



## MEETING NOTES

CITY OF SAINT PAUL

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, July 23, 2019

LOCATION: Arlington Community Center, Payne-Phalen Community Council Board Meeting, Saint Paul MN 55130

ATTENDANCE: Bart B., J. Ellis, Sy S., Gary B., Gunilla B., Susan B., Jaclyn S., Marjorie O., Jacklyn S., Jack B. & Payne-Phalen Board, Damian S., Chee Y., Brett H.

NOTES BY: Chee Yang, August 5, 2019

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### DISCUSSION TOPICS:

***Payne-Phalen Community Council welcomed Chee. Chee introduced himself and the presentation. Chee provided an project schedule update. Refer to page 2-3 of Presentation.***

- The Swede Hollow Park Master Plan project is funded by the McNeely Foundation.
- Parks and Recreation department is partnering with Lower Phalen Creek Project (LPCP). LPCP is taking the lead in community engagement for the project and is funded by the Bush Foundation
- Outlined the presentation's agenda
- Project Schedule
  - Today's meeting focuses on the 75% Master Plan draft based on comments received through previous master planning community meetings and survey.
  - A preferred master plan draft will be sent out digitally at the end of August 2019 for comments.
  - The final preferred master plan will be shared in September 2019.
- Specific questions asked to Payne-Phalen Community Council (PPCC) for feedback.
  - Should there be lighting along Bruce Vento Regional Trail? Emergency call box?
  - Access from Greenbrier Street
  - North-South pathway from Bates & Maury
  - Should the existing staircase from the park to Bates Street be removed or improved?
  - Should the water in the "creek" be activated through water recirculation or water filtration?
  - Responses from PPCC will be in [blue text](#).

***Chee presented site context information. Refer to pages 5-6 of Presentation.***

#### Historic Phalen Creek Map

- Map illustrates to the historic creek alignment prior to being deployed underground
- Based on Lower Phalen Creek Project's Daylighting Phalen Creek Feasibility Study,

reach 7 & reach 5 were the two most feasible locations for daylighting.

- The red circles inside reach 5 are the two locations the Rush Line project, along Phalen Blvd, are proposing to daylight.
  - One is just east of Eastside Heritage Park
  - The other location is east of Early St.

#### Site Context

- In previous community meeting, there was a comment to illustrate where the Rush Line is in relation to Swede Hollow Park.
- On the map, along Phalen Blvd, the purple dashed line represents the proposed location of the Rush Line route.
- There are three proposed station locations near Swede Hollow Park with two directly north of the park.
  - These two stations are ideal locations to add signage to lead people down to the park.
  - Ramsey Co. is supportive of adding future signage in those locations. One of their goals is to bring people to the parks.
- Another major route is the bikeway illustrated in the solid yellow line. Swede Hollow Park is a critical point for cyclists to get to downtown Saint Paul.

***Chee presented the master plan draft. Refer to pages 8-17.***

#### Swede Hollow Park Master Plan: Vision Statement

- Based on community input, there was a desire to have a strong statement to keep Swede Hollow Park as a natural corridor.
- Vision Statement:
  - Swede Hollow Park is a unique green space with a rich history located in the Dayton's Bluff and Railroad Island neighborhoods. The master plan honors the natural, historical, and cultural elements to begin awareness of its significance in the City of Saint Paul. The plan is to maintain a natural corridor for a high quality ecosystem for the wellbeing of the people, flora, fauna, and water.

