



**Roll Call Number**

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**Agenda Item Number**  
41(D)

**Date** May 23, 2022

**APPROVING NAMING AND DEDICATION OF GRAY’S LAKE WETLANDS PROJECT AREA AS PARKLAND**

**WHEREAS**, on January 24, 2022, by Roll Call No. 22-0095, the City Council received and filed a communication from the City Parks and Recreation Board advising that the Board voted unanimously to APPROVE the SW Infrastructure and Planning Study and recommendation of dedication of City-owned property as the Gray’s Lake Wetlands Project Area, south of Gray’s Lake and depicted in the attached exhibit, as parkland; and

**WHEREAS**, on May 9, 2022, by Roll Call No. 22-0687, the City Council received and filed a communication from the City Plan and Zoning Commission advising that at a hearing held on April 21, 2022, the Commission voted 12-0 to APPROVE the vacation of City-owned right-of-way located south of Gray’s Lake within the Wetlands Project Area, and by Roll Call No. 22-0690 resolved to set a public hearing on said vacation for May 23, 2022 at 5:00 pm in the City Council Chambers; and

**WHEREAS**, on May 23, 2022, by Roll Call No. \_\_\_\_\_ and Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_, the City Council approved the vacation of said City-owned right-of-way within the Wetlands Project Area; and

**WHEREAS**, said vacated City-owned right-of-way and adjoining City-owned real property, as depicted in the exhibit attached hereto and legally described as follows, is recommended as part of the SW Infrastructure and Planning Study to be dedicated as parkland for the park-related purposes of the Gray’s Lake Wetlands project area:

ALL OF THE VACATED EAST/WEST ALLEY RIGHT OF WAY LYING EAST OF THE WEST LINE OF GRAY PLACE, AN OFFICIAL PLAT, AND LYING WEST OF THE NORTHERLY EXTENSION OF THE EAST LINE OF LOT 1 IN SAID GRAY PLACE, **AND** ALL OF THE VACATED 40.0 FEET WIDE STREET RIGHT OF WAY (DIAGONAL STREET) ADJOINING THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID GRAY PLACE AND LYING EAST OF THE WEST LINE OF SAID GRAY PLACE AND LYING WEST OF THE SOUTHERLY EXTENSION OF THE EAST LINE OF SAID LOT 1, **AND** ALL OF THE VACATED 40.0 FEET WIDE STREET RIGHT OF WAY ADJOINING THE EAST LINE OF SAID GRAY PLACE AND LYING SOUTH OF THE NORTH LINE OF SAID GRAY PLACE AND LYING NORTH OF THE NORTHEASTERLY EXTENSION OF THE SOUTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF DIAGONAL STREET IN SAID GRAY PLACE, ALL NOW INCLUDED IN AND FORMING A PART OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, POLK COUNTY, IOWA,

AND

ALL OF “SOUTH PARCEL 69” AND “SOUTH PARCEL 69a”, SAID PARCELS ARE DESCRIBED AND SHOWN ON PLAT IN DEED RECORDED IN BOOK 15270 PAGES 41-66 AT THE RECORDER’S OFFICE OF POLK COUNTY, IOWA, PART OF SAID PARCEL IS IN THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 9, TOWNSHIP 78 NORTH, RANGE 24 WEST OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> P.M., AND PART OF SAID PARCEL IS IN THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 16, TOWNSHIP 78 NORTH, RANGE 24 WEST OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> P.M., ALL NOW INCLUDED IN AND FORMING A PART OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, POLK COUNTY, IOWA,

AND



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ALL OF "SOUTH PARCEL 70", SAID PARCEL IS DESCRIBED AND SHOWN ON PLATS IN DEED RECORDED IN BOOK 15270 PAGES 41-66 AT THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF POLK COUNTY, IOWA, SAID PARCELS ARE ALL IN THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 16, TOWNSHIP 78 NORTH, RANGE 24 WEST OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> P.M., ALL NOW INCLUDED IN AND FORMING A PART OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, POLK COUNTY, IOWA,

AND

-**EXCEPT** THE WEST 100.0 FEET THEREOF-, ALL OF "PARCEL 73", SAID PARCEL IS DESCRIBED AND SHOWN ON PLAT IN DEED RECORDED IN BOOK 15270 PAGES 41-66 AT THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF POLK COUNTY, IOWA, SAID PARCEL IS ALL IN THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 17, TOWNSHIP 78 NORTH, RANGE 24 WEST OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> P.M., ALL NOW INCLUDED IN AND FORMING A PART OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, POLK COUNTY, IOWA,

