

## **Sochacki JPA Board Meeting**

June 14, 2021; 4 PM

Zoom meeting

### **AGENDA**

- 2021-01. Roll Call
  - 2021-02. Welcome to new Board member and staff
  - 2021-03. Public Comments received
  - 2021-04. Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 21, 2020 JPA Board Meeting
  - 2021-05. Water Resources Study Update
  - 2021-06. Programming Update
  - 2021-07. Capital Improvement Program
  - 2021-08. JPA member and staff updates
  - 2021-09. Next Meeting
- Adjournment

**SOCHACKI JPA BOARD INFORMATION ITEM**

Meeting Date: 06/14/2021

Item Number: **2021-01**

**Agenda Item: Roll Call**

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N/A

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Roll Call

**Board Members:**

Pat Backen, City Council Member, Robbinsdale; JPA Board Chair  
Bill Blonigan, Mayor, City of Robbinsdale  
Larry Fonnest, City Council Member, Golden Valley  
Dan Freeman, District 3 Commissioner, Three Rivers  
John Gunyou, Chair, Three Rivers Board  
Shep Harris – Mayor, Golden Valley (unable to attend)

**Operations Committee members:**

Boe Carlson, Three Rivers  
Timothy Cruikshank, Golden Valley  
Marcia Glick, Robbinsdale

**Staff Members:**

Rick Birno, Golden Valley  
Patty Maher, Three Rivers  
Jami Markle, Three Rivers  
Ryan Parks, Robbinsdale  
Brian Vlach, Three Rivers  
Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers

**SOCHACKI JPA BOARD INFORMATION ITEM**

Meeting Date: 06/14/2021

Item Number: **2021-02**

**Agenda Item: Welcome to New Board Member and Staff**

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Information and Discussion

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Bill Blonigan, Mayor of Robbinsdale

Jami Markle, Director Natural Resources at Three Rivers

**SOCHACKI JPA BOARD INFORMATION ITEM**

Meeting Date: 06/14/2021

Item Number: **2021-03**

**Agenda Item: Public Comments received**

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Information and Discussion

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The JPA Board meeting packets and upcoming meeting notices are now posted on Three River's Sochacki website: [Sochacki Park | Three Rivers Park District \(threeriversparks.org\)](http://threeriversparks.org).

The June 2021 meeting will be held via zoom. The public will have the opportunity to observe the Zoom meeting in real time, but will not be able to actively participate in the meeting. The public has the opportunity to provide written comments via email to be submitted prior to noon on the day of the meeting. If comments are received, staff will read those comments at the meeting.

**REQUEST FOR SOCHACKI JPA BOARD ACTION**

Meeting Date: 06/14/2021

Item Number: **2021-04**

**Agenda Item: Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 21, 2020 JPA Board Meeting**

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Operation Committee's Recommendation:

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 21, 2020, SOCHACKI JOINT POWERS BOARD MEETING.

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Minutes Attached.

**DRAFT Minutes**  
**Sochacki Park JPA Governance Policy Board Meeting**  
**September 21, 2020, 4:00 p.m.**  
**Meeting via Zoom**

Roll Call

Board Members:

Pat Backen, City Council Member, Robbinsdale  
Larry Fonnest, City Council Member, Golden Valley, JPA Chair  
Dan Freeman, District 3 Commissioner, Three Rivers  
John Gunyou, Chair, Three Rivers Board  
Shep Harris – Mayor, Golden Valley (unable to attend)  
Regan Murphy – Mayor, Robbinsdale

Operations Committee present:

Boe Carlson, Three Rivers  
Timothy Cruikshank, Golden Valley  
Marcia Glick, Robbinsdale

Others present:

Rick Birno, Golden Valley (Unable to attend)  
Patty Maher, Three Rivers  
Ryan Parks, Robbinsdale  
Jonathan Vlaming, Three Rivers  
Danny McCullough, Three Rivers  
Barb Jordan, resident (neighborhood representative for the Water Quality Study)  
Mac Murphy, resident

1. **Item 2020-01: Appointment of a new Chair of the JPA Board**

The Board approved the following Motion:  
MOTION TO APPROVE PAT BACKEN AS THE CHAIR OF THE SOCHACKI JOINT POWERS BOARD FOR A TWO—YEAR TERM.