#### Swede Hollow Park: Goals & Priorities

- Park Interpretation & Signage
  - Natural, historical, & cultural stories - Migratory Bird Flyway, Dakota culture, Immigrants
  - Identify preferred sign locations
  - Connection to other destinations - Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, Downtown Saint Paul, East Side Heritage, Hamm Park
  - Opportunity for creative public art
- Access to Water
  - Work with watershed districts and Lower Phalen Creek Proposal to consider daylighting Phalen Creek through the park Consider daylighting water from surrounding storm sewer. Investigate water source and improve water quality Creative design by the water and education opportunity
  - Alternate trail type i.e. Boardwalk

- Natural Resource Management
  - Removal of invasive species i.e. Buckthorns, green ashes, Siberian elm, & low quality vegetation
  - Enhance wildlife habitat i.e. Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, planting native plant species
- Visibility/Safety
  - Lighting
  - Emergency Call-boxes
  - Removal of low quality vegetation
  - Activating the park brings more awareness i.e. partnering with Planning and Economic Development (PED) to activate north part of the park
  - Equitable Park Access
- Space
  - Provide space to gather & events
  - Spiritual/Cultural healing space
  - Activating spaces with passive recreation & programming
- Other desired improvements
  - Trail Improvements
  - Public Art
  - Play Space

#### Master Plan: Park-Wide Recommendations

- Swedehenge – only public art in Swede Hollow Park
  - Do we want to remove or relocate the public art?
  - Artist, Christine B., has given permission for us to remove if the community desires it.
- Drewry Tunnel
  - It is a historical bridge.
  - Need to partner and consult with Historical Preservation Commission (HPC) and Bridges Division on any future improvement for the trail
  - A Historical Consultant Study will be required prior to any improvements.
  - Jurisdiction: Public Works, Bridges Division
- Central Gathering Space
- Improve Staircase
  - The staircase should be improved. This is an important access point to and from the neighborhoods on the east. In addition to access it is an important exercise/climbing option for those who are looking for a free cardio-workout (something that's not always easy to find in a city that has generally flat topography overall).
  - Improving the staircase and adding a new connection at Greenbrier are complimentary and should go hand-in-hand; not one or the other.
  - For any park, but especially Swede Hollow, it's better to have more access points than fewer.
- Lighting - Personal safety is a critical element in this park, especially because the topography of the Hollow means it can sometimes feel quite isolated from city

neighborhoods that are adjacent and actually very close by. The more people that use the park, the safer it will feel. And for it to feel safe, there must be very clear indications that the park was deliberately designed to incorporate features that will help users know that their safety has been well considered. When safety enhancements are included, park users might sense a subconscious signal that they have been considered. Likewise, when such things are not included, park users have a subconscious signal that their well-being has not necessarily been thought about. Such safety features are deterrents to those who might consider exploiting the well-being and enjoyment of the park by those who might be perceived as vulnerable – the young, elderly, those who have mobility challenges, and anyone who might be walking, biking or strolling alone. A great park is not designed for its most active, sure-footed users; its designed for everyone of all ages and abilities. St. Paul has embraced 8-80 design policies, and this should be kept in mind when upgrading city parks.

- Lighting is a necessary component that should be included and enhanced – albeit in a way that is sensitive to the bucolic nature of the park, its eco-system, and the wildlife that thrives within this valley.
- Adequate lighting is critical to ensure that park users can see where they are going and they can see who is approaching them. Lighting should be spaced so that light is consistent and there is a minimum of dark spots between pools of light since these are often places where criminals prey on those whose eyes are adjusting to the change in light levels.
- Lighting can and should be integrated in a way that is sensitive to night skies, season migration of wildlife, and the sense of respite that Swede Hollow offers.
- There should be lighting as well as call emergency call boxes along the regional trail so that is lit for 24 hours. This is a location that feels unsafe due to its lack of visibility from the street. At the same time, it is a vital transportation corridor for people on bicycle. The trail does not close, whereas the park around it might. People commute on this trail often when the sun is down.
- Low dim amber light along Bruce Vento Regional Trail
- Option to automatically turn off when park closes and turn on when park opens
- Park light on bluff (active space)
- Emergency Call Boxes
  - Are a clear indication that any park user might be able to get help when its needed.
  - It's been said at several meetings and it's true that many of St. Paul's citizens carry cell phones today. But in low-income neighborhoods - like those adjacent to Swede Hollow - many people live on limited incomes and don't necessarily have consistent access to high-level digital data and phone plans. In other words, please don't count on the cell phones of some to provide emergency calling services for all.
  - The need for "help" may not be limited to incidence of crime alone. As I'm sure you know, park users sometimes suffer health emergencies, sprain their ankle, or fall off their bike. In short, emergency call boxes are a very good idea for all sorts of reasons.
  - If park users are to rely on using cell-phones to call out in case of an

emergency, they may be out of luck if their cell phone is stolen, falls in the water, or frankly if they can't get a good signal in one or another part of this deep valley.

