nature center or talking with the naturalists and other staff. We've generally liked what we've seen and the tenor of ideas being considered. We feel that the direction the park is heading is, for the most part, staying in line with what the park has been with an eye for the future as well. We are generally quite pleased with what we've seen.

Except for one area of major concern: the new name. We feel that it is a poor name choice for the park. The first I saw of the name "Mississippi Gateway Regional Park" was on a Facebook poll a few months back. As it was the best of what I considered overall poor names, I selected it, but it certainly was not my endorsement of the name. As I am opposed to that name and all the other names offered, I spoke with naturalists and staff at the park, and kept an eye out for public input gathering sessions. I saw the posting of the upcoming meeting about Mississippi Gateway Regional Park (the name change was printed on the literature????!) for this last week, but due to scheduling conflicts was unable to attend.

Today, I spoke with a park employee and was told that the name change wasn't discussed at the meeting. Has this name already been adopted? Did I miss the chance for public input? I feel very strongly that this is a poor name choice. I do not want this to be the new name for our beloved park. The park's name is something that should not be changed quickly as it will be used, daily by many people, and should last for the rest of the park's existence. It is no small thing to rename a park and I am seriously concerned at this time that it has been rushed without public input.

I assume that I must have missed the opportunity. Four kids will keep a girl very busy after all. Right? I can understand that the park may need to differentiate itself from the park on the other side of the river. I can see the value in having its own name, but this name is unacceptable to me and most everyone I know who cares about the park. Mississippi Gateway Regional Park expresses nothing to me about the park. It feels like a name without heart or meaning. It certainly doesn't fit the beloved park that is so a part of our family's lives. Now, West Coon Rapids Dam Park does have historical and literal meaning. That's what I would prefer to see. If, however, that's not enough to differentiate it from the park across the dam, could we not name it after an individual involved in making the land into a park or another historical name in and around the area? Perhaps something about the landscape, an animal that is commonly seen at the park, or some other identifying feature?

Please let me know what I need to do to as a concerned citizen. I'd love to receive a phone call as I have many more questions that I'd love to discuss on this issue for further clarification. Please call me on my cell at --- or my home number of ---.

Again, thank you for serving our community and thank you for your time. I do so appreciate the work you are doing.

**Response**

Community members were invited to make and share recommendations for a new park name as part of the master planning process. Those recommendations were narrowed down to three different options based on criteria and guidance set by Three Rivers Park District's Board of Commissioners and then made available for community members to vote for their favorite park name in the fall of 2017.

Mississippi Gateway Regional Park was ultimately selected through a public voting process.

---

**Comment**

I absolutely love the proposed changes for the renamed Mississippi Gateway Park. My family and I are frequent park visitors. The larger visitor center is much needed as the current center is small and cannot support the visitors, classes, camps, and parties. I also love all of the outdoor child-focused play area and tree canopies. My three children are 9 months, 3, and 6. I can foresee us being able to experience this as a family for many years. Please do not let lack of funds eliminate this component of the plan. The river walk views also are lovely as are the picnic area. Please contact me with any questions.

**Response**

Thank you!

---

**Comment**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We (City of Minneapolis – Community Planning and Economic Development) reviewed the plan. While the park is a regional amenity, the plan is more site specific, so we have no comments from CPED planning regarding the plan. Thanks again.

**Response**

Thank you!

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**Comment**

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) is a local non-profit community-based organization that works to protect and enhance the natural and cultural assets of the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities region. We have 2,300 active members, more than 3,000 volunteers and 1,600 advocates who care deeply about the river's unique resources. FMR has been an active and ongoing participant in planning for the future of the riverfront throughout the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) corridor.

We are writing today with a letter of support for the draft Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan, including a few comments.

### ***FMR Support***

FMR supports this plan because it aligns with our belief that the Mississippi River belongs to all of us and that its ecological, recreational, economic and social benefits should flow equally to all people in our community. This plan, from the vision statement and action goals to the design and implementation, is built to make the park better serve all community members, including new park users. It does this while maintaining a nature focus to the park that will benefit park users as well as the habitat and water quality of the Mississippi River. Additionally, the planning process included a robust, inclusive and comprehensive community engagement process that was clearly used to shape the plan. Staff and consultants should be commended for this excellent work.

### ***FMR Comments***

**Park Name** We strongly support the park name change to Mississippi Gateway Regional Park. This name fits well with the plan's vision statement and action goals as well as eliminates confusion with Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park across the river.