2. **Item 2020-02: Approval of meeting minutes from September 23, 2019 JPA Board Meeting**

The Board approved the following Motion:  
MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 23, 2019, SOCHACKI JOINT POWERS BOARD MEETING.

3. **Item 2020-03: Water Quality Update**

Staff provided an update on the water quality study currently underway.

4. **Item 2020-04 2021-2025 Capital Improvement Program**

5. The Board approved the following Motion:  
MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2021-2025 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR SOCHACKI PARK.

Staff provided the board with an overview of the proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for 2021-2025, with project investments totaling \$1.87 million. Highlights include: one-room

classroom with adjacent restrooms and potable water; water quality improvements to be determined by the water quality study; pond water docks/boardwalks/learning stations; interactive art/play nodes and a feasibility study of a trail underpass of Golden Valley Road to connect the park to Theodore Wirth Park and Parkway.

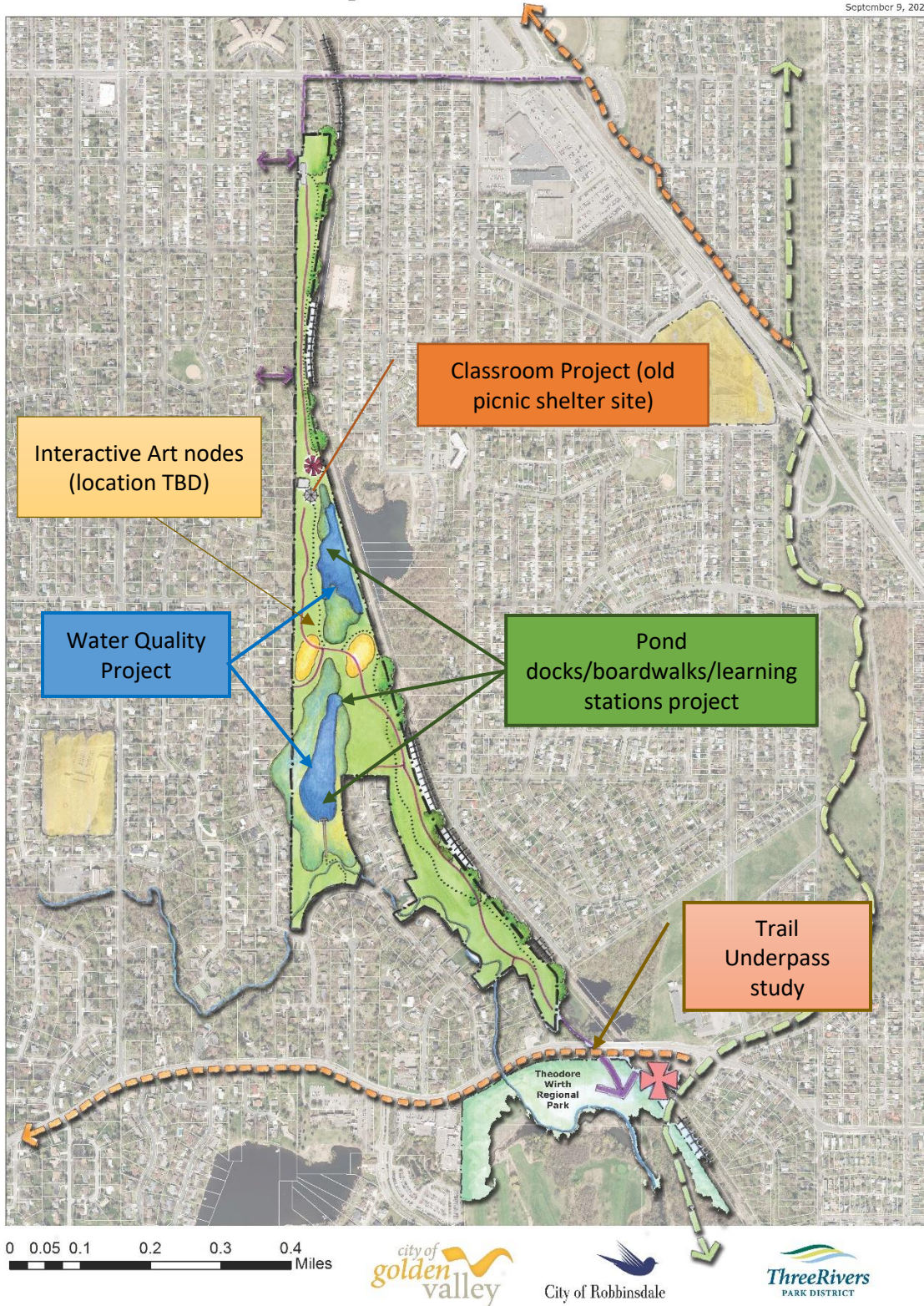
The CIP was rebuilt based on the assumption that the Bottineau LRT project would not be using Sochacki for construction staging within this time period. The CIP leaves open the ability for the park to be used for staging if the adjacent route is chosen.

