

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
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DATE: August 30, 2007

TO: Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

FROM: Jan Youngquist, Senior Planner-Parks (651) 602-1029

SUBJECT: (2007-266) Mississippi River Regional Trail Northern Alignment Master Plan, Anoka County (Referral No. 20057-1)

INTRODUCTION

Anoka County has submitted a master plan for the Mississippi River Regional Trail Northern Alignment for Metropolitan Council review and approval.

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* (Chapter 2 – Policies and Strategies, Section D – Planning, Strategy 4A- Master Plans), describes the role of the master plan in the regional park system. The policy requires that any project proposed for funding in the Metropolitan Regional Parks Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) be consistent with a Metropolitan Council approved regional park master plan.

This memorandum contains a review of the Mississippi River Regional Trail Northern Alignment Master Plan based on its consistency with the *2030 Parks Policy Plan*.

AUTHORITY TO REVIEW

Minnesota Statute 473.313, Subdivision 1 requires Regional Park Implementing Agencies to “prepare, after consultation with all affected municipalities, and submit to the Metropolitan Council, and from time to time revise and resubmit to the council, a master plan and annual budget for the acquisition and development of regional recreation open space located within the district or county, consistent with the council’s policy plan.” (i.e., the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*)

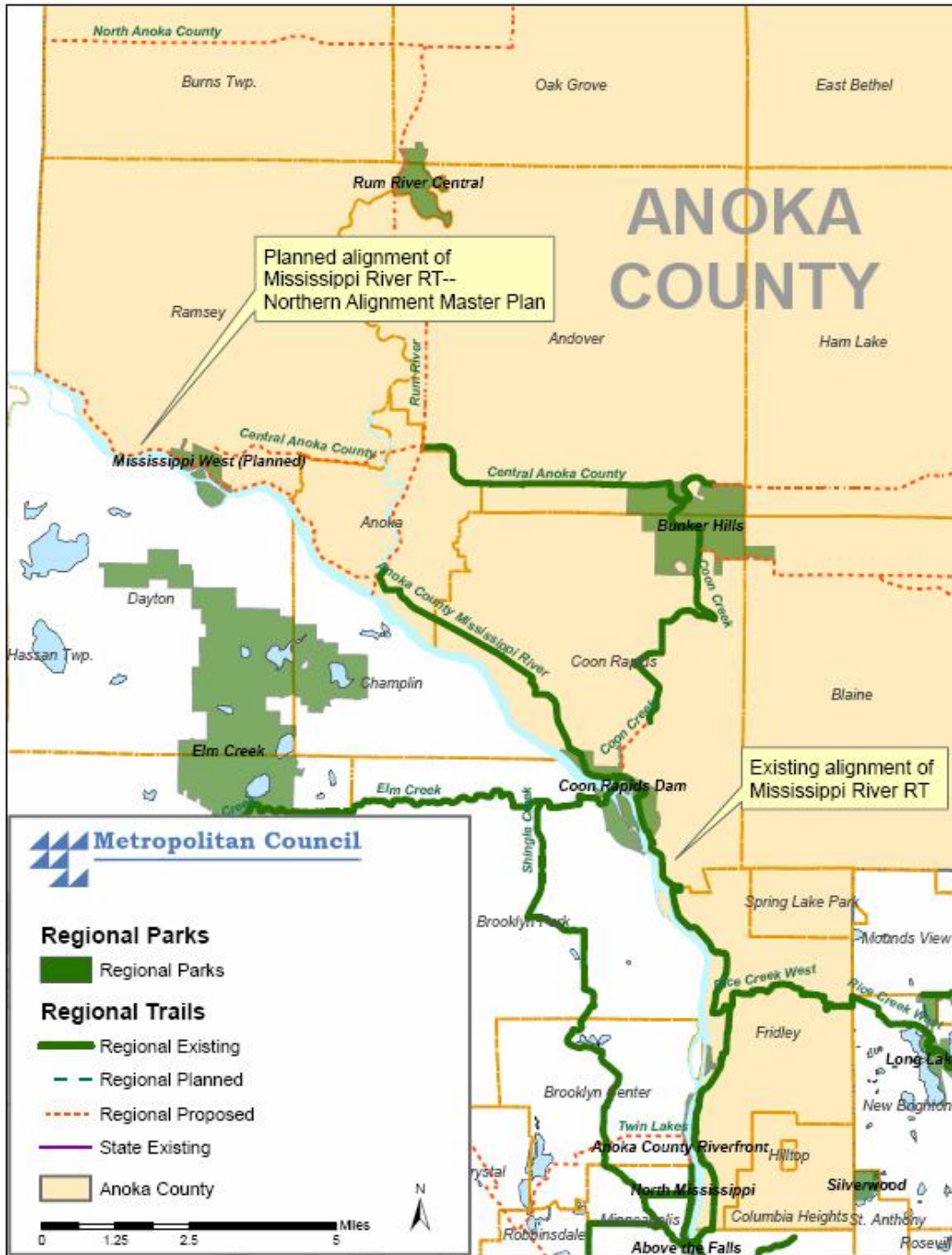
Minnesota Statute 473.313, Subdivision 2 authorizes the Metropolitan Council to review, with the advice of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, master plans for the regional park system. Plans are reviewed for their consistency with the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and other Council policy plans. If a master plan is not consistent with Council policy, the Council should return the plan to the implementing agency with its comments for revision and resubmittal.