AND

ALL OF "PARCEL 71 SOUTH" AND "PARCEL 72", SAID PARCELS ARE DESCRIBED AND SHOWN ON PLATS IN DEED RECORDED IN BOOK 15270 PAGES 41-66 AT THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF POLK COUNTY, IOWA, SAID PARCELS ARE ALL IN THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 16, TOWNSHIP 78 NORTH, RANGE 24 WEST OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> P.M., ALL NOW INCLUDED IN AND FORMING A PART OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, POLK COUNTY, IOWA, -**EXCEPT** AREA "A", AREA "C" AND AREA "D" AND DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

**AREA "A"** - COMMENCING AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID "PARCEL 72"; THENCE NORTH 71° (DEGREES) 30' (MINUTES) 43" (SECONDS) EAST ALONG THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF SAID "PARCEL 72", A DISTANCE OF 704.54 FEET; THENCE NORTH 18°29'17" WEST CONTINUING ALONG SAID SOUTHERLY LINE, 30.85 FEET; THENCE NORTH 57°31'14" EAST CONTINUING ALONG SAID SOUTHERLY LINE, 19.79 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE NORTH 32°28'46" WEST, 40.00 FEET; THENCE NORTH 57°31'14" EAST, 90.50 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 32°28'46" EAST, 40.00 FEET TO THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF SAID "PARCEL 72"; THENCE SOUTH 57°31'14" WEST ALONG SAID SOUTHERLY LINE OF "PARCEL 72" AND ALONG SAID SOUTHERLY LINE OF "PARCEL 71 SOUTH", A DISTANCE OF 90.50 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, **AND**

**AREA "C"** - COMMENCING AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID "PARCEL 72"; THENCE NORTH 71° (DEGREES) 30' (MINUTES) 43" (SECONDS) EAST ALONG THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF SAID "PARCEL 72", A DISTANCE OF 655.32 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE NORTH 32°28'46" WEST, 58.02 FEET; THENCE NORTH 57°31'14" EAST, 75.00 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 32°28'46" EAST, 40.00 FEET TO THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF SAID "PARCEL 72"; THENCE SOUTH 57°31'14" WEST ALONG SAID SOUTHERLY LINE, 19.79 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 18°29'17" EAST CONTINUING ALONG SAID SOUTHERLY LINE, 30.85 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 71°30'43" WEST CONTINUING ALONG SAID SOUTHERLY LINE, 49.21 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, **AND**



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**AREA "D"** - COMMENCING AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID "PARCEL 72"; THENCE NORTH 71° (DEGREES) 30' (MINUTES) 43" (SECONDS) EAST ALONG THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF SAID "PARCEL 72", A DISTANCE OF 704.54 FEET; THENCE NORTH 18°29'17" WEST CONTINUING ALONG SAID SOUTHERLY LINE 30.85 FEET; THENCE NORTH 57°31'14" EAST CONTINUING ALONG SAID SOUTHERLY LINE, 110.31 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE NORTH 32°28'46" WEST 48.29 FEET; THENCE NORTH 57°31'14" EAST, 81.75 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 32°28'46" EAST, 48.29 FEET TO THE SOUTHERLY LINE OF SAID "PARCEL 72"; THENCE SOUTH 57°31'14" WEST ALONG SAID SOUTHERLY LINE OF "PARCEL 72" AND ALONG SAID SOUTHERLY LINE OF "PARCEL 71 SOUTH", A DISTANCE OF 81.75 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING,

AND CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 34.02 ACRES (1,482,068 SQUARE FEET); and

**WHEREAS**, it is in the best interest of the City to dedicate the City-owned real property described above and depicted in the attached exhibit as parkland.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, that the City-owned real property, including the City-owned right-of-way vacated by Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_, all as legally described above and shown in the attached exhibit, be and is hereby dedicated to use as parkland and that such parkland is hereby named and to be known as Gray's Lake Wetlands project area.

(Council Comm. No. 22-232)

MOVED BY \_\_\_\_\_ TO ADOPT.

Approved as to Form:

SECONDED BY \_\_\_\_\_.