- For anyone who might consider preying on another person in the hollow, the mere sight of an emergency call box (one around every bend) will be a visible deterrent.
  - Though some park users might assume that the local homeless population is a threat to public safety, it is important to be fair and keep in mind the reality that the homeless population is indeed quite vulnerable, and they are often victims of crime perpetrated against them. It's a good bet that that the homeless population would not be relying on cell phones to call in case of such emergencies. Installing emergency call boxes is a fair and equitable investment in the diverse population in this part of the city.
  - The bollard approach with low level lighting is recommended. They should be placed keeping in mind that this park gets relatively little direct sunlight in the winter compared to other parks in the City. They should be made from durable materials that will withstand the tough conditions of our winters. Core-Ten steel has been suggested by some.
- Sewer easement highlighted as a yellow dashed line
  - Enhance Water & Wetland
    - Middle and Lower pond are registered as National Wetlands
    - Any future improvements near or to the wetlands will need to follow their design guidelines
    - Enhance aquatic habitat
    - Celebrate water – natural, historical, and cultural significance
    - A water feasibility study is required for either water recirculation or water filtration system to determine the source of water. All water onsite drains into the Mississippi River.
      - **Water Recirculation** – Recirculate spring fed water within the park.
      - **Water Filtration** – Collect stormsewer water which will be filtered to increase water volume in the creek. The water will be much cleaner as it empties into the Mississippi River.
      - **Which would you prefer?**
      - This is a complicated issue that has a lot of considerations. With that in mind, here are a few suggestions for thing to consider:
        - A cost/benefit analysis would make sense.
        - The benefit of filtering storm drain water would be worthwhile.
        - Please consider that so-called 100-year, 500-year, and perhaps 1000-year rains are becoming more common due to climate change.
        - Is Battle Creek a good model to consider? Is there filtration in that ecosystem?
        - What is cleanest and least intrusive makes the most sense. Also, if recirculation is a high-cost item, it may make smore sense to go with filtration and spend the balance of funds on improving and

adding access points.

- The desire to provide regular circulation is generally a good one but the method, efficacy, and cost should be decided with greater study and community input.
- South Access
  - 7<sup>th</sup> Ave Bridge is a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark
  - Future improvements will need to go through Historical Preservation Commission (HPC) and Bridges Division
  - Jurisdiction: Public Works Dept., Bridges Division
- Public Art
  - Creative artwork to celebrate the stories of Swede Hollow
  - Bring awareness to the park i.e. gateways
  - Enhance park user experience
- North Access via Bruce Vento Regional Trail
- Future Land Acquisition
  - 3 acres of land owned by Housing Redevelopment Authority (HRA) to be transfer to City for parkland
  - Parks and Recreation Dept. is currently working on having the parcel transferred.
- Access from Greenbrier St. down to regional trail
  - Shared path that runs through HRA property. Will require an easement in the future for development.
- Bluff Area
  - Picnic Area
  - Play Area
  - Wood Land Garden
  - Improve path network
- Historical Remnants
  - Historical significance
  - Community wants remnants to be protected with historical status
  - Consult with HPC for process – can be community driven
- Natural Resources Management
  - Remove invasive species and low quality vegetation throughout park
  - Enhance wildlife habitat i.e. Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, Migratory Birds
  - Removal will most likely happen in phases. Future opportunities to coordinate and involve volunteer organization such as Tree Trust.
  - Target plant communities compiled by Friends of the Mississippi River in 2011.
  - Map and associated documents are to be used as a guide. More extensive work is required for site preparation.
  - Swede Hollow Park documents are available on the project website.
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- **Forgot to add:** Remove large concrete and miscellaneous debris & stabilize bluff slope