**Proposed Capital Projects: 2021 - 2025**

<b>Capital Projects</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<i>Water Quality Project</i>	\$50,000	\$250,000	\$250,000		
<i>One-room classroom, with adjacent restrooms and potable water</i>		\$700,000			
<i>Pond water docks/boardwalks/learning stations</i>				\$500,000	
<i>Interactive art/play nodes (1 or 2 per year, on a five year rotation)</i>				\$50,000	\$50,000
<i>Feasibility study: Trail underpass/connection at Golden Valley Road</i>					\$50,000

# Sochacki Park Improvements

September 9, 2020





**6. Item 2020-05: Update on programming in the time of Covid-19**

Staff provided the Board with an update on programming activity in the park. Prior to the pandemic, programming had been scheduled to have a 50 percent increase over 2019. The pandemic resulted in the cancellation of all spring programs, and a restricted outdoor programming schedule of smaller groups with social distancing during the summer. To help make up for the impacts on programming, staff will add education signage in the park and “pop-up” programs in the park as weather permits.

**7. Item 2020-06: Addition of JPA Information on the Three Rivers Sochacki Park webpage**

Three Rivers maintains a webpage for Sochacki Park similar to the pages it provides for its other parks.

The Operations Committee proposed to add the following items to that webpage:

- Notices of upcoming meetings
- Approved minutes from past meetings
- Contact information (JPA members, primary park contact)
- The JPA Agreement

The webpage would be the hub in which Sochacki information can be shared with the public. Partners can link directly to this page on their own sites. No motion was needed, but the Board expressed support for this initiative.

**8. Item 2020-07: JPA Member and Staff Updates**

Comments centered around Sochacki as an excellent example of how Three Rivers can partner with local communities to better serve the residents of those communities in areas where there has historically been no regional park system presence.

**9. Item 2020-08: Next Meeting: Information and Discussion**

JPA members agreed to meet on Monday June 14, 2021 via Zoom.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:01 PM.