/s/Glenna K. Frank  
Glenna K. Frank, Assistant City Attorney

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE				
BOESEN				
GATTO				
SHEUMAKER				
MANDELBAUM				
VOSS				
WESTERGAARD				
TOTAL				
MOTION CARRIED			APPROVED	

**CERTIFICATE**

I, P. Kay Cmelik, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

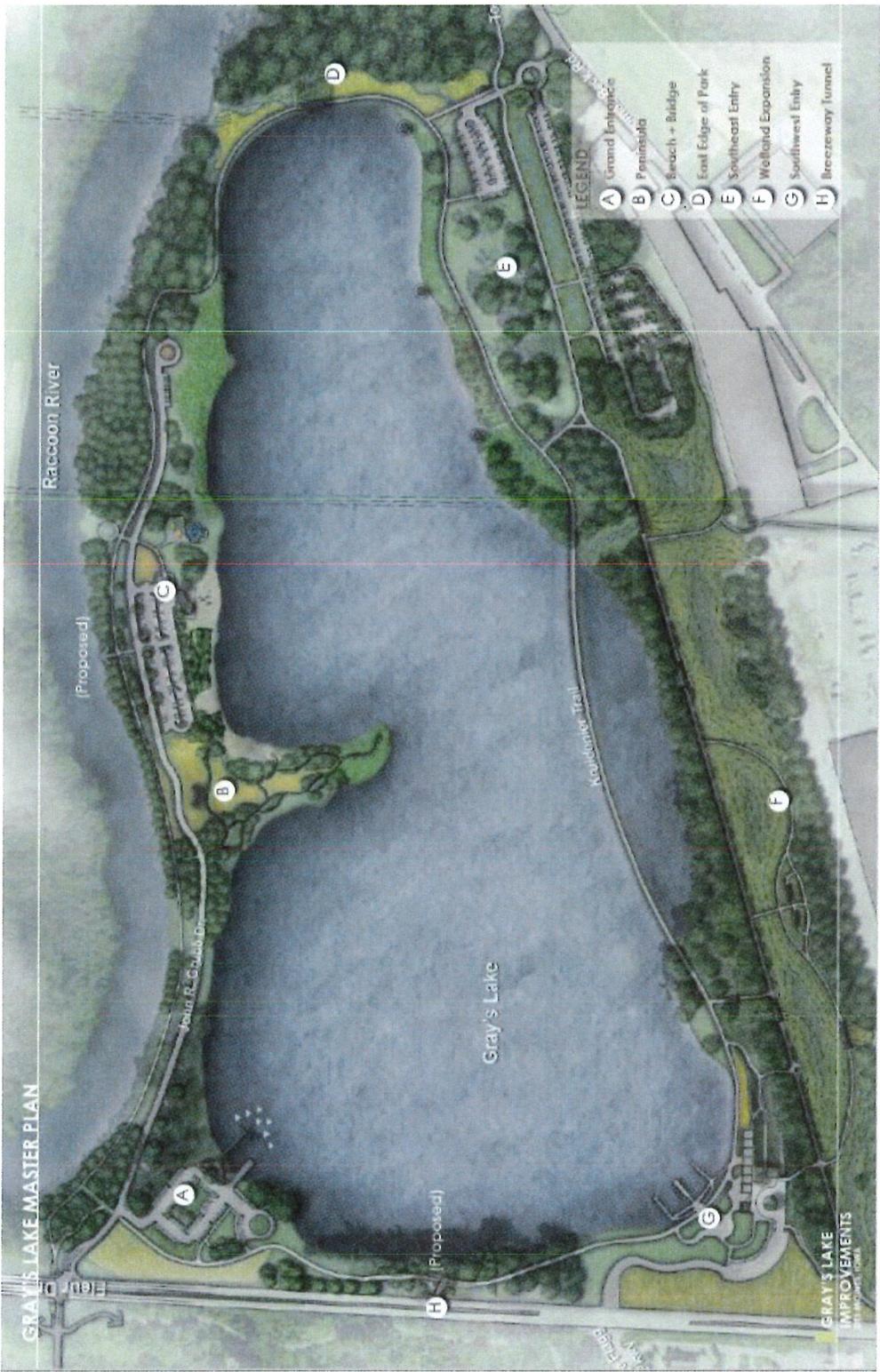
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

41D

Map exhibits for:  
RECEIVE AND FILE COMMUNICATION FROM THE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD REGARDING  
APPROVAL OF THE SW INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING STUDY AND RECOMMENDATION OF  
DEDICATION OF GRAY'S LAKE WETLANDS PROJECT AREA AS PARKLAND



2016 Gray's Lake Park Master Plan – Areas A through G including Area F as expanded parkland

# final master plan

## South of Gray's Lake Master Plan

The more detailed master plan created for the South of Gray's Lake area shown in Figure 4.1 is focused on the main portion of the study area.

