



City of Blaine

Natural Resource Conservation Board

November 18, 2025 | 7:00 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

The Natural Resource Conservation Board is an advisory body to the City Council. The Board is charged with recommending acquisition of lands for open space and developing a Natural Resource Plan which includes environmental policy and guidelines for the maintenance and preservation of Blaine's existing and future open spaces and trail corridors. One of the Board's functions is to hold public meetings and make recommendations to the City Council. For each item, the Board will receive reports prepared by City staff, provide the opportunity for public response, conduct Board discussions and make recommendations. The City Council, however, makes all final decisions on these matters.

AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Approval of Agenda**
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
 - 4.1.** 2025-596 Approval of August 19, 2025 NRCB Meeting Minutes
Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager
- 5. Open Forum for Citizen Input**
- 6. New Business**
 - 6.1.** 2025-597 Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Wetland Bank Update from ISG
Sponsors: Megan Hedstrom, Stormwater Coordinator
 - 6.2.** 2025-600 Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Trail System Project Update
Sponsors: Brent Larson, Project Engineer, Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager
 - 6.3.** 2025-598 Recommendation of the 2026 - 2030 Open Space Capital Improvement Plan Budget
Sponsors: Nate Monahan, Recreation Manager

7. Adjournment



City of Blaine

Natural Resource Conservation Board

August 19, 2025 | 7:00 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM.

2. Roll Call

Present – Chair Rafferty, Boardmembers Anderson, Dahl, Gramstad, Mereness, Panning, Truchon.

Others Present: Stormwater Coordinator Megan Hedstrom.

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

4. Approval of Minutes

- 4.1. 2025-421 Approval of the March 18, 2025 NRCB Minutes
Sponsors: Megan Hedstrom, Stormwater Coordinator

Boardmember Panning requested the blank line in Section 6.1 be filled in by staff.

MOVED by Boardmember Truchon, seconded by Boardmember Anderson, to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2025 board meeting as amended.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Open Forum for Citizen Input

No one appeared to address the NRCB.

6. New Business

- 6.1.** 2025-422 Update from ISG on the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Wetland Bank.
Sponsors: Megan Hedstrom, Stormwater Coordinator

Stormwater Coordinator Hedstrom stated monitoring work began earlier this spring within Site 7 in Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. ISG and Engineering staff have conducted meetings with the Army Corps of Engineers, Board of Water and Soil Resources, and Rice Creek Watershed District to review preliminary monitoring data and the proposed maintenance plan for Fall of 2025. In the upcoming months, preliminary herbicide treatments, prescribed burns and mowing, grazing and haying will be conducted while monitoring continues. Monitoring results from 2025 will be compiled into a year-end report later this fall which will be presented to the Natural Resource Conservation Board at either the October or January meeting.

Boardmember Anderson asked if the fen areas were fed by natural springs. Ms. Hedstrom reported this was the case.

Boardmember Anderson inquired if there was a date certain in the spring when the burns would occur. Ms. Hedstrom explained that in the past burns were held when the snow was out in the middle of March through mid-May.

Boardmember Truchon questioned if ISG had identified where herbicides would be used. Ms. Hedstrom commented GPS areas have been identified where the canary reed grass and other invasives will be treated. She reported there would not be a broad treatment of the entire wetland sanctuary.

- 6.2.** 2025-444 Update on Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Trail System development from Stantec
Sponsors: Megan Hedstrom, Stormwater Coordinator

Ms. Hedstrom stated the city and Stantec team met with the watershed and permitting agencies to review the existing wetland banks and previous wetland delineations. Current wetland delineations were required by the agencies for all sanctuary area outside of the wetland banks. The wetland delineations are complete and final wetland/upland delineations and significant plant community observations are being reviewed. Once complete, final design will resume to make alignment modifications and reestablish boardwalk/gravel trail transitions accordingly. We should be ready for any final reviews of the 100% Construction Documents needed prior to bid letting by late August or the first weeks of September.

