

**Park Board
Agenda Item 7.B
Meeting of February 4, 2026**



Title: Cullen Nature Preserve Master Plan

Strategic Plan Goal: To renew and maintain parks and trails

Related Strategy: Provide guidance that aligns with the goals and recommendations of both the NRMP and POST Plan on balancing the conservation of natural resources with providing high-quality recreational opportunities.

Participate in the park & trail projects process and make recommendations to the city council.

Action Requested: Recommendation

Form of Action: Report

Summary Statement

A final draft Cullen Nature Preserve Master Plan has been developed for review, feedback, and recommendation to the City Council for adoption.

Recommended Action

Review, provide feedback, and recommend City Council adoption of the Cullen Nature Preserve Master Plan.

Background

The Cullen Nature Preserve (also known as the Ann Cullen Smith property) is a 30-acre parcel consisting of restored open prairie, oak savanna, mixed woodlands and wetlands. This property is protected by a conservation easement with the Minnesota Land Trust to preserve its open character and provide for public uses in an ecologically-sensitive manner.

The Minnetonka City Council approved the updated Parks, Open Space and Trail (POST) System Plan in 2022. Through that process, the Cullen Nature Preserve was identified to be master planned and opened to the public as a passive recreational amenity for bird watching and nature walks. Currently closed to the public, the master plan will prioritize improvements to the site designed to highlight restoration successes as well as provide the public with outdoor passive recreational opportunities.

Working with the Friends of the Cullen Nature Preserve and Bird Sanctuary (FCNPBS), city staff have helped coordinate ongoing restoration of the site using grant funds from Hennepin County and the MN Department of Natural Resources. Work includes removal of invasive plants and the ongoing establishment of native plant communities outlined in the Cullen Nature Preserve Habitat Management Plan. In early 2025, staff began developing the Cullen Nature Preserve Master Plan in collaboration with the FCNPBS group. The draft master plan was presented to the Park Board in August 2025. Feedback received helped finalize the master plan which showcases the unique opportunity the city has to open a new public space dedicated to experiencing the outdoors and providing an example of high-quality

restoration for the regional community. The plan includes concepts for a variety of park amenities, including site access with parking, on-site trails and wetland boardwalks, and features such as overlooks, benches, and interpretive signage to educate the public about ongoing restoration and opportunities for volunteering.

The master plan also includes standard details for features such as sustainable trail installation and management guidelines, including ADA accessible trails segments. The standards will be used to develop estimated costs for the implementation and opening of the park in the coming years.

The final master plan is available as an attachment, or for download and review at [Cullen Nature Preserve Master Plan | Minnetonka Matters](#). Upon park board recommendation, staff will be compiling and responding to resident feedback and will present the final master plan to the city council for adoption later this year.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Cullen Nature Preserve Master Plan_Feb 2026
Addendum](#)