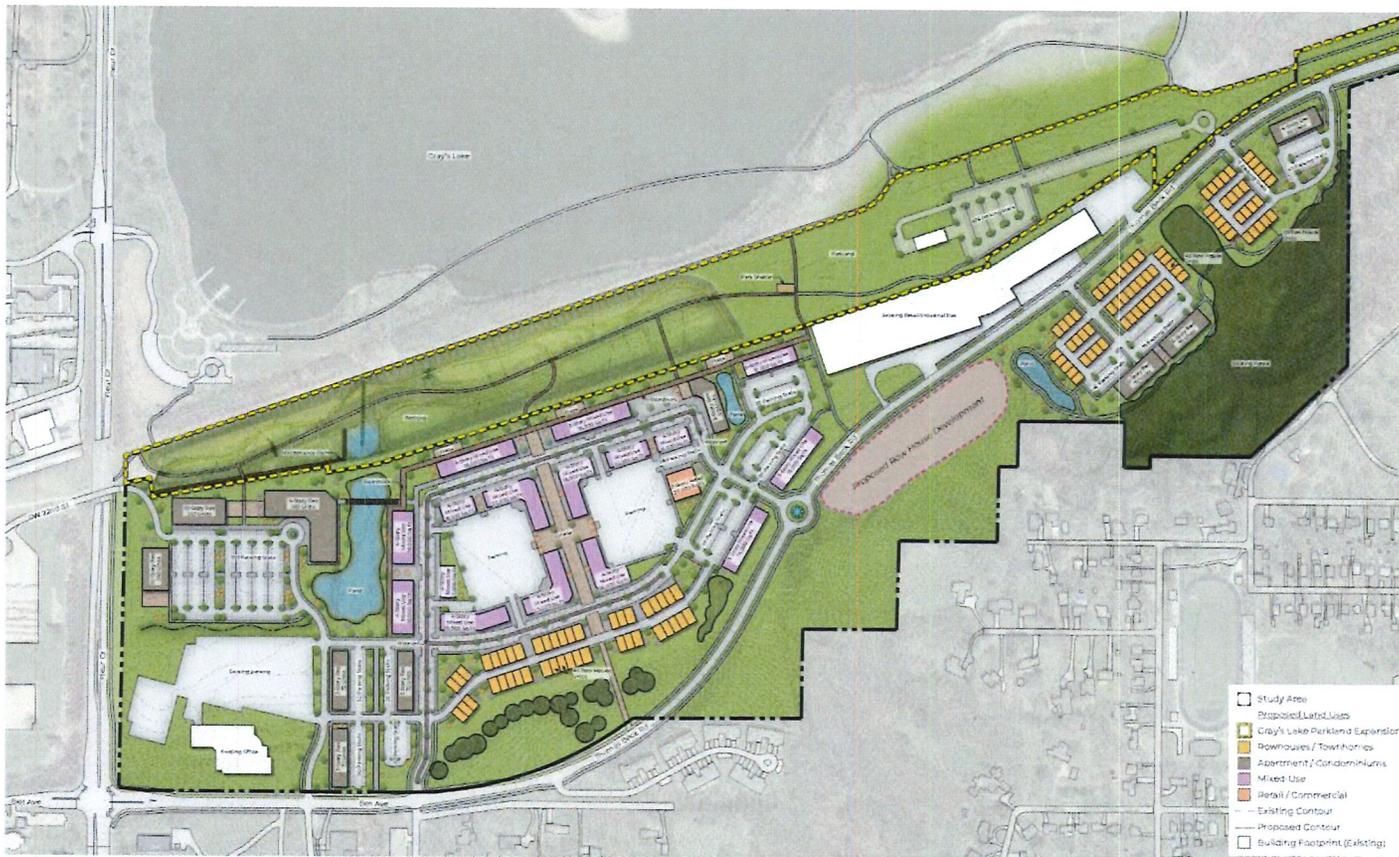


Figure 4.1 Final South of Gray's Lake Master Plan

2021-22 South of Gray's Lake Master Plan – preferred concept indicating extent of parkland expansion (from the final draft report)

