



Council Agenda Item 25-0792R

MEETING DATE: 10/14/2025

SUBJECT/TITLE: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF A U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$560,000 FOR DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF WAABIZHESHİKANA – THE MARTEN TRAIL SEGMENT 7.

SUBMITTED BY: Bridget Erickson, Parks & Recreation

RECOMMENDATION: Approve.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: N/A

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:

November 25, 2019 (19-0784R) – Approved and authorized implementation of the Waabizheshikana: The Marten Trail Mini Master Plan as funding becomes available. The primary goal of Waabizheshikana is to increase connectivity from adjacent neighborhoods to the St. Louis River and each other while restoring and protecting the natural habitat along the trail corridor neighborhoods.

March 22, 2021 (21-0180R) – Approved and authorized implementation of Waabizheshikana: The Marten Trail Interpretive Master Plan. The Interpretive Plan provides the framework for the creation of interpretive elements for the entire Waabizheshikana to develop a heritage trail experience that shares the ecologic and cultural history of the region, celebrates the St. Louis River Estuary, and promotes stewardship of the river and riverfront.

BACKGROUND: Waabizheshikana: The Marten Trail is a planned 10-mile multi-use, nonmotorized trail connecting Duluth's western neighborhoods along the Estuary. Currently, two portions of the trail are available for use, with work in progress to connect these sections. The planned route will create connectivity between 63rd Avenue West in the Irving Park neighborhood to Chambers Grove Park in the Fond du Lac neighborhood.

This resolution authorizes acceptance of a grant through the U.S. EPA for design and implementation of Segment 7 of Waabizheshikana, which connects Perch Lake Landing (located at 12100 MN-Hwy 23) at the east and Chambers Grove Park (located at 13404 MN-Hwy 23) at the west, both of which have had Area of Concern (AOC) actions implemented to improve habitat and recreation opportunities.

This grant will support the design and construction of access improvements to pedestrian and water-based recreation. By improving access in proximity to newly restored habitat areas within the St. Louis River Estuary, the project will foster equitable community connection to the river while addressing the disproportionate impacts of legacy contamination in the St. Louis River Area of Concern (SLRAOC). This project will occur in two phases: Phase I will produce a design for the 0.6-mile trail segment along the Estuary side of Highway 23, and Phase II will implement the trail segment design. Phase I deliverables include preliminary and final engineered plan sets, and Phase II deliverables include trail implementation with contractor oversight. Outcomes will include enhanced access to the remediated St. Louis River Estuary and increased recreational and educational opportunities for all those who live, recreate, and visit. Public access here is a high priority for the State of Minnesota, the City of Duluth, nonprofit partners such as the St. Louis River Alliance, and the surrounding community. (See Map – Exhibit B)

The grant opportunity involved a noncompetitive invitation to apply with finding from the Great Lakes

Restoration Initiative and administered by the U.S. EPA. The intent of these funds is to increase connectivity to the St. Louis River and along the Estuary.

BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACT: If awarded, this project will forward the Waabizheshikana development without significant City funding sources. There are no alternative City funding sources available for this project.

OPTIONS: Authorize the acceptance of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant award in the amount of \$560,000 to support the Waabizheshikana Segment 7 design and implementation or decline the EPA grant which will halt progress on the development of Waabizheshikana Segment 7.

NECESSARY ACTION: Authorize acceptance of the grant.

ATTACHMENTS: U.S. EPA Notice of Award, Map of Waabizheshikana: The Marten Trail Segment 7.