### ***Nature Interpretation Nodes***

The nature interpretation nodes sound like wonderful educational tools and a great way to expose visitors to many aspects of our local environment. For the island node, we encourage plan implementers to keep island access limited to favorable wading conditions or by boat.

### ***Trail Infrastructure***

The trail infrastructure proposed in this plan is exceptional. It creates space for people with varying levels of comfort in nature, improves connectivity to and through the park for pedestrians and bicyclists and even provides a new type of trail. We strongly support the proposed grade-separated crossing of the Rush Creek Regional Trail and West River Road as well as formally extending Rush Creek Regional Trail through the park to connect with the Anoka County parks and trails using the Coon Rapids Dam pedestrian bridge. We appreciate the efforts of all partners involved to better and more safely connect people using all transit modes to the river. The proposed canopy-level trail providing visitors new vantage points to the park with interactive play looks like a wonderful asset. To make this section complete, we would like to see a water trails component included. This could be as simple as wayfinding signage for boaters (page 26).

### ***Transit***

While transit service is limited to the park, there is a bus stop at the park entrance where the 766 bus stops 26 times per day on the weekdays. We encourage Three Rivers Park District to work with Metro Transit to improve transit access, awareness and accommodations to the park. Transit access could be improved by more bus routes stopping at the park entrance as well as the 766 bus making more frequent stops and running on the weekends. Transit awareness could be

significantly improved by simply installing bus stop signs on West River Road so users know where the bus stops near the park entrance. Ideally, transit accommodation improvements like a bench and shelter, potentially with park information, would be made at the stops and then a sidewalk or trail would be constructed for people to comfortably and safely walk from the bus into the park (the Rush Creek Regional Trail expansion looks like it could meet this trail need).

### ***Implementation Section***

In the Implementation Section of the plan, we are excited to see that the river access construction project is planned for 2018-2020. We appreciate that this first project improves access to the river for all. It would be helpful to know, beyond this project, what the project priorities are within the plan. What steps are in place to ensure this great plan is implemented? Please include more details about plan implementation in the final version of the plan.

Finally, we'd like to share that our organization has ecologists on staff that partner with government entities to write and implement natural resource management plans, a whole team of stewardship and education professionals who organize river-related educational programming and an advocacy team that would be happy to support funding requests to make plan implementation possible. Please feel free to reach out at any time!

### ***Response***

Thank you for your thoughtful support and your willingness to lend your natural resource expertise. We look forward to discussing potential partnerships in the near future.

Three Rivers will continue to work with Metro Transit and the Metropolitan Council to improve transit service particularly during evenings and weekends and to develop or reconfigure routes so access via transit is more convenient to a greater number of people.

Three Rivers is committed to fully developing this master plan. While a detailed implementation plan is not part of the master plan document, Three Rivers and Brooklyn Park have identified partial funding using their own resources and are currently working on securing additional external funding. Current discussions indicate the majority of the plan are anticipated to be implemented over the next five years – this is subject to Three Rivers' ability to successfully secure external funding.



# APPENDIX I

## RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT



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**RESOLUTION #2018-24**

**RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE  
MISSISSIPPI GATEWAY REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN**

**WHEREAS, the City of Brooklyn Park recognizes Mississippi Gateway Regional Park as an important component of the regional parks system providing desirable nature-based recreation to the residents of the City and the region; and**

**WHEREAS, the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan aligns with many of the Brooklyn Park 2025 community plan goals including “United Community,” “Beautiful Places,” “Healthy and Safe People,” and “Increased Equity”; and**

**WHEREAS, City staff have been working in partnership with the Three Rivers Park District in development of the vision, community engagement efforts and the framing of the Joint Master Plan for the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park and Environmental Nature Area; and**

**WHEREAS, the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan calls for the park to be a gateway for everyone to connect with the Mississippi River and its dynamic environment; and**

**WHEREAS, the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan includes a new Mississippi Gateway Center, Nature’s Highline (elevated tree canopy walkway), nature play areas, Mini-Mississippi Play and Education feature, field learning labs, South Pond Learning Lab, nature interpretation nodes, and improved trails, fishing platform, picnicking, non-motorized boat launch, archery range, off-leash dog area, natural areas and more; and**

**WHEREAS, the City of Brooklyn Park recognizes that Three Rivers Park District, in conjunction with efforts of the National Park Service, Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, Anoka County, West Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, Friends of the Mississippi, Anoka-Hennepin School District, and the directly affected cities, have gathered significant public input in the development of the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park; and**

**WHEREAS, the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan is consistent with other approved local and regional plans; and**

**WHEREAS, the City of Brooklyn Park supports the acquisition, design, implementation, and operation of the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park pursuant to the Master Plan.**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that City Council of the City of Brooklyn Park supports the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan.**

**#2017-24**

The foregoing resolution was introduced by Mayor Lunde and duly seconded by Council Member Parks.