**SOCHACKI JPA BOARD INFORMATION ITEM**

Meeting Date: 06/14/2021

Item Number: **2021-05**

**Agenda Item: Water Quality Study Update**

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Operation Committee's Recommendation:

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

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*Jami Markle, Director of Natural Resources at Three Rivers, and Brian Vlach, Senior Manager of Water Resources at Three Rivers will provide a brief update on the Water Quality Project.*

A dedicated webpage for this project which contains in-depth information is available to the Board and to the Public:

[Water Quality Improvement Projects | Three Rivers Park District \(threeriversparks.org\)](https://www.threeriversparks.org/water-quality-improvement-projects)

The Spring 2021 Update is shown below:

# Sochacki Park

## Sub-Watershed Study Spring 2021 Update

Three Rivers Park District, in coordination with Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, and the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission, is assessing the sub-watershed in Sochacki Park to identify potential water quality improvements to its wetlands. Common to wetlands in urban areas, the wetlands (ponds) have high amounts of nutrients that contribute to water quality problems, prompting concern from residents and park visitors. The purpose of the study is to better understand how and why the wetlands have reached their present condition, and what steps can be taken to improve the wetlands' water quality. The wetlands drain into Bassett Creek, so decisions about the wetlands affect the health of the creek and ultimately the Mississippi River.

The assessment is the first step toward improving the ecological health, aesthetics, and condition of the wetlands and providing additional outdoor recreation and education opportunities.

The assessment began in spring of 2020 and will continue through 2021.



**Staff surveying water quality at South Rice Pond in September 2020.**

### 2020 Recap

Collecting water quality and quantity data is essential in assessing wetland condition in Sochacki Park.

- Flow meters and automated equipment were used to collect watershed water quality data flowing into each of the ponds after a rain event.
- Each individual pond was monitored monthly for water quality.
- Vegetation surveys were conducted in the spring and fall in each pond.
- Sediment cores from each pond have been collected for nutrient analysis.

Preliminary data indicate that water in each of the ponds is high in nutrients and low in dissolved oxygen.

Staff from Three Rivers Park District and Barr Engineering will use the data collected to develop a sub-watershed model that simulates the flow of water and nutrients into the ponds.

The model will be used to:

- Identify those areas in the watershed that are major sources of nutrients that flow to the ponds.
- Determine the total amount of nutrients that end up in each of the ponds.
- Determine how the nutrients impact pond water quality.
- Develop recommended best management practices to be implemented for pond water quality improvement.



**Sediment cores were collected from the ponds in January 2021. The cores will be used to determine the levels of phosphorus in the sediment at the bottoms of the ponds.**

### **What's ahead in 2021**

Barr Engineering will develop the sub-watershed model with data collected by Three Rivers Park District in 2020 and 2021. Once the model is complete, it will be used to identify significant sources of nutrients that flow to the ponds, and develop guidelines for nutrient levels that support a healthy wetland ecosystem.

Following the assessment, a report will detail the findings and recommend potential options and costs to improve water quality and the ecological health of the wetlands. Based on this report, staff will determine best management practices to implement to meet the long-term goals of the plan.

## **Project Timeline**

### **Summer 2021**

Data collection and monitoring by Three Rivers Park District and Barr Engineering staff will continue.

This includes:

- Water quality monitoring
- Vegetation surveys
- Sediment analysis
- Watershed stormwater monitoring

**SOCHACKI JPA BOARD INFORMATION ITEM**

Meeting Date: 06/14/2021

Item Number: **2021-06**

**Agenda Item: Programming Update**

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Operation Committee's Recommendation:

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

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*Patty Maher, Three Rivers' Outdoor Education Supervisor, will provide on update on programming.*

Three Rivers Park District continues to offer educational programming at Sochacki Park focused on nature and outdoor recreation. In the last year, Three Rivers staff have offered a variety of programs and the interest from the public has increased. When staff were not able to deliver summer day camps (Three Rivers Explorer Camps) in the summer of 2020 (due to the covid19 pandemic), they pivoted to provide pop-up and family programming in the park. In 2020, Three Rivers education staff offered 31 programs in the park and had over 220 people participate. Naturalist staff also added temporary natural history interpretive signage in the park for the many people that were enjoying the trails. The Pop-up Palooza event in October had over 100 people participate in slacklining, activities, and more.

