



SRF No. 8418

## **Bridge Enhancements Meeting Record #3 Old Cedar Avenue Bridge Over Long Meadow Lake**

City Project 2010-201

May 29, 2014

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

City of Bloomington Public Works Building

The following is a summary of the meeting. Action items are in bold and underlined.

### **Attendees:**

Randy Quale, Bloomington  
Shelley Pedersen, Bloomington  
Karl Keel, Bloomington  
Julie Long, Bloomington  
Julie Farnham, Bloomington  
Brandon Jutz, USFWS

Gerry Shimek, USFWS  
Tim Bodeen, USFWS  
Matt Cramer, SRF  
Michael Jischke, SRF

### **Meeting Summary:**

#### **1) Previous Action Items**

##### **a) Bridge Lighting**

- Matt noted that the team has reviewed the records and found no evidence of roadway lighting on the original bridge.
- Currently the refuge closes at dark. It is anticipated that there will be desired bike commuter trail use after dark during some seasons.
- There is currently no lighting on the pedestrian ramps across the Minnesota River or at the DNR boat launch.
- There is currently only a couple of intersection/driveway lights along Old Cedar Avenue on the hill up to the Old Shakopee intersection.
- The group decided that since lighting does not currently exist on any of the approaches that no lighting would be installed as part of the bridge project. If and when more continuous lighting is developed for the approaches, additional lighting could be considered for the bridge.
- Tim said that any planned new lighting should be sensitive to wildlife.
- USFWS prefers to not light the entire parking lot. Brandon said that lighting on or near the restroom facility is desired.
- Both City and USFWS staff want to engage respective law enforcement personnel to discuss security.

- b) Parking lot design scope
- Brandon confirmed that USFWS wants the bridge and parking lot reconstruction project to be seamless and sees benefit in having SRF prepare the plans for the lot and trailhead area as well. He said that there is a convenient policy in place whereby funds for design and construction can be transferred to the City. Julie L. concurred that the City is interested in this arrangement.
  - USFWS will be handling the following nearby projects: existing boardwalk replacement, water control structure repairs (Orchard Springs, Kidder Marsh), trail loops (ponds to north), and savannah restoration (north of bridge area to TH77).
  - **SRF will prepare a scope of services for design and construction services to add the parking lot area and submit to the City.**
- c) Bridge Construction Access
- Matt noted that access to the site is being shown from the north and south sides of the bridge, but feels the north side may be problematic due to the proximity of the gas line. He added that after reviewing the site conditions, it appears the larger trees are mainly near the lot and the area to be cleared near the bridge is mainly younger growth.

## 2) West Gateway context

- a) The group discussed the coordination of the different projects planned in close proximity to each other:
- Bridge project
  - Old Cedar Avenue reconstruction up to Old Shakopee intersection
  - Parking lot and trailhead reconstruction
  - Bluff Trail and Hogback Ridge Trail area improvements
  - Water control feature improvements (dike/outlet structures)
  - MN Valley State Trail
  - Potential trail connection from bridge to state trail
    - **SRF will prepare a scope of services amendment for submittal to the City.**
- b) The group reviewed several contextual factors:
- The visual character of the site has changed seasonally with vegetation filling in recently.
  - Michael noted that there is approx. 100' vertical grade change between Old Shakopee Rd. (800) and the wetland edge (700). The parking lot elevation is approx. 710. The project site is within the 100-year flood plain.

- Gerry said that water levels were beginning to recede generally in the vicinity.
- Brandon said that most recent flood events have crept up the embankment near the parking lot without flooding it, but the lot has also fully flooded in the past.
- Michael described the right of way configuration which narrows considerably between Old Cedar Ave. (approx. 80') to the bridge itself (approx. 20').
- Michael pointed out the primary existing utilities on the north side of the bridge – MCES sanitary line, gas main, and overhead power. Current survey ends approximately 100' west of the bridge abutment so the extended routes need to be verified for the expanded scope area. Karl said the MCES sewer turns north and follows the Hogback Ridge Trail alignment.