The following voted in favor of the resolution: Gates, M. Mata, Jacobson, Lunde, B. Mata, Parks and Pha.

The following voted against: None.

The following was absent: None.

Where upon the resolution was adopted.

ADOPTED: February 5, 2018



JEFFREY JONEAL LUNDE, MAYOR

CERTIFICATE

STATE OF MINNESOTA  
COUNTY OF HENNEPIN  
CITY OF BROOKLYN PARK

I, the undersigned, being the duly qualified City Clerk of the City of Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, hereby certify that the above resolution is a true and correct copy of the resolution as adopted by the City Council of the City of Brooklyn Park on February 5, 2018.

WITNESS my hand officially as such Clerk and the corporate seal of the City this 6<sup>th</sup> day of February 2018.



DEVIN MONTERO, CITY CLERK

(SEAL)

#2017-24



# **APPENDIX J**

## METROPOLITAN COUNCIL APPROVAL





**METROPOLITAN COUNCIL MEETING**

Wednesday, September 12, 2018

390 Robert Street North | Council Chambers | 4:00 PM

**AGENDA**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

August 22, 2018 Metropolitan Council Meeting

**IV. PUBLIC INVITATION**

Invitation to interested persons to address the Council on matters not on the agenda. Public comment on the agenda items has occurred in the respective committees (each speaker is limited to a three-minute presentation).

**V. BUSINESS**

**VI. CONSENT AGENDA**

Note: Items listed under the Consent Agenda will be enacted by one motion with no separate discussion. If discussion on an item is desired, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration.

1. **2018-201** Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan and Master Plan Boundary Amendment, Hennepin County, Review File No. 50210-1 (Tracey Kinney 651-602-1029)
2. **2018-213** Contract with VSP for Voluntary Vision Insurance (Terri Bopp 651-602-1370, Marcy Cordes 651-602-1582)
3. **2018-230** Empire Polymer Contract (Joseph Ward 651-602-8302)

**VII. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

A. Community Development

1. **2018-202** Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for West Mississippi Regional Trail, Three Rivers Park District – Goodin Property (Deb Jensen 651-602-1554)
2. **2018-203** Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Baker-Carver Regional Trail, Three Rivers Park District – Hodgson Property (Deb Jensen 651-602-1554)
3. **2018-204** Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Grey Cloud Island Regional Park, Washington County – Katarik Property (Deb Jensen 651-602-1554)
4. **2018-205** Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant for Big Marine Regional Park, Washington County – Bofenkamp Property (Deb Jensen 651-602-1554)

B. Environment—Report on Consent Agenda

C. Management

1. **2018-223** Labor Agreement with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, District Lodge No. 77 (Marcy Cordes 651-602-1582)

D. Transportation

1. **2018-227 SW** Amend Contract 14P268 with HDR Engineering for C Line BRT Design and Construction Administration Services (Katie Roth 612-349-7772)
2. **2018-231 SW** C Line/Penn Avenue Construction Contract Additional Change Order Authority (Katie Roth 612-349-7772)

E. Joint Report of Environment and Transportation Committees

1. **2018-216 SW** Sole Source Procurement for e-Builder (Adam Gordon 651-602-1333, James Sailer 651-602-8914, Pat Jones 612-347-7606)

F. Joint Report of Community Development and Environment Committees

1. **2018-220 SW** City of Landfall Village 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Review File 21800-1 (Kyle Colvin 651-602-1511, Corrin Wendell 651-602-1832)

**VIII. OTHER BUSINESS**

1. **2018-235** Appointment to the Livable Communities Advisory Committee (Chair Tchourumoff 651-602-1390)
2. Information Item: **TPP Public Comment Update** (Amy Vennewitz 651-602-1058, Michelle Fure 651-602-1545) **handout**



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## Community Development Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of September 12, 2018

**Subject:** Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan and Master Plan Boundary Amendment, Hennepin County, Review File No. 50210-1