#### Bluff Area: Master Plan Enlargement

- Future bikeway along Minnehaha St. & Margaret St.
  - Future connection bikeways

- Historical North-South Pathway
  - Creates a north & south connection to Minnehaha Ave.
  - Approx. 400ft
  - **UPDATE:** Will require retaining walls along the pathway. In existing conditions, the slope drops as you move further north. Not ideal for future path as maintenance and upkeep will consume future resources for the park.
  - The proposed walking trail to Bates/Maury is very welcome. Please include this in the project. PPCC has had long term support for creating this access.
  - Trails are a good addition. They provide more options for more people. Currently there are very few people who are connecting with the trail from the neighborhoods on the west and west; only from the north and south.
- Park Lights
  - Proposing to add 3 additional park lights
  - 5 existing park lights
- Overlook improvement
  - Open view to the valley of the park & downtown Saint Paul
  - 700 SF (30' diameter (DIA.)) with colored concrete
- Improve Staircase
- Nature Based Play Area
  - 3,000 SF
- Wood Land Garden
  - Proposed to make it a destination point on the bluff
  - Interpretation of the garden
  - Currently maintained by Friends of Swede Hollow (FOSH)
- Proposed Shared Path
  - A proposed paved path as an access point from Greenbrier St. & the east side
  - Potential for future federal funding
  - Requires an easement with HRA
  - Connects to regional trail and future bikeways on Minnehaha St. & Margaret St.
  - The connection from Greenbrier is a high priority, as it would provide a transportation improvement, giving walkers and cyclists easy access to 7th Street and the residences and businesses around there. Currently we only have the very challenging staircase, which is not a realistic possibility for someone with a bike. This access point should be pursued in addition to (and not as a replacement for) the stairs at Bates and Maury.
- Existing Parking Lot
  - 5 parking stalls
  - 1 ADA parking stall
  - Improve path network
  - New sidewalk to connect to the rest of the neighborhood and to the proposed shared path
  - No need to expand the parking lot. This a park that's mostly walked to or cycled to. Existing parking facilities near Union Depot can and should be designated and publicized as places for vehicular parking.
  - **Correction:** This may have been miscommunicated. Proposing the idea if we

would like to improve, not expand, the parking lot?

#### Middle Swede Hollow: Master Plan Enlargement

- Multi-Use Overlook
  - Open view to the creek
  - 1,960 SF (50' diameter)
  - Space for healing, education, and celebration
  - Access to proposed aggregate trails
- Aggregate Trails
  - 3'-4' Trails
  - Creates access to the creek
  - Additional 0.19 miles of new hiking trails
- Create Riffles
  - Provide a variety of water movement
  - Enhance aquatic habitat through a variety of water movement
- Creek Crossings
  - Access to water
  - Opportunity to interaction with water
- Creek Outlet – Middle Pond
  - Creates a continuous water flow
  - Reduce dredging
  - Enhance water quality & habitat in middle pond
- Trail Improvement
  - Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) recommends to raise trail in addition with draitile to prevent water from sitting on trail surface
- Oak Savanna or Bee Lawn
  - Transform an approx. 39,800 SF to either oak savanna or bee lawn
  - The City's natural resources coordinator mentioned Great River Greening has attempted to convert the northern turf to savanna but failed. The primary reason why it failed was the hollow is too restrictive for burning prescriptions. Alternate ideas include converting the area into bee lawn, a pollinator friendly and low maintenance area.
  - Add aggregate trail for exploration & education opportunities
  - Remove large boulders
  - Open view to creek inlet
- Trail Improvements
  - Bituminous trail approx. 7,200 SF
- Centralized Plaza
  - Central area for people to gather. An opportunity for education
  - Have seat walls for seating
  - 1,664 SF (46' DIA.)
- Creek Inlet
  - Open and improve view to creek
  - Close off Public Works leaking stormsewer
  - Feasibility study required for water filtration or water recirculation

- Creek Confinement
  - Increase water movement and visibility

#### Lower Swede Hollow: Master Plan Enlargement

- North Primitive Trail
  - 3'-4' aggregate trail
- Informal Gathering
  - Area for trail and park users to sit and rest.
  - Aggregate pathways are proposed to reduce the amount of impervious surface
  - Pathways will lead to seating areas
  - Open view to the creek
  - 3 bike racks, 1 fix-it station, 2 benches, and 1 ADA picnic table
  - Interpretative Signs – 4-Sided Kiosk
- Observation Deck
  - **UPDATE:** Tree Trust is constructing a wooden observation deck this summer. Instead of a 12'x8', it is now going to be 8'x6' without any benches. This was decided because with benches it will cut the platform space in half and it would be uncomfortable sitting having our backs to three trails behind. Without benches it would discourage people to sleep. There is opportunity to add a small bench in the future with desired.
  - Opportunity for future interpretative signage & seating
- South Primitive Trail
  - Tree Trust will begin working on the trail this summer as much as they can.
  - 3'-4' aggregate trail
- Boardwalk & Observation Deck
  - Will add an approx. 50' boardwalk when the soil becomes muddy
  - 12'x12' Observation Deck
- Boardwalk
  - An approx. 250' proposed boardwalk on the north end connecting to other side of the park
  - Access near the water

#### Passive Recreation & Park Amenities

- Walking/Hiking
- Bicycle
- Cross Country Skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Wildlife Observation
- Play Area
- Picnicking

*Chee presented the preliminary future projects priority list. Refer to page 18 of Presentation.*

Please prioritize the list of future projects by ranking them from 1 to 20 with 1 being the highest priority and 20 the lowest.

Projects listed consists of other items for improvements such as trail improvements, signage, and natural resources management.

Ranking is available online at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7XFXSDB>.

Survey is anticipated to close Wednesday, August 21<sup>st</sup> at 2:00 PM. Your guidance and participation is greatly appreciated!

***Chee presented next steps. Refer to page 19 of Presentation.***

August 2019: Will send a digital version of the preferred master plan with ranked projects for community input.

September 2019: The final preferred master plan will be shared with the community.

### **Overall Discussion:**

- If lighting is added on the regional trail, are there any future plan to add lighting beyond Swede Hollow along the regional trail?
  - Parks and Recreation staff will discuss with Ramsey Co. Railroad Authority.
- What is the difference between the park closing and trail users using the regional trail? Is the trail closed as well?
- Add railings to timber staircase south of Swede Hollow Park
- Water circulation, I would go with what is cleanest and what is less expensive, though those might not be the same thing.
- The old staircase, I have mixed feelings about the existing staircase. It is not easy to use. A new connection at Greenbrier would allow access from that side of the park much more easily. Two reasons for keeping the staircase is that it provides access more directly to the park than the Greenbrier connection would. It's also better to have more access points than fewer. But it's a low priority for me to have that staircase improved.
- I am in favor of the boardwalks and overlooks, and the inclusion of handrails along the new stairs.
- What are “Aggregate Trails?” – Trails that are crushed stone/rock/gravel as the trail surface material.
  - Trails that are crushed stone/rock/gravel as the trail surface material.
- What does the “Multi-Use Overlook” include?
  - The multi-use overlook includes the overlook, aggregate trails, wayfinding (directional) signs, interpretive sign, natural resources management, and public art. Please note that any projects funded by CIB, per City ordinance, is required to put at least 1% of total funding towards public art.
  - Does it include the part now built up on Payne Avenue?
    - The Payne-Bedford Overlook is a Public Works project and not part the master plan. The master plan references the Payne-Bedford Overlook as it is along the bluff of the park and its public art connects to the Swede Hollow Park’s historical and cultural elements.

