



Legislation Text

File #: 16-538, **Version:** 1

City Council Meeting Date: December 6, 2016

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator

From: David E. Bennett, Public Works Director/City Engineer

Discussion of potential property acquisition for Mill Towns State Trail at 1700 and 1900 Dundas Boulevard.

Action Requested:

The Northfield City Council is requested to discuss potential property acquisition for the Mill Towns State Trail at 1700 and 1900 Dundas Boulevard.

Summary Report:

The Mill Towns State Trail Joint Powers Organization (MTSTJPO) and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have been working to acquire property and easements for the Mill Towns State Trail alignment in the southwest corner of Northfield. Currently, the trail is located in the ditch between the roadway of County Road 78/Armstrong Road and the railroad tracks.

The trail is in need of maintenance and the DNR and MTSTJPO have been thinking of a longer term relocation of the trail from the ditch to the east to be closer to the Cannon River in order to provide for a more scenic and enjoyable experience.

The DNR has made an offer to both properties located at 1700 and 1900 Dundas Boulevard and both were turned down by the property owners. Each property owner had their own reason for declining the offer, and staff's understanding is at 1700 Dundas Boulevard the DNR would not offer more than the property appraisal and at 1900 Dundas Boulevard the owners thought the acquisition of property would not leave them with enough land.

Since those offers were declined it was thought that the property at 1700 Dundas Boulevard was being sold to another party; however, the property has come back on the market for sale. In light of this, the DNR has indicated those property acquisitions are important for the trail (Attachment 4 - Letter from DNR). The Friends of the Mill Towns State Trail have also indicated that these are important property acquisitions for the State Trail.

In working with the DNR, they have indicated they do not have funding at this time for these property acquisitions. However, the DNR will work cooperatively with the City for realigning, constructing, and maintaining the realigned trail. Scott Haugen, Acquisition and Development Specialist with the DNR, provided an email (Attachment 5) on how the DNR has worked with local governments through cooperative agreements to facilitate trail development.

It would be anticipated that after the properties are acquired, the DNR and the City would be in a good position to create a cooperative agreement for this realignment. One item that could be included within the agreement with the DNR is to reappraise the property and reimburse the City for the appraisal amount. There is some risk that the City would not receive the full reimbursement for the 1700 and 1900 Dundas Boulevard property acquisitions.

However, there is benefit to the City if this trail is realigned and the existing segment in the ditch on County Road 78/Armstrong Road is removed. This in essence would remove the City obligation of maintenance on this trail segment.

With that understanding, if City Council is interested in pursuing this opportunity further, staff is recommending a closed session to discuss a purchase agreement for the properties. Pursuant to §13D.05, Subd. 3. (c), a public body may close a meeting (3) to develop or consider offers or counteroffers for the purchase or sale of real or personal property.

Alternative Options:

The City could choose not to participate in the property acquisition and allow the DNR to continue to pursue these acquisitions.

Tentative Timelines:

Property acquisition could occur in 2017.