

**Park Board
Agenda Item 7.C
Meeting of December 3, 2025**



Title: Opus Area Improvements

Action Requested: Informational

Form of Action: Report

Summary Statement

Staff is providing an update on the Opus Area public space improvements including trail wayfinding, trail lighting, and planning for a new public space east of the light rail station.

Recommended Action

None

Background

Wayfinding: One of the key distinctions of the Opus area is its six-mile system of off-road trails. This robust trail system has branded trail loops associated with the roadway naming system. The wayfinding strategy outlined in the [Opus Public Space Study](#) highlights the necessity for a variety of sign types to facilitate ease of biking and walking through the Opus area including overall area maps, trail loop and directional maps, monument signs, and mile marker/trail identification directional signage. Staff has been working with a sign design consultant to develop an Opus wayfinding final design for each sign type. The signage concepts utilize the latest in durable yet sustainable materials for outdoor signage. The consultant is developing cost estimates and design and install documents for bidding winter 2025/spring 2026. A mock-up (preliminary sample) of the wayfinding intersection trail loop and directional map will be installed this fall (2025) to test material durability and to have an example on-site for review by staff and the public. Funding was included in previous CIPs.

Trail Lighting: The Opus Area Placemaking + Design Implementation report emphasizes the necessity of additional trail lighting to enhance safety and security for residents using the trail networks. This is more important when light rail opens as the trails may be used more often during evening hours. Staff is currently working on an Opus Area Lighting Evaluation. The evaluation includes a lighting analysis with elements such as current cost estimates for lighting units and typical installation detailing. Lighting analysis also includes photometric evaluation to determine the necessary luminaire spacing along the trails. The evaluation recommends placing lights spaced at approximately 250 feet along trails adjacent to on-street facilities and along the overall trail network. Consideration has been made to avoid unnecessary light pollution while balancing light unit durability, ease of maintenance and replacement and high-efficiency lighting standards. The luminaries selected for cost estimate will follow the guidance proposed in the Opus Area Placemaking report. Following up on the Opus Area Lighting Evaluation, staff has scoped lighting design, bidding and installation. The lighting system design work is underway with field assessments and surveying taking place. Initial design work will include phasing recommendations that include a multi-year lighting install process. Bidding will take place in the spring of 2026 and install to begin later next fall (2026).

Public Space Study

The Opus Area Placemaking + Design Implementation report envisioned a central plaza as a community-level open space and public park. The plaza/park is identified to the east of the light rail station (10301 Bren Rd W). This 19.85-acre parcel contains the existing Minneapolis Mart building, its associated parking lots and the northeast portion of the property contains a 2.8 acre pond (the entire pond area to the east is approximately seven acres). The property recently transferred to a local developer (the development company for the Hillcrest site, near 394). The parcel is centrally located and key to the future of the Opus Area as a modern and highly desirable mix of housing and commercial uses all around the vibrancy of the light rail transit connection. In June 2023, the city was awarded \$725,000 from the State General Fund grant program. On Sept. 23, 2024, the city council approved a resolution that authorized the execution of the appropriation. The resolution also allowed the city to enter a grant agreement. The grant agreement for the Minnetonka Opus Public Space Project assists the city in the acquisition of property and predesign/design of a public space which could include a linear plaza, interactive art and play area, a splash pad, a dog park, a great lawn, an amphitheater, shelters, trail connections, a bike share space, bike parking and an overlook adjacent to the Southwest Light Rail Transit Opus station. Master planning and predesign preparation for the public plaza and park is currently being scoped by staff. Staff will select a qualified planning consultant that can assist the city in developing a vision for public space that further evolves the Opus Area Placemaking concept and public engagement considerations. Staff will continue to meet with the landowner to identify an area for city land acquisition while accommodating the potential for future mixed-use site developments that support the city's vision for Opus.

Public space planning will begin in the winter of 2025/2026. Outreach and engagement with the public will take place during the master planning process to ensure that adjacent residents help determine the future of the park. Staff will work closely with the landowner during this design period and seek to complete land acquisition once the public space master plan is complete.

Park Space Planning Timeline

December 2025 – Staff issues Request for Proposals to qualified consultants

January/February 2026 – Agreement with planning consultant and project kick-off

April – June 2026 – Public outreach and engagement

September 2026 – Draft public space master plan for council and public comment

November/December 2026 – Final public space master plan