- Does it include a Pedestrian Bridge?
  - Initially, we investigated this access as a potential point of access. The cost to build the infrastructure is not desirable from the community’s perspective, and the slopes on both sides of the trail makes it difficult to have an ADA ramp pedestrian bridge. In addition, the community didn’t want additional infrastructures in the ravine area of the park to keep it as natural as possible. Instead, there was a desire to improve the Drewry Tunnel since it’s an existing access from the west.
- What will the “Centralized Plaza” include?
  - The central plaza includes the central plaza, trail improvement (from the Drewry Tunnel down to the creek inlet area), wayfinding sign, interpretive sign, natural resources management, and public art.
  - Where exactly would it be located?
    - The centralized plaza is proposed to be the area where the park trail (not the regional trail) comes together southeast of the Swedehenge.
- What does the “Informal Gathering Space” include?
  - The proposed informal gathering space includes aggregate trails, site furnishings (bench, ADA picnic table, bike racks, bike fix-it station), interpretive signs, wayfinding sign, emergency call-box, and natural resources management.
  - Where exactly would it be located?
    - The proposed location is the existing bump off area above the existing timber staircase in southern Swede Hollow Park.

**Other comments from Payne-Phalen Community Council:**

- Please be sure that the park retains and improves access from all four sides. In all cases, design that is inclusive and inviting should be prioritized over solutions that foster a sense of exclusion and exclusivity. The bucolic nature of the park is important and should be safeguarded, but not at the expense of equity and inclusion.
- The connection on the west near Payne and Beaumont is crucial for access from the Railroad Island Neighborhood. It should be maintained and improved to be sensitive to its historic significance while also improving accessibility and security. Given the historic character of the bridge and tunnel, it might make sense to add a second path (one that is ADA compliant) in this vicinity running from the east side of Drewry Lane down into the Hollow.
- The plan should indicate locations for future access points from Railroad Island – components that should be anticipated, identified, and planned for at this time, even if they will only be realized in the long-term. For instance, the City has granted interim development rights for new mixed-use development at 520 Payne. Development on this parcel offers an excellent opportunity to create a new, additional access point from the southern portion of Railroad Island into the Hollow – perhaps along the alignment with Kenny or Hopkins.
- It might be helpful to consider design applications where emergency vehicles would be able to access the park (when necessary) from as many access points as possible. The pedestrian trails along the lower Minnehaha Creek in Minneapolis were improved to

maintain their bucolic feel on an everyday basis while also being just wide enough to accommodate the occasional emergency vehicle when necessary.

- Is there any consideration as to how to activate the second tunnel under 7th Street? One is used for the regional trail but the other is not. Could it be a covered picnic area? A bicycle repair station?
  - Will keep the idea in mind, but that would be a conversation with Ramsey Co. Railroad Authority since that parcel is within their jurisdiction. We'll also need to consider consulting with the Historical Preservation Commission (HPC) and Bridges Division as the bridge itself is a historical landmark.
- For the proposed new addition of park land, a "bee lawn" makes sense - both for its beneficial qualities for bees, but also hopefully to reduce the use of that area as a potential encampment. Perhaps this area could include the kind of habitat that the rusty bee needs?
- The boardwalks and overlooks, and the inclusion of handrails along the new stairs are all considered very good additions and improvements to the park.
- The south end of the trail near the pond needs a secondary access/egress point; its currently designed as a dead-end trail. Dead-end trails can often feel like places where park users are vulnerable because they can be trapped by someone. A second in/out provides a practical and psychological sense of security.

*A special thank you to everyone who attended the meeting and to Payne-Phalen Community Council for having the City of Saint Paul, Parks and Recreation Dept.*

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Please contact Chee Yang at 651-266-6414 if any items are missing from the meeting notes or items were listed incorrectly.