Chair Rafferty asked what portion of the project would be bid in late August or early September. Ms. Hedstrom reported the three sections on the southern portion of the wetland sanctuary would be bid. She reviewed the location of these three sections on a map with the board. She explained these three sections would allow for connections to the three neighborhoods to the south. She stated once the numbers come in, staff can begin

planning for when the remaining trail sections can be completed.

Boardmember Truchon questioned if the watershed district had delineated the wetland area. Ms. Hedstrom stated this work had been completed by the watershed district and Stantec.

Boardmember Truchon encouraged staff to look into new building materials for the boardwalk in order to find a material that lasts longer. Ms. Hedstrom indicated composite materials were being considered given how the price for lumber was on the rise. She noted the contractors would be allowed to present bids with either type of building material.

Boardmember Anderson recommended ditch maintenance be completed prior to the trail segments being constructed. Ms. Hedstrom indicated the city's portion of ditch would be abandoned, which meant no maintenance would be required by the city.

Boardmember Panning asked how the rare plants would be addressed or relocated. Ms. Hedstrom explained this would depend on the process that is followed by the city. She indicated the goal would be to avoid the rare plants all together.

Further discussion ensued regarding how the watershed district addresses invasive/nuisance weeds and ditch management.

Boardmember Panning expressed concern with how the wildness from the wetland sanctuary was spreading into residential backyards. Ms. Hedstrom stated she would look into this concern further. She noted open space boundary signs had been posted near the wetlands.

Boardmember Truchon asked if the trail alignment could be altered. Ms. Hedstrom explained the proposed trail alignment has been proposed in order to lessen the impact on the existing homeowners.

Boardmember Truchon thanked staff for this information and stated she understood property owners had the right to fence in their rear yards.

6.3. 2025-445 NRCB Updates

Sponsors: Megan Hedstrom, Stormwater Coordinator

Ms. Hedstrom provided the board with an update on the following items:

Pioneer Park Boardwalk - The city hired a contractor to replace some of the boards along with replacing many of the supports along the boardwalk. It is back open and in good condition for walkers and park users to enjoy.

Restoration of Hidden Ponds Park has continued since viewing the project at the June tour. Native grasses are starting to come in more fully and tree replacement projects have been completed. Staff thanked the Anoka County Conservation District for their partnership with the City. Staff reviewed photos of the restoration work that had been completed to date.

It was noted the next NRCB meeting would be Tuesday, October 21 at 7PM.

Boardmember Truchon commented on a culvert that was installed in a neighboring community that would assist with providing safety for pedestrians and turtles.

Boardmember Anderson asked if staff had an update for the board on the city's comprehensive water management plan. Staff had no update for the Board.

Boardmember Anderson inquired if the city had a fund in place to assist with purchasing vacant land for open spaces.

Boardmember Truchon stated it would benefit the city to have a fund in place for unintended acquisitions as this would assist in protecting open space for the community.

Further discussion ensued regarding developments that would be occurring in Lino Lakes and Ham Lake.

7. Adjournment

Chair Rafferty adjourned the meeting at 8:25PM.



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2025-597

Agenda Date	Status
November 18, 2025	
In Control	File Type
Natural Resources Conservation Board	Report

New Business -

Agenda Item # 6.1

Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Wetland Bank Update from ISG

Background

ISG, the city's consultant conducting monitoring and creating a workplan for the Site 7 Wetland Bank, has completed 2025 monitoring. ISG and city staff will be meeting with the Corps and BWSR later this month to review the draft monitoring report, so that a final plan can be submitted for agency review in December. This plan will be provided to the NRCB for review once available, and ISG will be in attendance at our first meeting in 2026 to present the monitoring report and discuss the upcoming work plan for 2026. If weather allows, this will start with a controlled burn of the site this spring, followed by targeted treatments for invasive species, predominately reed canary grass. Staff will provide a more detailed update to the NRCB regarding the draft monitoring report and more information about planned spring work.

