



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

100 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611

Legislation Text

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TRANSMITTAL LETTER FOR BOARD MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2016

COMMITTEE ON ENGINEERING

Mr. David St. Pierre, Executive Director

Authorization to negotiate an Intergovernmental Agreement with the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the Chicago Park District for a project to remove the North Branch Dam and stabilize banks along the North Branch Chicago River and the North Shore Channel from Lawrence Avenue to Devon Avenue (16-IGA-22)

Dear Sir:

Authority is requested to negotiate an Intergovernmental Agreement in the form of a Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Chicago Park District (CPD) in support of USACE's River Riparian and Habitat Project (16-IGA-22). The project consists of restoration of approximately one acre of stream bed by removing concrete within the channel, installing riffles and step pools, removal of the North Branch Dam, and providing cobbles, gravels and sands; restoration of 29 acres of savannah habitat; restoration of 14 acres of river bank by gentling riverbank slopes, removing invasive species, and establishing native bank vegetation; and restoration of five acres of aquatic beds.

The District has considered initiatives by the Friends of the Chicago River and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to remove or modify the North Branch Dam. The current project stems from a request from CPD to USACE to improve their District leaseholds along the North Branch Chicago River and the North Shore Channel. The project has already gone out for public comment, and USACE is currently finalizing its feasibility study. The total project cost is estimated at \$15 million. CPD has committed \$2.5 million for local matching funds, and the District has been asked to consider providing the remaining required \$2.5 million local cost share. USACE would provide the remaining \$10 million.

Federal funding for this project is still uncertain, but USACE is trying to obtain funds to start construction in Fiscal Year 2017. Removal of the North Branch Dam is proposed near the beginning of the five-year project.

Based on the foregoing, the Engineering Department recommends that the District be authorized to negotiate an Intergovernmental Agreement with the United States Army Corps of Engineers and Chicago Park District. Authority to enter into the PPA will be sought from the Board of Commissioners at a future date.

Requested, Catherine A. O'Connor, Director of Engineering, WSS:KMF

Recommended, David St. Pierre, Executive Director

Respectfully Submitted, Frank Avila, Chairman Committee on Engineering

Disposition of this agenda item will be documented in the official Regular Board Meeting Minutes of the Board of Commissioners for September 1, 2016