

Council Agenda Item 26-0013R



MEETING DATE: January 12, 2026

SUBJECT/TITLE: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN AGREEMENT WITH MSA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES INC. FOR ENGINEERING SERVICES RELATED TO THE DESIGN OF WAABIZHESHIKANA: THE MARTEN TRAIL SEGMENT 7 PROJECT

SUBMITTED BY: Kooper Andringa, Project Tech, Property & Facilities Management

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION: Approved Resolution 19-0784R - RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WAABIZHESHIKANA (THE MARTEN TRAIL) MINI MASTER PLAN.

Approved Resolution 22-0772R - RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE TO INCLUDE AN INITIAL FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF \$35,000 FOR THE CONTINUED DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF WAABIZHESHIKANA: THE MARTEN TRAIL AND THE ST. LOUIS RIVER ESTUARY NATIONAL WATER TRAIL

Approved Resolution 23-0616R - RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF A MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND GRANT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$1,375,000 TO EXPAND RECREATIONAL ACCESS ALONG THE ST. LOUIS RIVER ESTUARY.

Approved Resolution 25-0792R - RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF A U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$560,000 FOR DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF WAABIZHESHIKANA: THE MARTEN TRAIL SEGMENT 7.

BACKGROUND: Waabizhesikana (The Marten Trail), once referred to as the Western Waterfront Trail, consists of an existing 3.3-mile multi-use recreational trail that traces the shore of the St. Louis River Estuary. A mini master plan was approved in 2019 with the following major recommendations:

1. Rebrand the Western Waterfront Trail as a heritage trail, including renaming the trail to reflect and honor the cultural and historical significance of the area.
2. Initiate a separate heritage interpretive planning process to identify and articulate the stories of the river and the area.
3. Retain the entire existing LSMR rail line for excursion train use.
4. Extend the existing trail to connect seven river corridor neighborhoods by way of a trail alignment that traverses the shoreline and nearby ridgeline.
5. Improve three existing water access sites and develop three additional water access sites to increase public riverfront use.
6. Design all these facilities to ensure accessibility, regardless of income, age or physical ability.

The grant opportunity emerged through the St. Louis River Area of Concern (AOC) management actions—an ongoing collaboration among State, Federal, Tribal, and local agencies working to address legacy contamination in the river corridor. As part of this initiative, the EPA has allocated dedicated funding to advance equity, access, and environmental justice activities within the St. Louis River Estuary.

Projects supported by this grant will enhance community access to the St. Louis River, creating safer and more inclusive recreational opportunities. Specifically, the funding will support the following:

- Design and construction of access improvements for both pedestrian and water-based recreation near newly restored habitat areas within the St. Louis River Estuary.
- The project will be completed in two phases:
 - o Phase I will develop a design for the 0.6-mile trail segment along the Estuary side of Highway 23.
 - o Phase II will implement the approved trail design.
- Phase I deliverables include preliminary and final engineered plan sets.
- Phase II deliverables include full trail construction with contractor oversight.

This project supports the goals of the Waabizheshikana: The Marten Trail Mini Master Plan and Interpretive Master Plan, promoting connectivity, habitat restoration, cultural interpretation, and equitable access to the riverfront.

BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACT: Budget is \$140,744.00, from the Parks Fund, Community Resources, Parks Capital, Cap Mtce Fund 205, Contract Services, West End Environmental Justice, 2024 GLRI-EPA Environmental Justice Grant

OPTIONS: Approve the resolution and the design of the trail can continue as planned. If denied the project will be halted

NECESSARY ACTION: Approve.

ATTACHMENTS: