



Jess L. Greenwood, P.E.
Public Works Director – County Engineer

2140 Pioneer Road
Red Wing, MN 55066
Office: (651) 385.3025

TO: Honorable County Commissioners
Scott Arneson, County Administrator

FROM: Jess L. Greenwood, P.E. – Public Works Director / County Engineer

RE: 17 September 2024 County Board Meeting
Lake Byllesby Parking Lot – REGULAR AGENDA

Date: 11 September 2024

Summary

Goodhue County Public Works was asked to provide parking lot usage data for the expanded parking lot area east of the existing paved passenger vehicle lot at Byllesby Park.

Background

The 2025 capital plan originally had \$50,000 included for the placement of class 5 aggregate surfacing over an expanded parking lot area immediately east of the existing passenger vehicle lot. Through discussions with administration the capital plan item was changed to utilize fund balance dollars from Public Works.

At the September 3, 2024, County Budget Workshop the aggregate surfacing project and subsequent use of fund balance dollars was discussed. During discussions there were questions related to the usage of this expanded parking area that is presently delineated with posts and rope and whether staff had obtained vehicle counts. At that time the Board was informed that staff had not been able to collect any data related to the number of vehicles that utilize this area for parking. A request was made by the Board for staff to visit with those who might have regular attendance at the park that could provide insight on what they have witnessed. Due to their routine appearances at the park, it was suggested that staff inquire with the Sheriff's Department to gather information. The limited information that was available did not include most afternoon's, evenings, weekends, or holidays which are the busiest times at the park. It was noted that on weekdays the paved passenger car parking lot was busy. It was suggested that the current configuration utilizing rope to delineate the overflow parking area may be confusing to most park visitors. Staff have also reached out to those individuals responsible for staffing the Aquatic Invasive Species checkpoint at the park as they are present during peak park usage which would include weekends. At the time of writing this report contact with AIS staff has been attempted but no response received.

With very limited responses, staff have been unable to collect any quantifiable data that could be a basis for usage. Being on the tail end of summer the ability to capture any volume of usage is diminishing and will not be representative of season long park usage and attendance.

"To effectively promote the safety, health, and well-being of our residents"

The purpose of this expanded parking area is not only to accommodate expanded park usage due to the construction of the Richard Samuelson Pavilion but to help keep vehicles from parking in areas of the park that have had prairie restoration completed and to keep other green spaces from being damaged. Appropriately sized parking lots provide safety by keeping visitors from having to park along the highway or along the entrance road into the park.

The Stanton Township Board approved this expanded lot under a conditional use permit this past spring in a 3-0 vote as they recognized the additional parking needs to accommodate increased park usage that would be caused by the opening of the pavilion. Reservations of the pavilion began in August and are generating more and more usage of the park.

Alternatives

- Keep the parking lot aggregate surfacing project in the budget utilizing fund balance dollars.
- Remove the project from the 2025 budget.

Recommendations

- Staff's recommendation is to keep the parking lot aggregate surfacing project in the budget utilizing fund balance dollars.