BACKGROUND

The Mississippi River Regional Trail will follow the Mississippi River from the southernmost Anoka County border in Fridley to the Sherburne County border in Ramsey. This master plan for the northern alignment of the regional trail consists of approximately 10 miles, which will bring the total trail length to 24 miles once developed. The proposed alignment corresponds to Sherburne County’s proposed trail system.

The northern alignment of the Mississippi River Regional Trail connects to the Central Anoka County and Rum River Regional Trails. It will also connect to the planned Mississippi West Regional Park, the Ramsey Town Center and local neighborhood parks, trails and points of interest. See Figure 1 for the location of the Mississippi River Regional Trail in Anoka County.

Figure 1—Location of Mississippi River Regional Trail—Anoka County



ANALYSIS

1. Boundaries and Acquisition Costs

The proposed trail corridor in this master plan is divided into five segments that illustrate the primary and alternative routes. If the primary route cannot be constructed, the alternate routes will be considered. Most of the alternate routes are intended to be additional trail locations that will connect with other existing and proposed trails, however. Figure 2 describes the primary routes in each segment.

Figure 2—Primary Segment Descriptions

Segment	Approx. Length	Location	Costs
1 West	4 miles	Anoka/Sherburne County line to west end of Mississippi West Regional Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 75,000 square feet in trail easement acquisition needed—estimated cost of \$175,000 • Approximately 13,050 linear feet crosses agricultural land or open space. As the land is developed, the trail could be required as part of the development with little costs to the city or county
2 Mississippi West Regional Park	2 miles	West border of Mississippi West Regional Park to Riverdale Drive in Ramsey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the trail is within Mississippi West Regional Park. The regional park is in the development planning phase and the trail segment will be included in park development • The remaining portion is currently developed and maintained by the City of Ramsey • No acquisition costs for this segment
3 Central	1 mile	138 th and Riverdale Drive to the east end of Rivlyn Avenue in Ramsey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First portion of this segment would be south of Riverdale in existing right-of-way • Second portion travels 450’ across private property, which has an existing utility easement that might be used for the trail. If the easement cannot be used, acquisition costs are estimated to be \$25,000 • Third portion would follow Rivlyn Ave in existing right-of-way
4 Kings Island	1.1 miles	East end of Rivlyn Avenue, across Kings Island to Mississippi River Community Park in Anoka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kings Island is owned by the City of Anoka • The trail will utilize existing trails through Mississippi River Community Park • No acquisition costs for this segment
5 City of Anoka	1.7 miles	East boundary of Mississippi River Community Park to the Rum River Regional Trail on the east side of the Rum River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.1 miles of on-street trail along Benton St. that will be signed as a designated trail route • When road widths are widened, an off-street trail should be considered where possible • 850’ of existing sidewalk could be used at the east end of Benton St. • No acquisition costs for this segment

Total acquisition costs are estimated to be \$200,000 for the northern alignment of the Mississippi River Regional Trail described in this master plan.