Recommendation

Informational

Attachment List

None



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2025-600

Agenda Date	Status
November 18, 2025	
In Control	File Type
Natural Resources Conservation Board	Report

New Business -

Agenda Item # 6.2

Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Trail System Project Update

Background

The City Council had a discussion at a recent workshop about the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary trail project.

The direction they gave staff was to delay the project because of the following factors:

- Low ending balances of the 2026-2030 Open Space CIP Fund
- Less than projected revenue of park dedication fees came in for 2025
- No current wetland credits to sell to generate revenue from Site 7 Wetland Bank
- High estimated cost of the project

The Council expressed excitement for the project. Staff will continue to work with the NCRB and Council about alternative options that may exist to complete and fund portions of the project or the entirety if circumstances change.

The following is a summary of the work that has been completed to date for the Blaine Wetland Sanctuary (BWS) Trail project.

Preliminary Design - Staff walking the proposed route with Stantec to determine an appropriate location of the trail and boardwalk. The goal was to minimize wetland impacts to any adjacent properties, maximize the use of upland (thus reducing the amount of boardwalk and reducing the project cost), and provide a unique and interesting trail experience. Preliminary design included multiple route options, phasing, and neighborhood notices and public meetings.

Soil Borings – Braun Intertec conducted soil borings along the proposed route and prepared a geotechnical evaluation report. The report provided necessary data and professional recommendations for the design of the boardwalk portions of the trail.

Wetland Permitting – The previous phase of the BWS trail system constructed the east-west boardwalk through the northern part of Blaine Wetland Sanctuary. As part of that trail/boardwalk the delineations and impacts two wetland bank sites were approved (Site 7 and Branch 3). These approvals essentially locked in location for the far northern portion of the current proposed trail/boardwalk (northern section of Segment 3).

As part of the current phase of BWS trail/boardwalk, Stantec performed wetland delineations along the entire proposed route (Segments 1-3). The wetland edges that were used during the initial preliminary design phase were outdated or non-existent in some areas. Stantec worked with the Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD), Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR) and MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and received approval of the delineations. This delineation is valid for 5 years from the date of the Notice of Decision (10/28/2025).

