



Legislation Text

File #: 15-022, **Version:** 1

City Council Meeting Date: January 27, 2015

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator

From: Brian Erickson, P.E., Interim Public Works Director/City Engineer

Subject:
Meadows Park Master Plan Discussion

Action Requested:

The Northfield City Council reviews updated information regarding the Meadows Park Master Plan, and provides direction to staff and SRF/PMDI (the consultant) for the master planning process, especially as it relates to transportation connections.

Specific Action Requested:

1. Review proposed street connections that will provide access to and through the park.
2. With council consensus on street configuration, the community input process will be able to move forward with potential park programming and amenities within said boundaries and goals.

Summary Report:

Since the last discussion of the Meadows Park Master Plan with City Council on October 28, 2014, significant progress has been made regarding the master plan work. On November 19, 2014 the City of Northfield hosted an open house to gather community input regarding the desires of the citizens for how they would like to see the park develop. The following evening, November 20, 2014, the Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) met and discussed their desires for Meadows Park. City Council was provided an update regarding this meeting via memo on December 5, 2014, which is shown in attachments 1 and 2.

Multi-Modal Transportation Considerations

Street Connections

Since those meetings, SRF/PMDI and staff have reviewed the input received and discussed options for the master plan. At this point, two essential items affect finalizing options for the master plan. The first item is the extension of Ford Street east to Hall Avenue. Ford Street is designated as a collector street and connects Hall Avenue and TH 246 as part of the existing Transportation Plan (attachment 3). A straight extension to Hall Avenue has the effect of bisecting Meadows Park and limiting some of the future plans. A slight realignment would allow for park area to be maximized. The other issue with the Ford Street extension is the cost for construction. If Ford Street is extended through the park the City of Northfield would then be responsible for the full cost of street construction, likely several hundred thousand dollars. By shifting the road to the perimeter of the park that cost could then be borne by any future development. Several options were developed

and are shown in attachments 4, 5 and 6.

The second item is the potential extension of Abbey Road east connecting with Hall Avenue. This extension would provide the potential for additional residential development around the north side of Meadows Park. Allowing some development around this north side of the park would provide additional buildable lots adjacent to the park. Should Council choose this option, staff will return at a future date with more detailed information regarding what is required.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections

As an initial step in developing the park, the consultant and staff prepared a Phase I plan (attachment 7) for providing both native plantings and a maintained turf area in the park. Also included is a small parking lot on the southwest side of the park to allow for easier public access. Similar to Lashbrook Park, it would be possible to mow natural trails to allow for the public walk through the native plantings. This would occur in 2016 because this land is currently leased through the 2015 growing season. Future Phases would then be incorporated into the Capital Improvement Plan.

As the transportation network grows in the southern portion of the city access to Meadow Park will be improved by connections to TH 246 as well as Hall Avenue. In addition, the growing citywide trail and sidewalk network allows for good non-motorized access to the park. Ultimately, the potential exists to connect Meadows Park to the regional park through additional trail development, which could open the door to possible future grant opportunities.

Additional Considerations

According to the Framework Map (Map 4.4) included in the Northfield Comprehensive Plan, the Meadows Park area is included in the Priority Growth Area. The preference for accommodating future residential growth is to utilize infill locations already served with infrastructure, then redevelopment/land intensification opportunities, followed by development on the edge of existing developed areas. While utilizing infill and redevelopment opportunities is a more sustainable development pattern, the Comprehensive Plan calls for selectively and strategically pursuing development opportunities on the edge of existing developed areas.

When the Northfield Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2008, there were approximately 235 remaining undeveloped single-family detached lots and 120 remaining undeveloped twin-home or townhome lots available. The Community Development Department work plan for 2015 includes conducting a lot inventory for platted and available residential parcels. The Meadows Park area provides a strategic development opportunity in a Priority Growth Area which could leverage additional private investment related to street construction.

Alternative Options:

Implementation of the master plan is a requirement of this acquisition. If the land is not put to its intended use or is abandoned, then the City would have two options:

1. Purchase the property at the then present market value with approval of the county board.
2. Authorize the conveyance of the land or part of the land not required for an authorized use to the State of Minnesota.

Financial Impacts:

The estimated cost of implementing the master plan will be prepared by SRF/PMDI and presented at a later date in the planning process. Due to the size of the park it is safe to assume at this point that the development will be spread out over several phases.

Tentative Financial Implications:

2015: \$35,000 (budgeted) To be used to order design and specifications for phase 1 of the final design.

2016: \$135,000 (included in the CIP) to be used to proceed with Phase 1. Noting as costs for Phase 1 are materialized coinciding with the annual budget process, this may or may not be amended.

Tentative Timelines:

The planning process has been prepared to allow for input from the community, other partners, and boards and commissions. It also goes further in that it shows a final implementation timeline for completing the actual work in the park. The current timeline and project process are attachments 8 and 9.