2. Stewardship Plan

Anoka County Parks and Recreation is a natural resources based system. Along the Mississippi River Regional Trail, the County will provide for:

- The protection, restoration and enhancement of plant and animal habitats throughout the corridor
- Protection and improvement of water and soil resources
- An increased public awareness of the diverse natural resources
- Encouragement of green and open spaces along the trail corridor where possible to enhance the recreational benefits to the community

The areas adjacent to the corridor include parks, state owned land, agricultural fields, residential housing, commercial districts and light industrial uses. Areas such as the parks and state owned land would be suitable for restoration and stewardship plans. The agricultural fields provide opportunities to restore natural resources along the corridor when development occurs. The areas adjacent to existing housing, commercial and light industry would not be suitable for restoration, although landscape and restoration enhancements along the corridor could be possible.

The trail will traverse two prime management and stewardship areas—Mississippi West Regional Park and Kings Island. Mississippi West Regional Park is a 273 acre undeveloped park. Kings Island is a wooded preserve in the City of Anoka.

Management and stewardship practices for maintenance along the corridor will include regular inspections; sweeping; debris removal; cleaning; mowing; snow and ice removal; bituminous repair; turf, brush and tree maintenance; shouldering if necessary; sign inspection and repair or replacement; and maintenance and repair of overlooks, observation decks and amenities along the trail corridor.

3. Needs Analysis

Regional parks and trails in the greater metropolitan area are very popular; therefore, the demand for regional trails is anticipated to increase as the population grows. The population of Anoka County has been growing steadily and is predicted to grow 38 percent in the next 25 years. Along the trail corridor, the population of the City of Ramsey is projected to grow by almost 140 percent from 2000 to 2030.

Figure 3—Population Forecast*

Year	City of Ramsey	City of Anoka
2000	18,510	18,076
2010	30,000	19,000
2020	43,000	19,800
2030	44,000	20,800

**Metropolitan Council 2030 Regional Development Framework—System Statements*

According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources 2004 Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey, nearly 82 percent of Minnesotans surveyed indicated that outdoor recreation is “very important” or “moderately important” in their lives. Popular trail activities include walking, hiking, biking, running, jogging and inline skating.

The estimated recreational visits to regional parks and trails in Anoka County have increased by 67 percent from 1995 to 2005. The future population growth anticipated for the County, along with the increase in regional park and trail use, will most likely increase the demand for additional facilities.

4. Development

The Mississippi River Regional Trail – Northern Alignment is intended to be a corridor with a 10 foot wide bituminous surface trail for use by pedestrians, bicyclists and inline skaters that provides connections to other existing and proposed regional and local parks and trails. Ideally, the trail would be completely off-street, but due to existing road widths and right-of-way restrictions, a portion of the trail will be on-street. When roadways are reconstructed and rights-of-way widened, additional right-of-way for an off-street trail should be considered. Where an on-street trail is necessary, the goal is to have a minimum 5 foot wide striped bike lane with a minimum 5 foot wide sidewalk behind the curb.

The typical trail section would include a 2 foot wide shoulder on each side of the 10 foot wide trail, with grades not exceeding 5 percent. The shoulder is recommended to be within the street or trail right-of-way for maintenance purposes. The trail may be located as close as two feet from the back of the curb; however, the preferred distance would be five to seven feet.

It would be necessary to have the following amount of right-of-way width for the trail corridor, depending on the trail and boulevard width:

Figure 4—Right-of-Way Needed

Boulevard Width	Trail Width	ROW Needed
5'	10'	17'
2'	10'	14'
2'	5'	9'

The project has been broken down into a primary route and several alternative routes. If the primary route cannot be constructed, the alternate routes will be considered. Most of the alternates are intended as additional trail locations to connect with other existing and proposed trails, however.

Figure 5 shows detailed cost breakdowns by trail segment as well as the total estimated construction costs for the entire trail. Total master plan development costs are approximately \$1,355,680—or \$34.23 per linear foot.

Figure 5—Estimated Development Costs by Trail Segment

Segment 1 - West	Estimated Costs
Clearing and grubbing of 267,700 square feet @ \$0.09	\$24,093
Private fence relocation	\$8,250
Private utility relocation	\$4,950
Signing and striping for street crossing	\$1,650
Trail construction 20,500 linear feet @ \$25/LF	\$512,500
Design/Engineering/Contingency (15%)	\$82,716
Total Estimated Cost = \$30.93 per LF	\$634,159

Segment 2 – Mississippi West Regional Park	Estimated Costs
Clearing and grubbing of 50,000 square feet @ \$0.09	\$4,500
Trail construction 6,400 linear feet @ \$25/LF	\$160,000
Design/Engineering/Contingency (15%)	\$24,675
Total Estimated Cost = \$29.56 per LF	\$189,175