RECEIVE AND FILE COMMUNICATION FROM THE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD REGARDING APPROVAL OF THE SW INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING STUDY AND RECOMMENDATION OF DEDICATION OF GRAY'S LAKE WETLANDS PROJECT AREA AS PARKLAND

Map exhibits for:

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City Interest Properties and Parcels as shown in Des Moines Maps

Letters of Recommendation for:  
RECEIVE AND FILE COMMUNICATION FROM THE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD REGARDING  
APPROVAL OF THE SW INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING STUDY AND RECOMMENDATION OF  
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The Honorable Mayor  
Members of the City Council  
Scott Sanders, City Manager

Re: Gray's Lake Park Southern Expansion

I am writing this letter based on my long-time interest and involvement in the planning, development and management of Gray's Lake. Gray's Lake Park is a crown jewel of our City and its park system. It is an important Gateway to our community. It has over one million trail uses per year by people from all walks of life. The combination of parks, trails and water from Water Works Park, through Gray's Lake and Meredith Trail to the Des Moines River corridor constitutes one of the nation's great urban parks.

The City has a historic opportunity to claim the abandoned rail yard south of Gray's Lake as part of the Park and park system. The potential expansion area is now owned by the City as right-of-way, the Southwest Connector concept has been abandoned by the City and long-term planning by the City for the adjacent area for commercial and residential development is underway. The potential expansion area and a vision for its use is described in the report by Confluence dated September 12, 2016 entitled "Gray's lake—A Historical Review and Vision for the Future." This report was approved by the Parks and Recreation Board on August 23, 2016.

The hills to the south of Gray's Lake constitute a large watershed that drains towards the Lake which causes water management issues and affects water quality of the Lake. A solution is a wetland water management area directly south of the Lake which can enhance both the Park and development planned for the adjacent area further to the south. This Park expansion can provide a new park experience for walkers and bikers demonstrating the beneficial use of water filtration and new walkways, paths and views. It solves a water management problem for development while enhancing the Park as a highly attractive amenity for that development. Even if the wetland project is delayed or

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is determined to be infeasible, the rail yard should be claimed as Park green space. Either way, the abandoned rail yard becomes an attractive asset for passersby on Fleur and enhances the Park for its many users and adjacent property owners.

The first step is to formally designate this area, as shown in the drawing below outlined in dashed red, as part of the Park. This designation costs the City nothing. With this formal designation in hand, planning for the area can begin in earnest. The project will no doubt be planned in phases over time with a combination of federal, state and local government contributions, as well as private contributions, yet to be determined. Thank you for your consideration.

Please take action now to have the City formally designate this area as part of Gray's Lake Park. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rick Neumann

Cc Des Moines Parks and Recreation Board  
Benjamin R. Page  
Jenny Richmond



Letters of Recommendation for:

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Friday, October 1, 2021

Brooke Avila  
*President*

ATTN: Honorable Mayor Cownie  
Members of City Council  
Scott Sanders, City Manager

Laura Smidt  
*Vice President*

Jenna Bates  
*Treasurer*

Andy McCoy  
*Secretary*

On behalf of the Friends of Des Moines Parks, our organization requests your support of the Gray's Lake Wetland expansion proposal that would transfer property currently designated as right-of-way to parkland. The cancellation of the Southwest Connector roadway project provided an opportunity for the City's Engineering and Parks and Recreation Departments to consider alternate development in this area. The resulting Southwest Infrastructure and Planning Study included a comprehensive study of this parcel and a detailed process to convert this unused land to a wetland.

Rex Coble  
Beth Pargulski  
Dylan Lampe  
Tami Wingert  
Erin Muir  
Andrea Boulton  
Amal Barre  
Chris Lightfoot  
Adam Ibrahim

Gray's Lake Park is a signature park in the Des Moines park system, drawing visitors from near and far who come to enjoy its numerous amenities and activities, which include: water recreation, a stroll on the walking loop, a picnic on the terrace with incredible views of downtown, a family photo shoot, or yoga on the lawn and so much more. The opportunity to acquire the land south of this area, which is currently in a dismal state in appearance and usefulness, is a win-win for both the City and the park system.

*Ex Officio:*  
Cynde Fanter  
Jane Hein  
Janis Ruan

We strongly support this proposed initiative and the opportunity to transfer the abandoned land that runs the length of the trail on the south side of Gray's Lake to parkland for three reasons.

