



LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES
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Preservation, Restoration, Education and Recreation

DATE: November 5, 2018

MEMO TO: Carol Calabresa, Chair
Planning Committee

FROM: Randall L. Seebach
Director of Planning and Land Preservation

REQUEST: Provide policy direction regarding a potential partnership with the Village of Arlington Heights for the Wilke Road trail connection at Buffalo Creek Forest Preserve.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION SUPPORTED: Public Access and Connections.

FINANCIAL DATA: There is no financial impact at this time.

BACKGROUND: For several years, the District and the Village of Arlington Heights (the “Village”) have received numerous requests from residents south of Lake Cook Road to provide a trail connection to the existing trails at Buffalo Creek Forest Preserve near Wilke Road. While there is an existing traffic light at the intersection of Wilke Road and Lake Cook Road, there are no pedestrian crosswalk improvements such as crosswalk pavement markings, sidewalk landings and pedestrian push buttons. Even though the intersection is not properly improved for pedestrians, residents have continued to unofficially use that location to access District trails. The District has consistently denied allowing a formal connection until the Village and/or the Cook County Department of Transportation provides adequate and safe pedestrian improvements through the Lake Cook Road right-of-way.

In 2008, the Village was awarded CMAQ funding for the pedestrian improvements to the intersection but was forced to withdraw the project because the bids received were significantly over the estimate. In 2017, the Village also applied for an Invest in Cook grant, but was not awarded this funding.

The District recently received a letter from the Village requesting (i) “a joint agency response and action to the citizen requests”, (ii) the District’s support to move the project forward, and (iii) the District’s attendance at a meeting scheduled for November 15, 2018 to further discuss the project. The Village has also sent similar correspondence to the Arlington Heights Park District and the Cook County Department of Transportation soliciting their support. If the project moves forward with the multiple local governments involved, it will likely culminate in an intergovernmental agreement, to which the District would be a party.

Staff is seeking direction from the Committee on (i) whether to support the project and if so, in what capacity, (ii) whether to attend the November 15 meeting to further discuss the project, and (iii) whether to engage in negotiations for an intergovernmental agreement (that would be effective only if and when it is approved by the corporate authorities of both the District and the Village and possibly other agencies).

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Executive Director, Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Corporate Counsel.



Village of Arlington Heights

33 South Arlington Heights Road
Arlington Heights, Illinois 60005-1499
(847) 368-5000
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October 30, 2018

Randy Seebach, Director of Planning and Land Preservation
Lake County Forest Preserves
1899 West Winchester Road
Libertyville, IL 60048

RE: Buffalo Creek Crossing at Wilke Road (A.H.E. File No. 2007-26)

Dear Mr. Seebach,

Over the years, the Village has received numerous requests for a safe connection to the Buffalo Creek Forest Preserve north of Lake-Cook Road. With the path improvements and MWRD project currently underway, these requests have only increased in frequency and the Village is exploring options to revive this project.

The Village itself has recognized this as an important connection for years. In 2008, the Village received CAMQ funding for the pedestrian improvements at the intersection of Lake-Cook and Wilke Road, which included new sidewalk landings, signal modifications, pavement markings, and path improvements. Unfortunately, the bids at that time came significantly over the estimate and the project was withdrawn. In 2017, the Village applied for the Invest in Cook grant, but was not awarded this grant.

The current situation is that there is no viable option to cross Lake-Cook Road to enter into the Buffalo Creek Forest Preserve from the south. However, as evidenced by the "goat-trail" on the north side of Lake-Cook Road at Wilke Road, many users are choosing this route. In addition, we are hearing accounts that users are crossing at Schaeffer Road where no signal exists. Providing the pedestrian and bicycle improvements at the intersection of Lake-Cook Road and Wilke Road is a needed improvement.

This letter is to formally request a joint agency response and action to the citizen requests. We have identified your agency as a key stakeholder for this project and are looking for your support to move this project forward.

Please join us for a meeting on Thursday, November 15, 2018 at 10:00am at the Arlington Heights Village Hall in the Engineering conference room to further discuss this project. Please direct any questions to Briget Schwab, P.E., Staff Liaison to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee, at 847-368-5257.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael L. Pagonis".

Michael L. Pagonis, P.E.
Village Engineer

Cc: Scott Shirley, P.E., Director of Public Works