Segment 3 - Central	Estimated Costs
Utility relocation	\$5,500
Parking lot modifications	\$3,000
Fence relocations	\$3,000
Driveway relocations	\$5,000
Pedestrian crossing striping and signs	\$2,000
Trail construction 4,950 linear feet at \$25/LF	\$123,750
Design/Engineering/Contingency (15%)	\$21,337
Total Estimated Cost = \$33.05 per LF	\$163,587

Segment 4 – Kings Island	Estimated Costs
Earthwork, fill embankment for earthen dike and culvert or bridge for oxbow crossing	\$175,000
Clearing and grubbing of 12,400 square feet @ \$0.90	\$11,160
Trail construction 3,100 linear feet @ \$25/LF	\$77,500
Design/Engineering/Contingency (15%)	\$39,549
Total Estimated Cost = \$97.81 per LF	\$303,209

Segment 5 – City of Anoka	Estimated Costs
Utility relocation	\$17,000
Landscaping/signage allowance	\$25,000
Trail construction 600 linear feet @ \$25/LF	\$15,000

Design/Engineering/Contingency (15%)	\$8,550
Total Estimated Cost = \$109.16 per LF	\$65,550

All Segments	Estimated Costs
1—West	\$634,159
2—Mississippi West Regional Park*	\$189,175
3—Central	\$163,587
4—Kings Island	\$303,209
5—City of Anoka	\$65,550
Total Estimated Construction Cost = \$34.23 per LF	\$1,355,680

*Construction costs for Segment 2 will be included in the park development of the Mississippi River West Regional Park or through a trail grant.

5. Conflicts

Anoka County will work to keep conflicts regarding this trail to a minimum through proper planning and community involvement. Common concerns among residents that live adjacent to the trail include the effect the trail will have on their safety, security and privacy. Generally, regional trails in the metropolitan area do not have high criminal activities related to trail use. Anoka County will work to minimize the impacts to the residents' privacy through vegetated screens or shifting the trail where possible. The best methods to address these issues will be determined by Anoka County and the affected residents.

Conflicts between pedestrian trail users and vehicular traffic will be kept to a minimum. Where conflicts cannot be avoided, pavement striping such as crosswalks or striping of the trail will be used. Signage along the trail will alert trail users to areas of potential conflict, such as street crossings, driveway crossings and pedestrian cross-traffic. In the areas where the trail is in close proximity to Highway 10, additional screening and buffering will be used to enhance the safety and aesthetic quality of the trail.

6. Public Services

The Mississippi River Regional Trail will not require non-recreational public services. Various public services such as restrooms and parking are available at Peninsula Point Park and Mississippi River Community Park in Anoka. A wayside rest in Ramsey has been redeveloped and includes parking and restroom facilities. As Mississippi West Regional Park is developed, parking and additional restrooms will be available for trail users.

7. Operations

Anoka County Ordinance #2000-1 regulates parks and trails and will be enforced by the local police departments and the Anoka County Sheriff.

The City of Anoka and City of Ramsey will be responsible for providing daily and general routine maintenance of the trail within their jurisdiction. These maintenance activities include mowing, sweeping, plowing, clearing and debris removal. Solid waste, such as litter and trash, will be removed from along the trail at regular intervals by the local agencies.

Anoka County will inspect the trail annually and will provide required long-term maintenance. Trail signage will be provided and maintained by the County. Annual maintenance costs for the trail are estimated to be approximately \$10,000, which includes funds for sign replacement, minor bituminous repair and crack sealing.

Revenue for the operation and maintenance of this trail will come from the Anoka County Parks and Recreation annual operations and maintenance budget with supplementary funding coming from the Metropolitan Council's regional operations and maintenance grant program.

8. Citizen Participation

Anoka County worked cooperatively with the Cities of Anoka and Ramsey throughout the master planning process. The regional trail was discussed at Parks and Recreation Committee or Advisory Committee meetings as well as at City Council and County Board meetings. All three jurisdictions passed resolutions supporting development of the trail. An open house was held on April 18, 2007 to inform the public and answer questions regarding the trail. Several positive comments were received.

9. Public Awareness

Once the trail is complete, Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department along with the Cities of Anoka and Ramsey will inform the public through maps, websites, publications and brochures. Since the trail is located in the Mississippi National River Recreation Area, Anoka County will work with National Park Service staff to educate and inform the public about the trail.

