

Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources

2005 Project Abstract

For the period ending June 30, 2008 (revised March 2009)

PROJECT TITLE: The Open Space Planning and Protection Project

PROJECT MANAGER: Chris Lord, District Manager,

AFFILIATION: Anoka Conservation District

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LEGAL CITATION: ML 2005, First Special Session, Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 11, Subdivision 8(d).

Subd. 16. Carryforward

18.30 (2) Laws 2005, First Special Session chapter

18.31 1, article 2, section 11, subdivision 8,

18.32 paragraph (d), open space planning and

18.33 protection;

APPROPRIATION AMOUNT:

(d) Open Space Planning and Protection 250,000

\$125,000 the first year and \$125,000 the second year are from the trust fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with Anoka Conservation District to protect open space by identifying high priority natural resource corridors through planning, conservation easements, and land dedication as part of development processes.

TOTAL BIENNIAL LCMR PROJECT BUDGET:

LCMR Appropriation:	\$ 250,000
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<u>Minus Amount Spent:</u>	<u>\$ 155,431</u>
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Equal Balance:	\$ 94,569
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Overall Project Outcome and Result

The premise of the *Open Space Planning and Protection Project* was to bring concepts related to open space planning into the local comprehensive planning process in hopes that they would be incorporated into comprehensive plan updates. Since it is not possible to mandate local government adoption of open space protection strategies, giving those concepts a place at the table and prominence in local planning discussions is the next best alternative. Ultimately, the success of the effort lay with the local decisions makers and in the end mixed results were achieved. Results 1 and 2, the *creation of local open space protection plans and local adoption of tools to provide the means of implementation*, have been achieved to the extent participating communities consented to do so. Due to factors beyond the control of project managers (primarily, an

unanticipated lack of new development in the project area) the goals for land protection in number of acres (i.e., Result 3) have not been met. Although 200 acres in easements were secured in the county during the project period and efforts along those lines continue in areas not necessarily covered by this planning effort, no LCCMR funding was used. Moreover, participating communities have been given a blueprint for natural resource protection going forward, including both 1) the identification and prioritization of natural resources for protection and 2) the planning and land use regulation approaches that can be used to protect land as part of the development process. In addition, the necessary long term shift in how communities view development and planning for the future has begun to occur—while difficult to quantify, this is a very important point. These techniques were demonstrated through an actual protection project in one community (East Bethel) and through a mock platting process in another (Burns Township/City of Nowthen; see Result 4).

Project Results Use and Dissemination

Each of the participating communities received extensive individualized planning documents that included NRA/I maps and analysis, infrastructure planning, demographics, model open space protection ordinances, easement documents, etc. Full copies of the reports are available on the Anoka Conservation District's website (www.anokanaturalresources.com/acd/tech_assist/res_plan.htm). While a lack of development and resistance from key community leaders inhibited the overall accomplishment of project goals, the information and expertise amassed as a result of this project have and will continue to inform efforts throughout the county. A low impact development workshop in Andover and the donation of 200 acres of conservation easement in the City of Anoka both benefited from this project. Many articles have appeared on this and related topics in community newsletters throughout the planning process and periodic articles will be sent to local and regional newspapers.