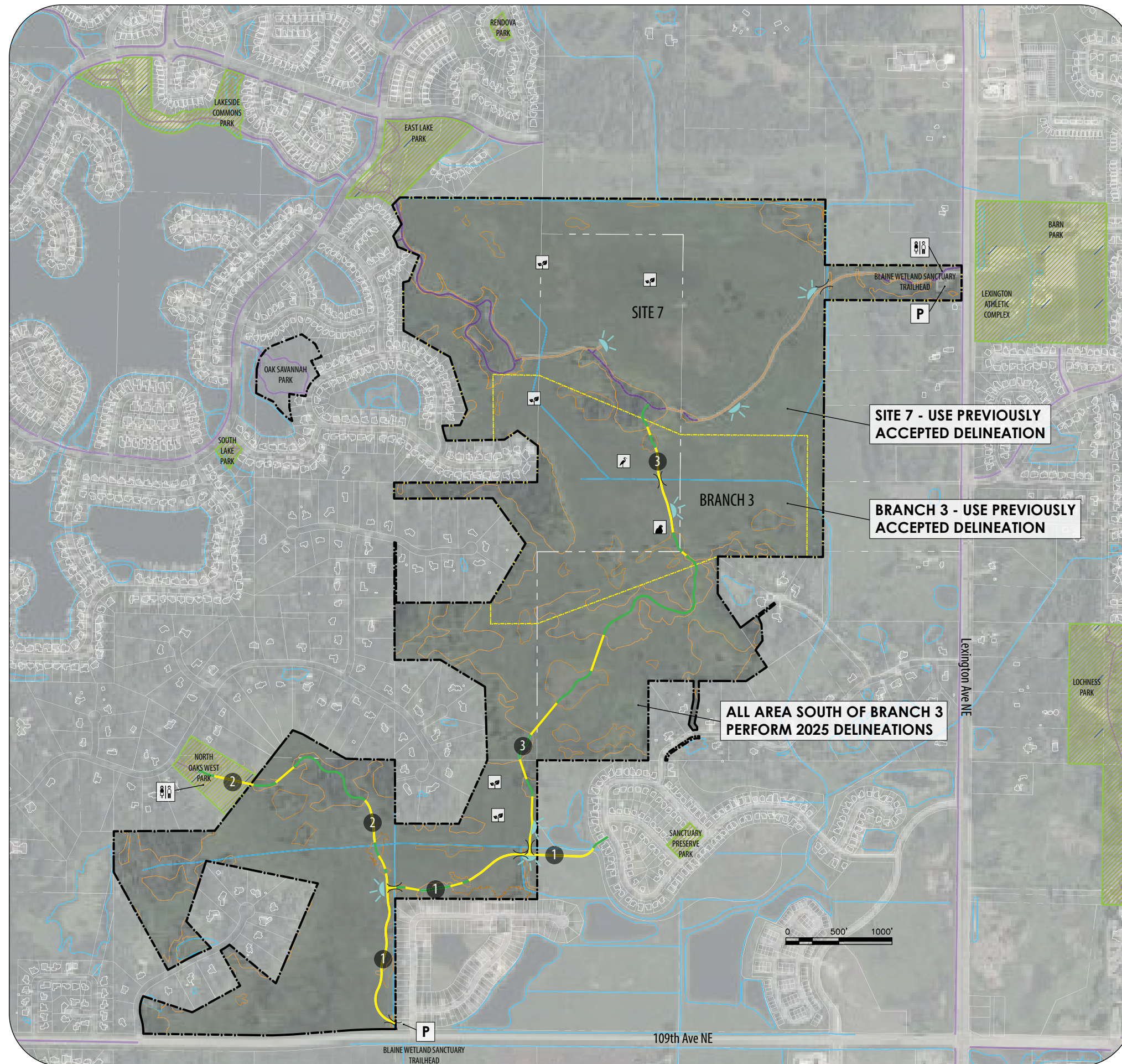
Final Design – Based on the soil borings, wetland delineations, neighborhood, council and staff feedback Stantec has completed the construction plans for the entire trail/boardwalk system. The plans have broken the system into three segments. Segment 1 is anticipated to be constructed first and bid as the base bid and Segment 2 will be constructed next and will be bid as an alternate with segment 1. Segment 3 is going to be a separate plan as it is not anticipated to be constructed at this time, but plans will be ready for bidding in the future. By breaking the plans and bids into segments the City will have more options to how the projects are constructed as well as flexibility in funding it. Throughout the design, dialogue of loading capacity and construction materials have been a major consideration. The designed loading capacity of the boardwalk sections are being bid as either 2500 lbs or 5000 lbs. The plans are setup to allow contractors to submit bids for either or both loading capacities. This again allows the City flexibility in the final product. The larger loading capacity would allow for easier access along the boardwalk using small UTV or other equipment to assist with medical or other emergencies and maintenance. This larger loading capacity is likely to come at a higher price. Once bids are received each product bid will need to be reviewed and evaluated to determine the best overall value (2500 lb vs 5000 lb capacity, wood or composite vs concrete materials, pan footings vs helical, etc).