In the first half of 2021, there was 12 programs offered and over 65 people participated. The most popular programs this year, so far, were a Family Snowshoeing program where the group enjoyed a beautiful winter day in the woods and a Pond Study program where families learned about animals the live in and around the pond. Plans are already underway for programming at Sochacki Park in the fall. The education team connects on a regular basis with city staff to coordinate and deliver excellent customer service.

**SOCHACKI JPA BOARD INFORMATION ITEM**

Meeting Date: 06/14/2021

Item Number: **2021-07**

**Agenda Item: Capital Improvement Program**

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Operation Committee’s Recommendation:

MOTION TO DIRECT STAFF TO SEEK OUTSIDE FUNDING FOR LRT-RELATED IMPROVEMENTS.

MOTION TO INCLUDE SOCHACKI PARK IN THE THREE RIVERS FIRST-TIER MASTER PLANNING INITIATIVE.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2022-2026 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR SOCHACKI PARK.

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There are three proposed Motions related to the 2022-2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

**LRT-Related Improvements:**

The Bottineau LRT project sought permission from the JPA in 2017 to use the park for construction staging, and the JPA provided conditional support for use of the park for construction staging in exchange for several desired improvements.

The final route of the LRT may not be known for several years, but the needs of the public should not be forced to wait for those decisions to be made. All of Sochacki’s proposed improvements related to the LRT benefit the public, and the majority of the improvements directly benefit the transportation network. Regardless of the final LRT location, these improvements have regional value. Transportation investment should reflect a holistic approach that includes benefits to all types of transit, and to the environment in which transit occurs. Sochacki improvement plans have been delayed due to the LRT project. Sochacki deserves to be recognized as a regional resource and as an amenity of the regional transit network, and funded appropriately.

Staff proposes the following 10 LRT-related projects be included in year 2026 of the Draft CIP to act as a placeholder for commitments from the Bottineau LRT project. The first motion related to the CIP would then instruct staff to pursue outside funding to realize these projects, regardless of the final location of the LRT route.



The projects are:

ID	Proposed 2026 CIP Projects Related to the Bottineau LRT Project	Original Responsibility	Cost	Notes:
1	Restoration of the existing paved interior road to provide for safe two way traffic.	BLRT	TBD	Needed, done in conjunction with the parking lot reconfigurations and northern trail segment.
2	Replacement of the northern parking lot.	BLRT	TBD	Needed.
3	Reconstruction and expansion of the interior paved parking lot to include room for a school bus turnaround.	BLRT	TBD	Needed.
4	Redevelopment of a safe 10-foot wide paved trail through the length of the park, running from the northern entrance to the current trail terminus by Bonnie Lane; with restoration along the trail edge as needed.	BLRT	TBD	Needed for some trail segments: Central parking lot north, and portions within Golden Valley.
5	Construction of an off-road trail connection from the existing terminus of the Sochacki Park trail at Bonnie Lane, crossing underneath the reconstructed Golden Valley Road Bridge and connecting to the existing trail in Theodore Wirth Regional Park	BLRT	TBD	Transportation safety need. This may not be feasible without reconstruction of the Golden Valley Road Bridge. An alternative is to develop park access via a trail on the north side of Golden Valley Road from Bonnie Lane to Wirth Parkway.
6	Regional trail construction from Bonnie Lane east to Wirth Parkway on the south side of Golden Valley Road as originally planned in the BLRT design.	BLRT	TBD	Transportation safety need.
7	Reconfiguration of the Golden Valley Road/Wirth Parkway intersection to remove free rights and improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.	BLRT	TBD	Transportation safety need.
8	Trail connection from northern end of Sochacki on 36th Ave N east to Crystal Lake Regional Trail.	TBD	TBD	Needed. Not in original BLRT Sochacki agreement.
9	Revegetation and screening	BLRT	TBD	This was originally intended to mitigate the impacts of using the park for staging, and to mitigate the impacts of the LRT on the park experience. The alternative would be to help revegetate the park in general.
10	Central location Dog Park prep: BPA was going to clear the area, provide infill, mitigate wetland issues, provide 2 feet of clean fill, and revegetate	BLRT	TBD	This site may no longer be feasible without major vegetation loss, wetland infill and soil restoration. As an alternative, staff will examine the potential for creation of a second dog park in a southern or south/central location.
N/A	In the southern staging area, N. Rice Lake water edge restoration work and vegetation plantings to provide learning opportunities for park users (design and species TBD).	BLRT	TBD	Covered in current CIP
N/A	Providing practicable utility services to a site adjacent to the interior parking lot for future development of a bathroom/storm shelter, and drinking water fountain.	BLRT	TBD	Covered in current CIP
N/A	Ground preparation for a future education shelter sized for 50 students in a location TBD	BLRT	TBD	Covered in current CIP

