



## **Hidden Falls North Gate | Community Advisory Committee Meeting # 3**

### **Meeting Notes**

**Meeting Date:** March 11, 2025

**Meeting Time:** 7:00 – 8:00pm

**Meeting Location:** Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

### **Committee Members Present**

Michael Boull, Meg Duhr, Tom Lauria, Jen Myers, Tara Perron, Katie Tuma

### **Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Staff**

Anne Gardner (Project Manager), Niko Hadera (Landscape Designer), Katie Hamerlinck (Landscape Architect)

*The notes below capture the questions raised and discussion throughout the presentation. A copy of the presentation shared at this meeting as well as the meeting recording can be found on the project website:*

<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/design-construction/current-projects/hidden-falls-crosby-farm>

### **Site Entrance Analysis**

- With the proposed construction work, is the City required to make a new path along the entrance drive fully ADA accessible?
  - The City is working through a similar challenge at the River Learning Center. In this situation, ADA accessibility is not necessarily required, although it is a priority to make site features as accessible as possible. The City is balancing budget, site constraints, and community and stakeholder input to determine the best approach.
  - The City is also looking at creating an accessible trail at the Hidden Falls outlet. This is a similar situation with a very steep slope and sensitive bluff area – significant engineering required.
- Improving the pavement quality would help make the trail more accessible. Currently, if pushing a stroller or other wheeled device, users must begin their walk on the road (feels unsafe).

### **Site Management**

- Curious if project staff have reached out to other native groups in the Twin Cities (beyond THPOs) who are using the site frequently.
  - Yes, we have discussed this with the Nibi ceremony users since the Master Plan/Long range plan work. This communication is in progress. The feedback of the indigenous groups who use the space at Hidden Falls will be valuable as we begin more in-depth planning and design for a Cultural Event space.



### **Site Plan**

- What is the stormwater management area?
  - With a project this size that includes impervious area, the project is required to include strategies to manage and treat stormwater. These areas could be infiltration basins or potentially floodplain forests. The intent is to work with the existing site conditions to limit maintenance and preserve the Park character.
- Emphasis on support for improved and enhanced lighting in the Park, particularly along roadways and in common areas for safety.
- Support for opening up sight lines at the entrance.
- Request to not use safety features with flashing lights at the entry – would be disruptive to neighbors.
- The path near the boat launch that connects to the south path is hidden – not easily visible. With path improvements, making this connection more obvious would be a benefit to Park users.

### **Nature Inspired Play Zone**

- Support for a designated play area. Kids now are building tree forts out of logs and found sticks in the Park. This means that there is not a debris layer on the ground for insects and small animals. Having a designated play area would support conservation goals.
- Images are headed in the right direction – excited to not see plastic!
- Desire for swings in the Park, even if they are not fully aligned with 'nature play'.
- (Staff comment) We are looking at the feasibility of installing more wood and natural material play areas. There are still concerns about maintenance and long-term durability.

### **General Discussion**

- Can you describe the porta potty enclosure mentioned earlier in the presentation and where it would be?
  - A porta potty or temporary restroom would be in the southern area of the Park, near the southern parking lot and boat launch. This item was something that the City heard feedback about throughout the Long-Range Plan process.
- How wide will the paved trails be? Will they be multi-use trails?
  - These trails will be 6-8' wide. They are not intended to be used by bikes.
- In the decision to fully demolish/reconstruct the picnic shelter, were there feasibility studies done looking into rehabilitating the existing structure?
  - No formal feasibility study was done. Project staff reviewed the option of rehabilitating the existing building with Operations and Maintenance staff. Their feedback is that elements of the building are extremely difficult to maintain in the existing state – the electrical service is beyond repair. The team and eventual architectural consultant will explore elements that can be salvaged from the existing building and reused in the new building. We have heard from this group and other community members that the design character of the existing building is well loved – the low profile and shallow roof lines, how it is nestled into the surrounding context, and the natural materials. These notes were included in the architectural RFP and will continue to be communicated through design.



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- For all – interesting exhibit at the Marine Art Museum – ‘Great Art Inspired by Water’. Great information about the River and MN natural environment.
  - Will the future restroom building be open year-round? Or at least for more time than some other Park restroom buildings? It seems that most facilities are only open June – September and we are experiencing longer periods of warm weather – more need for restrooms.
    - At this point, we are suggesting that the building will be operated seasonally. This is a balance of Operations, cost, regulatory restrictions (Sustainable Building Policy). The additional infrastructure needed to operate a restroom year-round requires more infrastructure; adds more cost.
    - City team to look into restrooms in the Park system that are open year-round or have extended season.
    - At the very least, it would be nice to have porta potties year-round.
  - Reminder for design team to engage with the Great River Passage Plan!

**Meeting End:** 8:00pm

Notes:

- Meeting minutes are intended to capture overall participation and summarize comments from City Staff and Advisory Member participants.
- Visit (<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/design-construction/current-projects/hidden-falls-crosby-farm>) for more information and presentation graphics

*This document shall serve as the official record of the community meeting and information shared. If there are additions or modifications that are required, please contact Katie Hamerlinck via email at [katie.hamerlinck@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:katie.hamerlinck@ci.stpaul.mn.us).*

# Hidden Falls North Entrance CAC #3 Feedback Summary

## Priority ranking from CAC:

1. Trail resurfacing
2. Pedestrian bridge repair over Hidden Falls
3. Signage, lighting, & wayfinding
4. Play zone (nature inspired play area)
5. Porta potty enclosure near boat launch
6. Picnic areas in open lawn space
7. Other\*
8. Kayak storage

## Other:

“Incorporate Native voices to help design the ceremony space by the water.”

“Consider adding native perspectives having to do with foraging.”

“Incorporate assessing the falls and streams’ current conditions.”

## Word frequency in comments:



\* Feedback was received via online form from CAC 3 community meeting on March 11, 2025. Responses from 8 participants are summarized in this document.