

# North Arm Public Access redesign

## Feedback on updated design concepts

Hennepin County and IMO Consulting Group held an in-person open house on January 29 and a virtual information meeting on February 4 to share information on the project, answer questions, and gather feedback on updated design concepts. Seventeen people attended, including residents who live near the access and representatives from local businesses, nonprofits, and local government.

Attendees shared feedback on topics including the access and parking, commercial usage and vertical access point, landscaping and stormwater management, and waste management.

The following summarizes feedback received from open house and virtual attendees and how the county will incorporate suggestions into the design or policies that guide the county's approach to the suggestion.

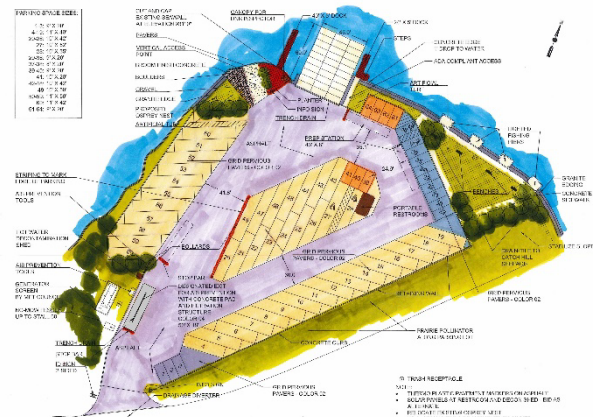
### Project process and stakeholders

Attendees suggested creating a map with the new concept and current state of the access laid on top of each other, making it easier for people to see where the changes are happening.

Attendees had general questions about the project process, such as where the funding is coming from and if the project will go to the city councils. Attendees also asked what other stakeholders, such as the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, were involved.

The county is:

- Planning to incorporate a map showing both the current state and new concept into the site plan review.
- Providing the funding for this project.
- Taking the site plan to the city for review.
- Inviting interested stakeholders to participation in discussions.



## **Access and parking**

Attendees asked if there are enough parking spots. They also wondered how the designation of certain parking spots for shore anglers would be enforced.

Attendees wondered if the new boat ramp was positioned closer to the channel, increasing boat traffic risks.

An organization, called Wheelchairs and Walleyes, proposed to donate an ADA-compliant boat lift and ramp. Fundraising and maintenance would be covered by the organization. This would be the first of its kind in Minnesota.

Attendees commented that the proposed area for paddleboard and kayak access is disproportionately large given low demand for such use at this site. They worried heavy boat traffic may create unsafe conditions.

Attendees stressed the importance of emergency response services.

The county is:

- Providing signage about designated parking spots, and the county will continue coordinating with the city police department to enforce.
- Planning for five different parking designations: vehicle/trailer; ADA vehicle/trailer; shore angler vehicle only; vehicle only, and ADA vehicle only.
- Planning to request a variance from the city of Orono for setbacks to maximize parking.
- Placing the ramp 80 feet from the navigation channel. Traffic flow was determined during initial analysis.
- Exploring the goal of improving access for all, providing separate lake access locations for recreational boaters, paddlers, commercial users, and shoreline anglers.
- Considering a multipurpose space for better land optimization.
- In agreement that emergency response services are important.

## **Commercial usage and vertical access point**

Several attendees had concerns about commercial use and questions about the vertical access point.

Attendees questioned whether the lake could sustain the proposed commercial operations. They criticized the use of large industrial equipment that may disrupt lake operations. They were concerned that increased commercial use will result in parking overflow and neighborhood disruption. Since this is a residential zone, they wondered if low commercial use could happen with the proper permits.

Attendees suggested reducing the height of seawall at the vertical access point to make it better for loading trucks on and off barges and possible to dredge area adjacent the loading area. They also wondered if there could be no seawall at all. Another attendee thought a lip on the vertical access would be in the way of barge ramps.

One commented that there was not enough space for commercial use and that vertical access was not a viable solution. Another commented that they do not want any commercial usage since "they take too long" with the boat ramp. The commenter was glad commercial entities have their own area.

The county:

- Does not anticipate changes from current usage of the access. The county is not changing the use to accommodate large industrial equipment. The city would be involved in any rezoning related to this site.
- Recognizes there was misunderstanding about the purpose of the vertical access and the type of use that will be occurring there. The county will better manage communication and expectations about the vertical access. The county will adjust if there are concerns or complaints about the access, such as installing a jersey barrier.
- Considered and decided against lowering the height of the seawall because water level fluctuations need to be accounted for.

### **Landscaping and stormwater management**

Some attendees expressed appreciation of the stormwater management improvements. Others were concerned about shoreline erosion and stormwater management in general on the lake.

Artificial turf is planned in high traffic areas where grass will not grow to prevent erosion. It was suggested that the county reduce the amount shown on the plan and integrate artesian grasses or pollinator plantings.

The county is:

- Following best management practices to stop water runoff of nutrients and sediment.
- Appreciative of the landscape suggestion and is getting input from the landscape group.

### **Waste management**

Attendees wondered if the trash cans could be raccoon proof, while others suggested the site be pack-in/pack-out with no garbage cans. Other attendees asked where people will dump seaweed. Another attendee suggested a "no littering" sign under the bridge

The county is:

- Making the site pack-in/pack-out and is not providing trash cans.
- Providing a disposal area for seaweed.
- Planning to incorporate no littering signage on the bridge.

### **Project contact**

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