### **First-Tier Master Plan**

Three Rivers Board of Commissioners recently approved its 2040 System Plan. That plan identified several goals and strategies related to better serving the residents of Hennepin County's fully-developed cities, or "first-tier", that surround Minneapolis. Due to the historical development of these cities prior to the full establishment of the regional parks system, Three Rivers has a very limited physical presence in the first-tier communities.

The System Plan also identifies the need to more fully engage the BIPOC communities, low income households and people aged 65 and older to better meet their needs and desires within the context of a natural-resources based regional parks system.

To help do this, Three Rivers will be starting its First-Tier Master Plan later in 2021. The process will involve all of the First-Tier cities within Hennepin County. The plan will look at both physical and programming needs and opportunities. The plan will be done in full partnership with the local communities.

Sochacki is the pioneer of the First-Tier initiative, and was instrumental in helping Three Rivers and the Metropolitan Council visualize and support the idea of bringing regional parks to where people live. The First-Tier Master Plan is intended to include Sochacki. The planning process will likely run through 2022, and could result in an updated list of capital improvements and programs in Sochacki as identified by our BIPOC, low income and elder communities.

Inclusion of Sochacki in the master plan will result in identification of Sochacki as a Regional Bridging Facility – a type of regional park unit that is intended to help introduce people to the wonders of nature based recreation. That designation allows for additional funding streams to be accessed through the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund as well as through State Bonding.

Inclusion of Sochacki in the Master Plan does not limit other First-Tier opportunities to be explored within Golden Valley or Robbinsdale

Staff is requesting formal action by the Sochacki JPA Board to include Sochacki in the First-Tier Master Plan initiative.

### **2022-2026 Capital Improvement Program**

Years 2022-2025 of this CIP are identical to the approved CIP 2022-2025 projects from last year. The highlights include:

#### **Water Quality Implementation:**

The CIP proposes to fund an estimated investment of \$500,000 split between years 2022 and 2023 for implementation of the recommendations from the Water Quality Study. More detailed cost estimates will be known once the study is completed, and the next CIP will be updated to reflect that information. Funding is proposed through a combination of State of Minnesota Legacy Grant(s) (75 % of cost) and a local match of 25 percent by the JPA and WMO, with actual cost share details to be worked out by the JPA once more detailed cost estimates are known.



**Classroom/Restroom/Potable Water:**

The CIP proposes a one-room classroom, with adjacent restrooms and potable water be built at the site of the old picnic shelter southeast of the central parking lot. Design will begin in 2022, and construction will likely occur in 2023. Restrooms will be available to all park visitors through outside doors. Funding is included in Three River’s approved 2021-2025 CIP.

**Pond water docks/boardwalks/learning stations:**

The CIP proposes a to-be-determined assortment of docks and boardwalks on Rice Pond and Grimes Pond. Public input will be sought on design and location. These may replace the existing dock on the south Rice pond, and the dilapidated boardwalk on the north end of that pond, possibly connecting them to create another entry into the park. Learning stations would be used for environmental education classes on aquatic life and the water quality improvements. Funding is included in Three River’s draft 2021-2025 CIP.