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan.
2. Approve the Master Plan Boundary Amendment to include an additional 5.2 acres of natural area including a 2.6-acre property held by the City of Brooklyn Park and a 2.6-acre property held jointly by Hennepin County and the City of Brooklyn Park, to protect the natural resources.
3. Prior to implementing the Master Plan, require Three Rivers Park District to:
  - Create a Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Brooklyn Park to:
    - Establish regional park use through a long-term lease or in perpetuity that identifies, outlines, and confirms use of land required for a park maintenance facility on land owned by the City of Brooklyn Park;
    - Clarify a minor realignment of the Rush Creek Regional Trail and grade separated crossing;
    - Transfer the 2.6-acre park easement held by the City of Brooklyn Park that is currently outside the regional park boundary.
  - Work with Hennepin County and the City of Brooklyn Park to transfer ownership of another 2.6-acre parcel of forfeited land currently owned by Hennepin County and the City of Brooklyn Park to Three Rivers Park District.
4. Advise Three Rivers Park District that:
  - Costs associated with lands and facilities associated with the Brooklyn Park Environmental Nature Area are not eligible for Metropolitan Council funding;
  - A Council approved master plan amendment is required to add inholdings and to be eligible for acquisition funding.

### Summary of Committee Discussion/Questions

Planner Tracey Kinney presented the staff report to the Committee. The Community Development Committee unanimously recommended approval of the proposed actions at its meeting on August 20, 2018.

## Community Development Committee

Meeting date: August 20, 2018

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of September 12, 2018

**Subject:** Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan and Master Plan Boundary Amendment, Hennepin County, Review File No. 50210-1

**District, Member:** District 2, Lona Schreiber

**Policy/Legal Reference:** Minn. Stat. 473.313;2040 *Regional Parks Policy Plan*, Planning Strategy 1

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Tracey Kinney, Planner (651-602-1029), Regional Parks and Natural Resources

**Division/Department:** Community Development / Regional Planning

### Proposed Action

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  - Costs associated with lands and facilities associated with the Brooklyn Park Environmental Nature Area are not eligible for Metropolitan Council funding;
  - A Council approved master plan amendment is required to add inholdings and to be eligible for acquisition funding.

### Background

Three Rivers Park District and the City of Brooklyn Park have completed a master planning process to determine a joint vision for Mississippi Gateway Regional Park located in the northeast corner of the City of Brooklyn Park along the Mississippi River. Mississippi Gateway Regional Park exists today as Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park (Three Rivers Park District) and Brooklyn Park Environmental Nature Area, a local park. The Metropolitan Council approved the existing Master Plan for the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park in 1979. The proposed park will provide a seamless experience to the user in a combined 267-acre facility focused on



transitioning visitors from the built environment to nature while maintaining the existing parks' separate ownership, development, and maintenance. The proposed park connects to the eastern portion of Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park and the Mississippi River Regional Trail both managed by Anoka County, and the West Mississippi River Regional Trail and Rush Creek Regional Trail both managed by Three Rivers Park District.

### Rationale

The Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan is consistent with the requirements of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, including Planning Strategy 1, Master Planning, and other Council policies.

### Thrive Lens Analysis

The Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan advances the Thrive outcome of Livability through increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation, which enhances quality of life in the region.

### Funding

The estimated total cost for Three Rivers Park District and the City of Brooklyn Park to implement the master plan is just under \$27,800,000 including development costs of just under \$26,000,000 and annual operation and maintenance costs of just over \$1,800,000 (*Table 1*). Only costs associated with the East Unit, owned by Three Rivers Park District, are eligible for Metropolitan Council funding. Costs associated with the West Unit, owned by the City of Brooklyn Park, are not eligible for Metropolitan Council funding. The City of Brooklyn Park is not an Implementing Agency, therefore not eligible for funding.

Three Rivers Park District is proposing to develop the East Unit, lead operations for both the East and West Units, as well as construct and maintain a shared maintenance facility and Rush Creek Regional Trail realignment and crossing. The City of Brooklyn Park will pay for TRPD's operations services via cash or as part of payment for the 100-year lease for the land on which the maintenance facility will be located.

