

TO: MAYOR LANDRY AND NOVI CITY COUNCIL
FROM: COUNCILMEMBER ANDREW MUTCH
SUBJECT: MAYOR AND COUNCIL ISSUES – APPLICATION TO MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT GRANT TO FUND PARKS OR TRAIL FACILITIES
DATE: JANUARY 31, 2008
CC: CLAY PEARSON, PAM ANTIL, MARYANNE CORNELIUS

Summary: A request to direct the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Commission to review and recommend a park or trail project eligible to be funded through an application to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. This review should be completed in time to allow an application to be submitted by April 1, 2008. This request is consistent with goals and strategies adopted by the City Council and the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Commission.

Background: Each year, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) awards grants to eligible recreational development projects that meet the priorities of the Trust Fund. In 2007, the Trust Fund awarded over \$9 million dollars for 34 development projects that provided natural resource-based outdoor recreational opportunities. MNRTF grants are the only significant source of funds for parks and recreation development projects provided directly by the State of Michigan.

MNRTF development grants must meet the following criteria:

- Local match of at least 25% of the total project cost. This match can be met with city or private funds as well as certain city employee activities and donated goods, labor, materials and services or a combination of all of the above.
- Minimum development grant request is \$15,000. The maximum development grant request is \$500,000.
- A public hearing completed before the application deadline and in advance of approval of a resolution by City Council.

MNRTF priorities in 2008 include:

- Acquisition of land or development of trailways that provide linkages to recreation opportunities.
- Acquisition of land or development of facilities in urban areas, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau based on the 2000 census. [Some portions of Novi fall outside the urban areas boundary.]
- Development of projects that provide universally accessible outdoor recreation opportunities. Highest priority will be given to projects that provide natural resource-based recreation opportunities.
- Highest priority will be given to applications for projects for which no fee will be charged to enter the site or for which an effective fee waiver policy is in place.

Potential Projects: Projects that provide access to specific natural resources or trailway projects are the most likely to score the highest number of points. While other types of projects may be eligible, they are less likely to be competitive than natural resource and trailways projects. None of the park development projects listed in the city's current Capital Improvement Program appear to provide access to a specific natural resource. The recently revised Pathway and Sidewalk Prioritization Analysis includes several trail projects that could be eligible for funding through a MNRTF grant.

The highest ranked trail project is a pathway along the ITC corridor from Community Sports Park to Wildlife Woods Park. One possible grant proposal could include the construction of a paved trail (and boardwalk when necessary) in the ITC corridor from Wildlife Woods Park on the north to 10 Mile Road on the south and then west to the path in front of Fire Station #4. This path could include connections to the planned paths on the Providence Park property as well as an extension of bikepath/sidewalk east along the north side of 10 Mile Road to the existing sidewalk in front of Mockingbird Estates. This pathway could include amenities typically associated with recreational trails including trailheads, wildlife viewing points and safe road crossings. Future trail segments could extend the trail south to Community Sport Park and Maybury State Park. A graphic illustrating the initial segment is attached.

Timeline: A development grant application must be submitted to the Department of Natural Resources by April 1, 2008. Unlike acquisition applications, there is no secondary deadline for application in August. This preliminary application will be reviewed and scored by DNR staff. The city will then have an opportunity to address any concerns or deficiencies raised by the DNR staff through a supplemental response that is due by October 1, 2008. The Trust Fund board will select the projects to be funded at its December 2008 meeting.