*Honorable:*  
Dr. Michael Eberle

- Improved Water Quality of Gray's Lake — This land is currently owned by the City of Des Moines with no known plans to improve or enhance the area. The wetland project that is being proposed creates a natural wetland management system that will improve the water quality of Gray's Lake. The large watershed that feeds directly into Gray's Lake reaches far beyond the perimeter of the Park, but by establishing a natural wetland, the water will run through a natural filtration process before flowing into the Lake.
- A New Park Feature — Implementing a wetland in this area provides a new feature to the park system that will also serve as an unparalleled opportunity for environmental education for residents and visitors of all ages.
- Beautification and Increased Biodiversity – The proposed wetland project will enhance natural beauty and increase the environmental health and biodiversity of the greater parkland. Investment in this area is critical to improving the aesthetics of Fleur Drive as the major gateway to downtown.

Letters of Recommendation for:

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Brooke Avila  
*President*

Laura Smidt  
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Andy McCoy  
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Rex Coble  
Beth Pargulski  
Dylan Lampe  
Tami Wingert  
Erin Muir  
Andrea Boulton  
Amal Barre  
Chris Lightfoot  
Adam Ibrahim

*Ex Officio:*  
Cynde Fanter  
Jane Hein  
Janis Ruan

*Honorable:*  
Dr. Michael Eberle

If the parcel of land is deemed parkland and the wetland project is stalled, the space can alternately be converted to green space and will be far more attractive to trail users and traffic that brings visitors along the Fleur corridor to downtown Des Moines.

We kindly ask that you consider the transfer of this right-of-way parcel south of Gray's Lake Park owned by the City to parkland. The comprehensive wetland study executed under the Southwest Infrastructure and Planning Study proves this is an exciting opportunity for the City and Parks Department to convert an underutilized piece of land into a home for pollinators, urban flora and fauna and an attraction for years to come. Thank you for your consideration and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Sarah Lohmeier  
Executive Director, Friends of Des Moines Parks  
1551 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Pkwy  
Des Moines, Iowa 50317



Brooke Avila  
Board Chair

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October 11, 2021

Honorable Mayor Cownie  
Members of City Council  
Scott Sanders, City Manager

I write on behalf of Urban Conservation Committee in support of the Gray's Lake Wetland expansion proposal that would transfer property currently designated as right-of-way to parkland. The cancellation of the Southwest Connector roadway project provided an opportunity for the City's Engineering and Parks and Recreation Departments to consider alternate development in this area. The resulting Southwest Infrastructure and Planning Study included a comprehensive study of this parcel and a detailed process to convert this unused land to a wetland.

Gray's Lake Park is a signature park in the Des Moines park system. The opportunity to acquire the land south of this area that is currently an eye sore is a win-win for both the City and the park system.

We strongly support this proposed initiative and the opportunity to transfer the abandoned land that runs the length of the trail on the south side of Gray's Lake to parkland for three reasons.

- Improved Water Quality of Gray's Lake – This land is currently owned by the City of Des Moines with no future plans to improve or enhance the area. The wetland project that is being proposed creates a natural wetland management system that will improve the water quality of Gray's Lake. The large watershed that feeds directly into Gray's Lake reaches far beyond the perimeter of the Park, but by establishing a natural wetland, the water will run through a natural filtration process before flowing into the Lake.
- A New Park Feature – Implementing a wetland in this area provides a new feature to the park system that may also serve as an important environmental education opportunity for residents and visitors.
- Beautification and Increased Biodiversity – The proposed wetland project will enhance natural beauty and increase the environmental health and biodiversity of the greater parkland offering an unparalleled opportunity for environmental education for all ages. Investment in this area is critical to improving the aesthetics of Fleur Drive as the major gateway to downtown.

If the parcel of land is deemed parkland and the wetland project is stalled, the space can alternately be converted to green space and will be far more attractive to trail users and traffic that brings visitors along the Fleur corridor to downtown Des Moines.

We kindly ask that you consider the transfer of this right-of-way parcel south of Gray's Lake Park owned by the City to parkland. The comprehensive wetland study executed under the Southwest Infrastructure and Planning Study proves this is an exciting opportunity for the City and Parks Department to convert an underutilized piece of land into a home for pollinators, urban flora and fauna and an attraction for years to come. Thank you for your consideration and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Victoria Facto  
Chair of the Urban Conservation Committee