



Dakota County

Legislation Text

File #: DC-1334, Version: 1

DEPARTMENT: Physical Development Administration

FILE TYPE: Consent Information

TITLE

Update On Lebanon Hills Sustainable Trails Study

PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED

Receive an update on Phase 1: Existing Trails Evaluation for Lebanon Hills Sustainable Trails Study.

SUMMARY

Background

By Resolution No. 15-156 (March 17, 2015), the Dakota County Board of Commissioners adopted an updated Master Plan (MP) for Lebanon Hills Regional Park (LHRP). By Resolution no. 201-458 (September 21, 2021), the Dakota County Board of Commissioners authorized staff to select a consultant to prepare a Sustainable Trails Study (Study); and by Resolution No. 22-204 (May 24, 2022), the Dakota County Board of Commissioners authorized the Physical Development Director to execute a contract with SRF, Inc., for the Study. The Study addresses the following trail topics: preservation of high-quality trail recreation and nature-based experiences; minimization and mitigation of impacts to natural resources; minimization and mitigation of impacts to culturally important sites; identification of trail use conflicts, safety, and risk concerns; ADA accessibility; reduction of trail-related erosion issues; identification of deferred trail maintenance needs; and improvement of sustainable maintenance practices.

The Study is being conducted in two phases: Phase 1: Assessment (Summer 2022) and Phase 2: Recommendations and Implementation Strategy (Fall 2022). Outreach with Wilderness in the City (WITC), Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists (MORC), and the School of Environmental Studies (SES) students is occurring during each phase.

Phase 1: Assessment (Attachment: LHRP Existing Trails Evaluation Summary)

The first phase of the project, Assessment, is complete. This phase included field assessment of all 50 miles of existing trails in the park and assessment of each trail's ability to provide high-quality trail and nature-based recreation experiences, impact on high-quality natural areas and important cultural sites, ADA accessibility, safety and risk concerns, trail erosion, and deferred maintenance.

SES students were introduced to the project in June and were invited to participate in the field evaluation during July. Additional engagement is planned for the fall semester of 2022. Initial meetings to discuss the project were held with MORC on August 4 and with WITC on August 25.

Key findings:

- West Park. Most of the mountain bike trail system provides a high-quality recreation

experience and is one of the more popular mountain bike destinations in the Twin Cities. Constructed over twenty years ago, some areas need improvements. The designated hiking and skate ski trails have areas of severe erosion due to steep fall line alignments.

- Middle Park. Many of the hiking trails have moderate to severe erosion and direct runoff into lakes and wetlands. The hiking trails lack connectivity to Camp Sacajawea, and there is a lack of accessible trails for campground visitors. The equestrian trails are located on steep topography and are experiencing severe erosion.
- East Park. The east segment of the park has the highest concentration of trails that serve the needs of hikers, skiers, and equestrian riders. Due to more forgiving terrain and sustainably built trails, the majority of erosion issues on the hiking and horseback riding trails are moderate to minor. The portage trails are generally in good condition though some steeper alignments have severe erosion and sediment depositing into lakes. The paved trails are generally in good condition.

Next Steps

Trail recommendations and an implementation strategy will be developed this fall based on the existing trail assessment. The Study recommendations and implementation strategy will be presented to Dakota County Board of Commissioners in December 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

Information only; no action requested

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACTS

- None Current budget Other
 Amendment Requested New FTE(s) requested

RESOLUTION

Information only; no action requested

PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION

15-156; 3/17/15
21-458; 9/21/21
22-204; 5/17/22

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment: Lebanon Hills Regional Park Existing Trails Evaluation Summary

BOARD GOALS

- A Great Place to Live A Healthy Environment
 A Successful Place for Business and Jobs Excellence in Public Service

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT LEVEL

- Inform and Listen Discuss Involve N/A

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