**Interactive art/play nodes:**

Starting in 2024, the CIP proposes installation of an interactive art play node along the trail within the park. Each year an additional installation will occur, with a goal of a total of 5 interactive play nodes replaced on a 5-year rotational schedule. The interactive art/play nodes would be curated and interpreted by staff from Silverwood Park. Public input will be sought on design and location.

**Feasibility Study : trail underpass of Golden Valley Road**

The in-park trail in Sochacki currently ends at Bonnie Lane. The original LRT plan called for replacing the Golden Valley Road bridge to accommodate the LRT, and to extend the Sochacki internal trail under the bridge into Wirth Park, ultimately connecting to Wirth Park and the adjacent Wirth-Memorial Parkway Regional Trail. The bridge replacement and associated trail extensions were all part of the original LRT plan.

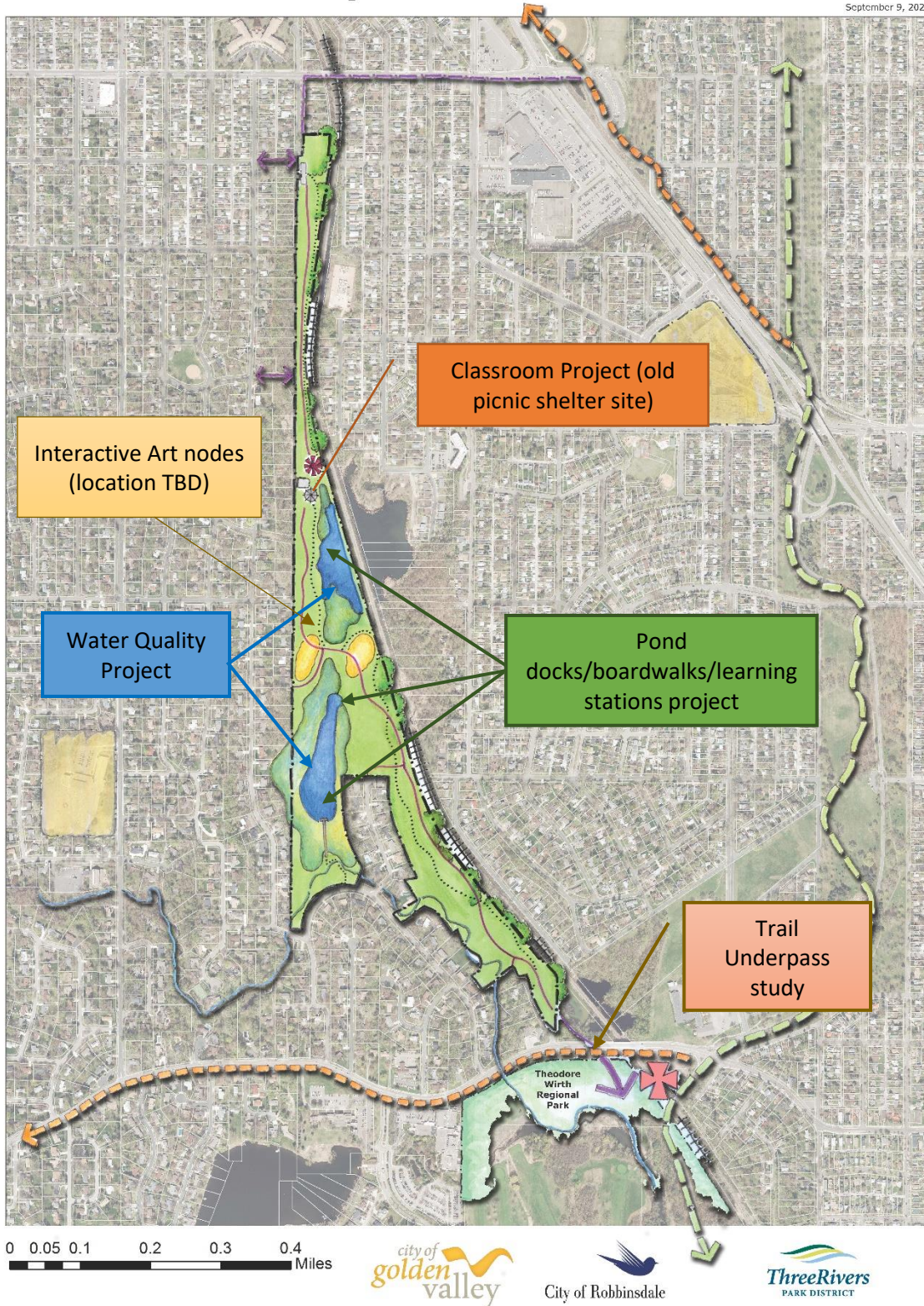
Even without the LRT in the area, It may be possible to complete the trail connection. Clearance under the bridge, Railroad ROW, and how to get from under the bridge to Wirth Parkway without BLRT infrastructure needs to be figured out. Staff will attempt to move this study forward to be completed as soon as time allows so that its findings can be incorporated into the discussions on funding of BLRT-related projects.

**Proposed Capital Projects: 2022 - 2025**

<b>Capital Projects</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<i>Water Quality Project</i>	\$250,000	\$250,000		
<i>One-room classroom, with adjacent restrooms and potable water</i>	\$700,000			
<i>Pond water docks/boardwalks/learning stations</i>			\$500,000	
<i>Interactive art/play nodes (1 or 2 per year, on a five year rotation)</i>			\$50,000	\$50,000
<i>Feasibility study: Trail underpass/connection at Golden Valley Road (to be moved forward if possible)</i>				\$50,000

# Sochacki Park Improvements

September 9, 2020



**Proposed 2026 Capital Projects:**

<b>ID</b>	<b>Proposed 2026 CIP Projects Related to the Bottineau LRT Project</b>	<b>Original Responsibility</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Notes:</b>
1	Restoration of the existing paved interior road to provide for safe two way traffic.	BLRT	TBD	Needed, done in conjunction with the parking lot reconfigurations and northern trail segment.
2	Replacement of the northern parking lot.	BLRT	TBD	Needed.
3	Reconstruction and expansion of the interior paved parking lot to include room for a school bus turnaround.	BLRT	TBD	Needed.
4	Redevelopment of a safe 10-foot wide paved trail through the length of the park, running from the northern entrance to the current trail terminus by Bonnie Lane; with restoration along the trail edge as needed.	BLRT	TBD	Needed for some trail segments: Central parking lot north, and portions within Golden Valley.
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9	Revegetation and screening	BLRT	TBD	This was originally intended to mitigate the impacts of using the park for staging, and to mitigate the impacts of the LRT on the park experience. The alternative would be to help revegetate the park in general.
10	Central location Dog Park prep: BPA was going to clear the area, provide infill, mitigate wetland issues, provide 2 feet of clean fill, and revegetate	BLRT	TBD	This site may no longer be feasible without major vegetation loss, wetland infill and soil restoration. As an alternative, staff will examine the potential for creation of a second dog park in a southern or south/central location.

**SOCHACKI JPA BOARD INFORMATION ITEM**

Meeting Date: 06/14/2021

Item Number: **2021-08**

**Agenda Item: JPA member and staff updates**

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Operation Committee's Recommendation:

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

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This item serves as an opportunity to provide additional information or to discuss other topics not on the formal agenda.

**SOCHACKI JPA BOARD INFORMATION ITEM**

Meeting Date: 06/14/2021

Item Number: **2021-098**

**Agenda Item: Next Meeting**

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Operation Committee's Recommendation:

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

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Identification of a date for the next JPA meeting.