

OFFICIAL ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Mississippi National River and Recreation Area
111 Kellogg Boulevard East, Suite 105
Saint Paul, MN 55101

NO HARD COPY TO FOLLOW

March 31, 2017

Karen Blaska
Park Planner
Anoka County Parks and Recreation
550 Bunker Lake Blvd. NW
Andover, MN 55304

Dear Karen:

The purpose of this letter is to inform Anoka County that the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (NRRA), National Park Service (NPS), supports the proposed amendment to the Mississippi West Regional Park (MWRP) Master Plan, as described below. MWRP is completely within the Mississippi NRRA and along the 3,000-mile Mississippi River National Millennium Trail (MRT). It is an important, multimodal destination in the NRRA, as identified in the park's Alternative Transportation System Five Year Implementation Plan (2017 – 2021).

Since 1996, the National Park Service, through its Trails and Open Space Partnership (TOSP), has been working with Anoka County and over 50 agencies and organizations to complete a continuous trail and open space, and now alternative transportation system, along the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities metro area. Through the NPS Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP), significant federal resources have contributed to several regional park projects in Anoka County. Projects that have received funding include improvements at Anoka County Riverfront and Coon Rapids Dam Regional Parks. Most recently, the City of Ramsey received \$490,000 for the Mississippi Skyway Bridge, which will connect the Northstar Rail station in Ramsey to Mississippi West Regional Park and the MRT. The project is a high priority of the NRRA's Five Year Alternative Transportation Plan as it provides safe, multi-modal access to the park.

The NRRA supports the County's Mississippi West Regional Park Master Plan Amendment, and we trust Anoka County continues to support the Mississippi Skyway Bridge as a phased improvement. Our understanding, in approving the 2011 master plan, the Metropolitan Council required Anoka County negotiate a cost sharing agreement related to the development of the pedestrian overpass prior to seeking regional parks funding for the project. We encourage the county to continue to work with the Metropolitan Council and the City of Ramsey to develop the Mississippi Skyway Bridge. Significant federal resources have been committed to its development and some additional resources are pending.

I look forward to continuing to work with Anoka County on these and other improvements within the Mississippi NRRRA. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to give me a call at 651-293-8432.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Anfinson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a distinct "A".

John Anfinson
Superintendent