Recommendation

Informational

Attachment List

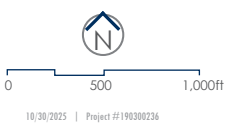
1. 2025 BWS Master Plan Trail 11-12-25
2. 25 11-13 OPC Summary Alternate Reduced



BLAINE WETLAND SANCTUARY PROPOSED TRAIL SYSTEM MASTER PLAN



- LEGEND**
- Existing Trails
 - Existing Boardwalk
 - Parcels
 - Existing City Park
 - Sanctuary Boundary
 - Site 7/Branch 3 Boundary
 - Proposed Trail
 - Proposed Boardwalk
 - Ditch
 - Bridge/Culvert Crossing
 - Delineated Wetland Upland Transition
 - Public Restrooms
 - Parking Lot
 - Wildlife Viewing
 - Rare Plant Area
 - Crane Nesting Area
 - Hawk Nesting Area





BLAINE WETLAND SANTUARY TRAIL DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT NO. 190300236
BLAINE, MINNESOTA
2025

	5000 LB LOAD RATING DESIGN	2500 LB LOAD RATING DESIGN
BASE BID: SEGMENT 1	\$4,069,557	\$3,662,601
ALTERNATE BID: SEGMENT 2	\$1,714,631	\$1,543,168
FUTURE BID: SEGMENT 3	\$3,467,422	N/A



City of Blaine Staff Report

File Number: 2025-598

Agenda Date	Status
November 18, 2025	
In Control	File Type
Natural Resources Conservation Board	Motion

New Business -

Agenda Item # 6.3

Recommendation of the 2026 - 2030 Open Space Capital Improvement Plan Budget

Background

Staff will review the attached 2026 - 2030 Open Space Capital Improvement Plan Budget.

Recommendation

By motion, recommend to the City Council the 2026 - 2030 Open Space CIP Budget.

Attachment List

1. 2026-2030 Open Space Fund CIP

City of Blaine, Minnesota
Open Space Fund - 405
Summary of Revenues, Expenditures, and Change in Fund Balance
2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan - As of November 13, 2025

	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 CIP	2027 CIP	2028 CIP	2029 CIP	2030 CIP
Operating Revenues							
Park Dedication Fees	\$ 250,000	\$ 30,986	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000
Wetland Credit Sales	-	-	-	125,000	275,000	300,000	300,000
Miscellaneous Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment Earnings	35,000	122,432	35,000	5,000	4,000	3,500	1,000
Total Revenues	285,000	153,418	285,000	380,000	529,000	553,500	551,000
Operating Expenditures							
Contractual Services - Open Space Management	5,000	-	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Total Operating Expenditures	5,000		5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Capital Outlay							
Blaine Wetland Sanctuary Trail Development	1,000,000	86,545	-	3,850,000	250,000	250,000	-
Trails Development - Open Space	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wetland Management - Site 7	100,000	42,935	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Ongoing Maintenance of BWS	25,000	-	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
105th Redevelopment Advance	-	-	-	1,000,000	(1,000,000)	-	-
Total Capital Outlay	1,125,000	129,480	125,000	4,975,000	(625,000)	375,000	125,000
Total Operating & Capital Expenditures	1,130,000	129,480	130,000	4,980,000	(620,000)	380,000	130,000
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	(845,000)	23,938	155,000	(4,600,000)	1,149,000	173,500	421,000
Other Financing Sources (Uses)							
Transfers In From Park Development Fund	-	-	-	1,500,000	-	-	-
Transfers Out From Park Development Fund	-	-	-	-	(1,000,000)	-	-
Transfer Out To Open Space Referendum Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer Out To EDA Capital Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	-	-	-	1,500,000	(1,000,000)	-	-
Net Change in Fund Balance	(845,000)	23,938	155,000	(3,100,000)	149,000	173,500	421,000
Fund Balance, January 1	4,550,608	4,550,608	3,705,608	3,860,608	760,608	909,608	1,083,108
Fund Balance, December 31	3,705,608	4,574,546	3,860,608	760,608	909,608	1,083,108	1,504,108
Cash Balance, December 31	\$ 3,692,080	\$ 4,561,018	\$ 3,847,080	\$ 747,080	\$ 896,080	\$ 1,069,580	\$ 1,490,580