

Jim and Anne Hildebrand
6808 Brook Drive
Edina, MN 55439

February 12, 2009

Subject: Proposed Nine Mile Creek Bike Path

Dear Mayor James Hovland, (also sent to members of Edina City Council and Three Rivers Park District Board of Commissioners)

My wife Anne and I have lived in Edina for twenty five years at 6808 Brook Drive. It is our home. It has wetlands where wildlife such as herons, fox, owls, deer and mink live. It is secluded and quiet. To me it would be a nightmare to see this destroyed by an asphalt bike path running along the creek or on a long boardwalk over the creek (a solution described at the meeting as a way to avoid destroying the wetlands.)

We see the following issues:

The Environment: The Three Rivers Park District states that it has the mission of environmental stewardship. But a bike path through numerous back yards, that goes through wetlands and increases the traffic in these areas will have the effect of destroying the environment and natural habitat. Has the US Core of Engineers been consulted on the proposed path along the creek? There is a wetlands protection act. I believe that increased traffic will drive away the wildlife that currently lives there. Also, I currently clean out the creek each spring of stuff that floats down from somewhere. Who will be responsible for cleaning up after a multitude of hikers and bikers who may not all have the motto of “no trace left behind?” I believe the second issue noted on their survey was concern for the environment.

Traffic and Safety: Mostly Edina citizens use our street, but the stated purpose of the bike path is “from Hopkins through Edina and Richfield perhaps with trails splitting off there to link with trails in Minneapolis and Bloomington.” (Star Tribune). This is the purpose of streets and more specifically highway 100. I personally would not feel safe night or day with the possibility of anyone wandering through my back yard and looking in my windows. What we would be going from is a secluded but relatively inaccessible area to a secluded and highly accessible area by anyone in the twin cities area.

Changing the rules: Edina is a developed suburb. While Minneapolis has Lake Harriet with a walk around path this decision was made when development occurred. When Edina was developed and our lots were platted, my previous neighbor told me the developer specifically extended the lots to the center of the creek to prevent a horse or bike path going through the back yards. This was a covenant between the city and the homeowners, and I do not believe it should be broken.

The Process: I would very much like to understand the process for the selection of and approval of an Edina bike path. At the information session on February 11th which was

held at the Edina City hall, I received conflicting information. John Keprios, the Edina Park and Recreation Director, indicated that the Edina City Council had the final say on whether a bike path would be approved and if so, what the route would be. That the city council would hold a meeting/ information session for Edina residents before deciding anything. Representatives of Three Rivers Park District who ran the information session on February 11th, implied that it was their decision and that they would select the route of the path.

Uncompensated and unable to sell: My lot runs to the middle of the creek, and in the paper and from the Three Rivers representative the idea was stated that an easement could be gotten from the courts for “pinch points.”, or in other words, my back yard. This would severely impact the value of my property.

This would severely impact the value of my property. It was also stated at the information session that I needn't worry, that the bike path wouldn't be put in for two or three years. My question is when would I be reimbursed for my loss if the route through my back yard is approved? Who and how would the size of the devaluation be decided? Since part of my yard often floods, do you intend to take our entire property? Once the route is approved, and the devaluation of my property has occurred, I would not be able to sell the house for what it is currently worth. We do not think it fair to be asked to wait years for reimbursement.

In summary, we strongly oppose routing a bike path along nine mile creek and through ours and our neighbors back yards. It jeopardizes the environment and our safety. With an easement, our home and the environment as we know it will be destroyed. We respectfully ask you to reconsider the direction this is taking.

Sincerely,

Jim and Anne Hildebrand
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