10. Special Needs

Anoka County strives to provide equal access to its parks and trails. No fees are collected for trail use. The Anoka County "Traveler" provides transportation services for a minimal fee to County citizens who are in need.

The trail and its access points will meet guidelines set by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The trail will be built with grades required for accessibility and curb ramps will be built at all locations where the trail crosses a curb.

11. Natural Resources

Anoka County's Natural Resources Unit will be involved in the design, construction and monitoring of the trail development project. An emphasis will be placed on avoiding and minimizing any adverse impacts to the plant and animal habitat as well as to the overall watershed. The County will focus on incorporating local native seed and plant material that will complement the ecology and function of the surrounding native plant communities.

Protection of surface and ground water resources are a top priority for the project. Anoka County will work closely with the Cities of Anoka and Ramsey, the Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization, the National Park Services' Mississippi National River Recreation Area, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Metropolitan Council to ensure that the standard and requirements for resource protection are consistent with the Council's model ordinance for storm water management.

Vegetation management along the trail corridor will focus on preserving native plants, introducing local native plants, maintaining water quality within the watershed and providing for linear plant and wildlife corridor connections. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources “Guidelines for Managing and Restoring Natural Plant Communities Along Trails and Waterways” reference will be used as part of the long term management plan for the trail corridor.

REVIEW BY OTHER COUNCIL DIVISIONS:

Community Development – Environment, Surface Water Management (Jim Larsen) –Staff suggests consideration of the use of porous asphalt in the construction of the trail system. The lower courses in a porous asphalt roadway system are typically deeper than systems with a traditional bituminous top course to allow for proper runoff drainage, storage and infiltration. The design modifications for a narrower trail system should not be as onerous, however, and will not contribute to increased imperviousness in the area.

Response: Anoka County indicated that the use of porous asphalt is a good idea and that they would examine it prior to construction of trails, parking lots and roadways.

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig) – Metropolitan Council Environmental Services has facilities within the vicinity of many of Anoka County Parks proposed trails. To assess the potential impacts to our interceptor system, prior to initiating any trail projects final plans should be sent to Scott Dentz, Interceptor Engineering Manager (651-602-4503) at for review and comment.

Transportation (Ann Braden) – In 2004 the city of Ramsey adopted an official map reflecting the proposed realignment for the reconstruction of TH 10. The official map is established along TH 10 from approximately Armstrong Boulevard to the Ramsey-Anoka municipal boundary. The official map area is bounded to the south by TH 10 and to the north by the BNSF railroad. By officially mapping this corridor, the city has been able to acquire available parcels of future right of way through the Council's right of way acquisition loan fund (RALF) program. It appears that the proposed trail (blue line) lies outside the official map alignment, but several segments of the proposed trail alternative (yellow line) appear to cross the officially mapped area. The County should recognize the officially mapped area of TH10 and ensure that it does not raise issues for the alternative trail alignment.

Response: Anoka County has submitted an addendum to the master plan, acknowledging the RALF/TH 10 mapped area. Two proposed trail alternatives cross the mapped area of TH 10: one entails a proposed pedestrian bridge over the highway; and the other involves a connection to an existing trail at Sunfish Lake Boulevard, both located in Ramsey. Anoka County worked closely with the City of Ramsey in development of the master plan and planning the trail segments in the Highway 10 corridor.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that master plans include information on eleven items reviewed in the “analysis section” above. It also requires that sufficient information be included on the estimated cost of the acquisition and development proposed in the master plan. This review concludes that the Mississippi River Regional Trail Northern Alignment Master Plan (Referral No. 20057-1) contains sufficient information to meet the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and that it is generally consistent with the requirements of the plan.

2. The estimated cost to implement the master plan is \$1,555,680 in 2007 dollars. This estimate includes \$200,000 in acquisition costs and \$1,355,680 in development costs.
3. Approval of this master plan does not commit the Council to any funding at this time. Future development funding based on this master plan would be done through the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Council action is required to approve the CIP and to approve specific grants to Anoka County.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Mississippi River Regional Trail Northern Alignment Master Plan (Referral No. 20057-1).
2. Require that prior to development of new trail segments, final plans be sent to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review and comment to ensure the integrity of the interceptor system.
3. Suggest that Anoka County consider the use of porous asphalt in the construction of the trail system to allow for proper runoff drainage, storage and infiltration.