*Table 1. Estimated Development Costs*

Activity	TRPD	City of Brooklyn Park	Sub Totals
East Unit Development	\$18,465,000	\$0	\$18,465,000
West Unit Development	\$2,810,000	\$4,210,000	\$7,020,000
One-Time Start-Up Equipment	\$450,000	\$0	\$450,000
<b>Development Totals</b>	<b>\$21,725,000</b>	<b>\$4,210,000</b>	<b>\$25,935,000</b>
East and West Unit Operations	\$355,000	\$0	\$355,000
Maintenance	\$320,000	\$53,800	\$373,800
Natural Resources and Education Programming	\$1,087,400	\$20,000	\$1,107,400
<b>Operations Totals</b>	<b>\$1,762,400</b>	<b>\$73,800</b>	<b>\$1,836,200</b>
<b>Master Plan Total (Development and Operations)</b>	<b>\$23,487,400</b>	<b>\$4,283,800</b>	<b>\$27,771,200</b>

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### **Summary of Discussion**

Tracey Kinney, Planner, presented the staff report to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. Kelly Grissman, Three Rivers Park District Director of Planning, was also in attendance.

Chair Tony Yarusso asked for clarification of the boundary of Brooklyn Park's West Unit. Ms. Kinney responded that the regional park boundary is proposed to encompass the East Unit including the existing Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park boundary, two additional parcels of land, each encompassing 2.6 acres, owned by Hennepin County and the City of Brooklyn Park respectively, and land yet-to-be identified for the Three Rivers Park District facility maintenance building to be located on City of Brooklyn Park-owned land. The remaining West Unit land is owned by the City of Brooklyn Park and serves as the Brooklyn Park Environmental Nature Center.

Commissioner Rich Theisen asked about the master plan's approach to the amount of land conserved for nature versus the amount developed. Ms. Grissman responded that Three Rivers Park District takes a portfolio approach to determining the amount of development and programming offered. The balance of land development and conservation in the proposed park is similar to what exists today.

Commissioner Theisen asked about the master plan's approach to creating experiences attractive to underrepresented communities. Ms. Grissman responded that feedback from the community included the need for more awareness of the Regional Park and space for larger community events. Three Rivers Park District is working with the City of Brooklyn Park to build awareness through marketing and targeted outreach. Additionally, the park will host no fewer than four large community gatherings a year.

Commissioner Theisen asked why the plan mentions a small playground. Ms. Grissman responded that the community acknowledged that there were local playgrounds nearby and chose to reduce the size of the West Unit play area in order to increase the size of the picnic area, so as to not duplicate existing opportunities available to the community.

Commissioner Robert Moeller asked about the diversity of languages included in the signs and displays. Ms. Grissman responded that the project website is available in a diversity of languages and Three Rivers Park District is starting to consider park signage with multiple languages.

Commissioner Theisen asked about the level of service of bus route 766, the main bus route servicing the park. Ms. Grissman stated that the route offers express service only on weekdays. She included that desire for more bus service is anticipated and would be very much welcomed.

Commissioner Catherine Fleming asked how the statement "no known opposition of the plan" was defined and noted that she was aware of organizations with concerns. Ms. Grissman responded that generally comments were positive and in support of the master plan and concerns were able to be

worked through. Commissioner Fleming requested a list of organizations that were included in the master plan process. After the meeting Grissman provided the below list of master plan pages highlighting involved parties.

- External Advisory Team: Page 11; bottom left
- Phase 1 Engagement Strategies: Page 12; left column and Table 6
- Phase 1 Engagement Events: Page 49
- Phase 1 Engagement General Summary: Page 12; bottom right
- Phase 1 Engagement Detailed Summary: Page 51
- Phase 2 Engagement Strategies: Page 13; left column and Table 7
- Phase 2 Engagement Events: Page 57
- Phase 2 Engagement General Summary: Page 13 – bottom and Concept Diagram on page 14
- Phase 2 Engagement Summary within the Market Summaries: Page 59
- Phase 3 Engagement Strategies: Page 15; Table 8
- Phase 3 Engagement Events: Page 63
- Phase 3 General Summary: Page 16; Table 9
- Phase 3 Engagement Comments: Page 65

Some of the groups and organizations who provided comments or were engaged in the master plan include:

- Adjacent park neighbors
- Brooklyn Center Multicultural Advisory Committee
- Izaak Walton League
- Brooklyn Park Rotary Club
- Brooklyn Park Lions Club
- West Unit Neighbor Meeting
- African Challenges
- Brooklyn Center Multicultural Advisory Committee
- Grassfield RC Club
- Friends of the Mississippi River

The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission approved the proposed action unanimously at its meeting on August 8, 2018.

## Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: August 7, 2018

For the Community Development Committee meeting of August 20, 2018

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of September 12, 2018

**Subject:** Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan and Master Plan Boundary Amendment, Hennepin County, Review File No. 50210-1

**District(s), Member(s):** District A, Rick Theisen

**Policy/Legal Reference:** MN Statutes 473.313; Planning Strategy 1, *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Tracey Kinney, Planner (651-602-1029), Regional Parks and Natural Resources

**Division/Department:** Community Development / Regional Planning

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan.
2. Approve the Master Plan Boundary Amendment to include an additional 5.2 acres of natural area including a 2.6-acre property held by the City of Brooklyn Park and a 2.6-acre property held jointly by Hennepin County and the City of Brooklyn Park, to protect the natural resources.
3. Prior to implementing the Master Plan, require Three Rivers Park District to:
  - Create a Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Brooklyn Park to:
    - Establish regional park use through a long-term lease or in perpetuity that identifies, outlines, and confirms use of land required for a park maintenance facility on land owned by the City of Brooklyn Park;
    - Clarify a minor realignment of the Rush Creek Regional Trail and grade separated crossing;
    - Transfer the 2.6-acre park easement held by the City of Brooklyn Park that is currently outside the regional park boundary.
  - Work with Hennepin County and the City of Brooklyn Park to transfer ownership of another 2.6-acre parcel of forfeited land currently owned by Hennepin County and the City of Brooklyn Park to Three Rivers Park District.
4. Advise Three Rivers Park District that:
  - Costs associated with lands and facilities associated with the Brooklyn Park Environmental Nature Area are not eligible for Metropolitan Council funding;
  - A Council approved master plan amendment is required to add inholdings eligible for acquisition funding.

### Background

Three Rivers Park District and the City of Brooklyn Park have completed a master planning process to determine a joint vision for Mississippi Gateway Regional Park located in the northeast corner of the City of Brooklyn Park, Hennepin County, along the Mississippi River. Mississippi Gateway Regional Park exists today as Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park (Three Rivers Park District) and Brooklyn Park Environmental Nature Area, a local park. The Metropolitan Council approved the existing Master Plan

for the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park in 1979. The proposed park will provide a seamless experience to the user in a combined 267-acre facility focused on transitioning visitors from the built environment to nature while maintaining the existing parks' separate ownership, development, and maintenance. The proposed park connects to the eastern portion of the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park and the Mississippi River Regional Trail both managed by Anoka County, and the West Mississippi River Regional Trail and Rush Creek Regional Trail both managed by Three Rivers Park District.

### Rationale

The Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan is consistent with the requirements of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, including Planning Strategy 1, Master Planning, and other Council policies.

### Thrive Lens Analysis

The Mississippi Gateway Regional Park Master Plan advances the Thrive outcome of Livability through increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation, which enhances quality of life in the region.

### Funding

The estimated total cost for Three Rivers Park District and the City of Brooklyn Park to implement the master plan is just under \$27,800,000 including development costs of just under \$26,000,000 and annual operation and maintenance costs of just over \$1,800,000 (*Table 1*). Only costs associated with the East Unit, owned by Three Rivers Park District, are eligible for Metropolitan Council funding. Costs associated with the West Unit, owned by the City of Brooklyn Park, are not eligible for Metropolitan Council funding. The City of Brooklyn Park is not an Implementing Agency, therefore not eligible for funding.

Three Rivers Park District is proposing to develop the East Unit, lead operations for both the East and West Units, as well as construct and maintain a shared maintenance facility and Rush Creek Regional Trail realignment and crossing. The City of Brooklyn Park will pay for TRPD's operations services via cash or as part of payment for the 100-year lease for the land in which the maintenance facility will be located.

*Table 1. Estimated Development Costs*

Activity	TRPD	City of Brooklyn Park	Sub Totals
East Unit Development	\$18,465,000	\$0	\$18,465,000
West Unit Development	\$2,810,000	\$4,210,000	\$7,020,000
One-Time Start-Up Equipment	\$450,000	\$0	\$450,000
<b>Development Totals</b>	<b>\$21,725,000</b>	<b>\$4,210,000</b>	<b>\$25,935,000</b>
East and West Unit Operations	\$355,000	\$0	\$355,000
Maintenance	\$320,000	\$53,800	\$373,800
Natural Resources and Education Programming	\$1,087,400	\$20,000	\$1,107,400
<b>Operations Totals</b>	<b>\$1,762,400</b>	<b>\$73,800</b>	<b>\$1,836,200</b>

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