### 3) West Gateway Area Concept Alternatives

- a) Michael presented representative “precedent” images for:
  - Refuge site/architectural details
  - Parking, paths, and stormwater treatment
  - Visitor amenities and wayfinding
  - Boardwalks and interpretive elements
- b) He then presented 3 alternative site plans for the West Gateway area.
  - Primary similarities amongst the alternatives included:
    - Old Cedar Avenue approach roadway includes shared car/bike lane inbound and separate car/bike climbing lanes outbound
    - Parking lot capacity (approx. 55-60 spaces)
    - Restroom facility is assumed to be a pre-designed building by an approved vendor with the potential for some limited exterior customizations.
    - Restroom facility is located within City right-of-way to facilitate maintenance by the City.
    - More “maintained” park-like character in the trailhead vicinity
    - Substantial bike parking
    - Drinking fountain/bottle-filling station
    - Pedestrian paths linking trails without needing to pass through the parking lot
  - Primary distinctions between the alternatives included:
    - Parking lot configuration
    - “Speed zone” transition area layout

- Special features for wildlife viewing at the trailhead area (overlooks, boardwalks)
- c) Concept review and discussion
- Restroom
    - Brandon said that USFWS would prefer that the restroom have running water and sanitary sewer connections considering the urban location and a perceived public dissatisfaction with vault-type facilities typical in more primitive locations. Further investigation is needed to determine whether the restroom will have full or limited utilities.
    - **SRF will inquire with MCES about the potential to connect to the sanitary main and also outline considerations about locating a vault-type system within the floodplain.**
    - **Brandon will look into the design of the existing restroom facility at Big Stone Refuge which is also susceptible to flooding.**
    - If connection to the MCES main is not possible, a pumping system would be required to connect to the City's sanitary system up Old Cedar Ave. **The City will provide additional detail about the extents of the existing sanitary sewer on Old Cedar Lake Rd.**
  - USFWS now sees the potential to bring larger school groups to the site (2 buses/approx. 40 children) and is interested in a picnic shelter for groups of that size. **SRF will need to verify that bus turning movements and parking space can be accommodated within the parking lot.**
  - Need to consider emergency vehicle access (fire, ambulance)
  - Karl is interested to see a small amphitheater-like gathering space included.
  - Julie liked the curvature introduced into the trail alignment in the transition area to slow bikers down. Brandon concurred based on personal experience at another location that this would be effective.
  - Brandon also suggested that a landscaped median could be introduced separating inbound and outbound bike traffic approaching bridge.
  - Randy suggested that a kiosk feature in the center of the transition area would be a visual cue to slow down and change traffic behavior.
  - Several attendees saw benefit in having overlook or boardwalk features within easy access of the parking lot for people of different mobility.
  - To provide context for whether an overlook/boardwalk makes sense at the trailhead area, Tim described the USFWS plans to rebuild the existing boardwalk in the same location (about ¼ mile south) which will now include side overlook areas to facilitate small group gathering and wildlife observation. He wondered whether a second facility would limit the

amount of people who would venture further along the trail to the re-built boardwalk. Brandon expressed some concern with an additional structure to maintain.

- Gerry highlighted the USFWS desire to maintain an open character with good visibility for safety and attractiveness for visitors. He commented that the plans appeared dense. Julie said that the canopy trees should not impact visibility. She recommended avoiding mid-height shrubs that would create screening. Michael confirmed that the intent was to have a low ground-cover coupled with canopy trees, thereby keeping eye-level visibility open.
- Several attendees expressed a similar preference for low-height native grasses and forbs in most areas. Karl said that regular mowing by the City in some areas where higher use is envisioned (amphitheater, picnic, etc.) could be assumed. Gerry stated that refuge trails in the immediate area will have edges mowed generously (5'+)
- City staff would like to seek input from SRF's historical sub-consultant, Hess-Roise, on potential interpretive opportunities. **SRF will request that Charlene develop a preliminary list of historical interpretive themes.**

d) Security cameras

- USFWS has a video surveillance system throughout the refuge.
- Julie indicated that there may be a desire to add security cameras to the bridge and parking lot project.

4) Next Steps

- **City and USFWS staff will provide more comprehensive written comments to Julie L. by June 9<sup>th</sup>.**
- City Council study meeting is scheduled for June 23<sup>rd</sup>. City staff advised SRF to maintain three alternative plans and suggest specific input that is needed. **SRF will update concept plans per written comments and provide electronic pdf graphics by June 19<sup>th</sup> for inclusion in the Council's packet.**

**Meeting Record Revisions:**

The preceding represents SRF Consulting Group's understanding of the referenced meeting and was prepared on June 2, 2014. If you identify discrepancies or items that require clarification, please contact Matt Cramer at SRF via email at [mcramer@srfconsulting.com](mailto:mcramer@srfconsulting.com) or via telephone at 763-249-6788.