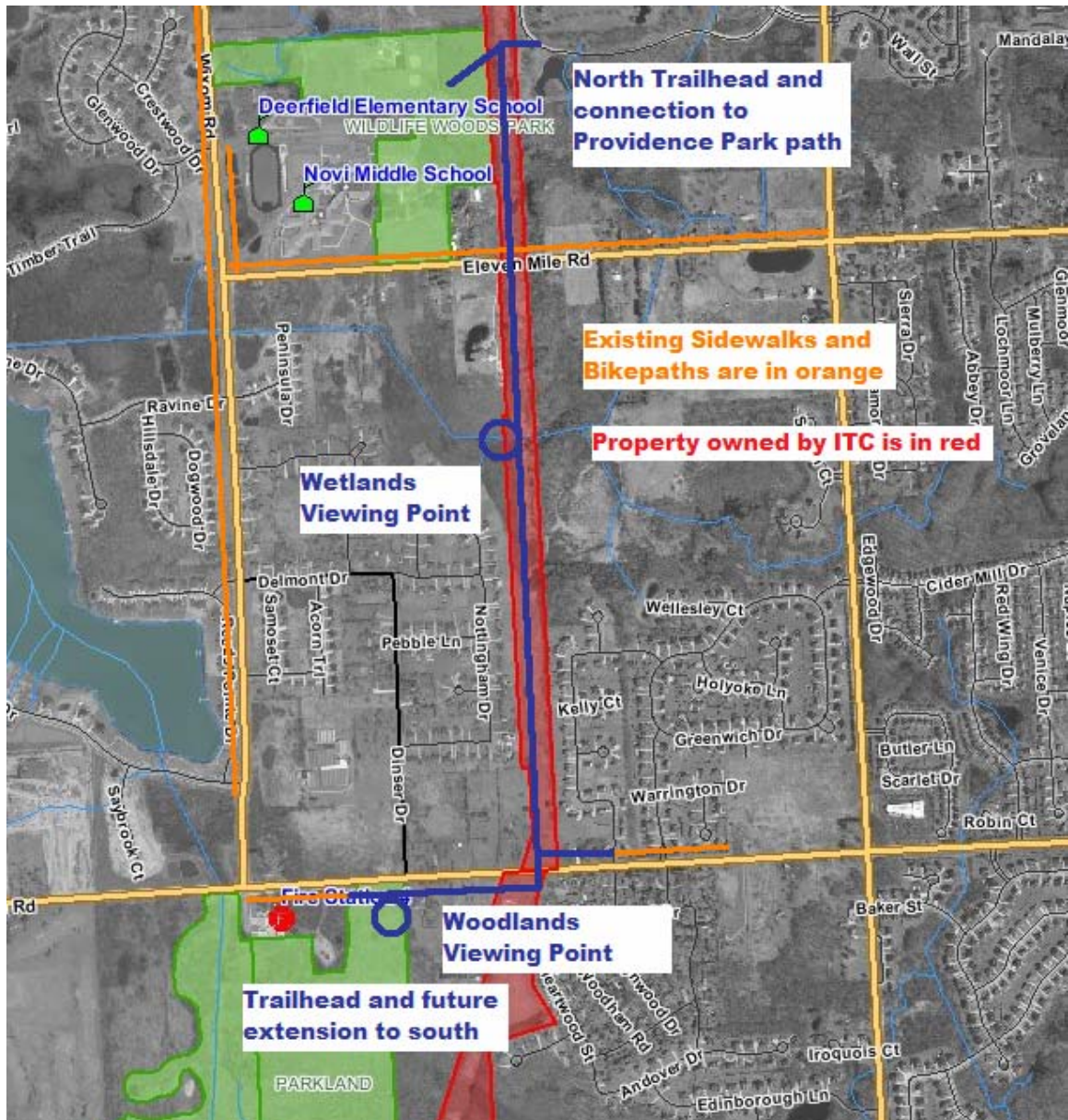
Budget Impact: The Trust Fund board does not select the projects to be funded until December 2008. The earliest the city could expect to see any funds available for reimbursement is Spring 2009. This means that this application will not have any impact on the current fiscal year budget which ends in June 2008. If the city uses city funds for the local match, those should be budgeted in the 2008 – 2009 budget. However, depending upon when the dollars are appropriated by the State, it may be the 2009 – 2010 budget before actual funds are expended by the city. The same applies to funds from outside resources like the Parks Foundation. The earliest funds would be expected to be needed is some time in 2009.

Requested Action: Direct the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Commission, in consultation with the Parks, Recreation and Forestry department, to review and recommend to the City Council a development project that is eligible for funding through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust. The recommendation should be completed in a timely manner to allow enough time for the completion of the initial application and appropriate public hearings to be held by the Commission and Council before April 1, 2008.

Council Goal/Strategy: Enhance park, recreational and cultural services - Develop creative means of funding

PRF Community Recreation Plan Action Strategy: Enhance revenue opportunities – grants, park foundation, park millage rate, bonds, sponsorship, fees and charges.

Concept Plan for ITC Trail Segment



Access to Natural Resources could be provided where the path crosses the wetlands south of Eleven Mile Road. Also, the pathway would allow access to the parkland south of Ten Mile Road where significant natural resources including woodlands, wetlands and high quality wildlife habitat exist. The viewing points are shown as examples of how access could be provided.