

Regional Parks Policy Plan Update Proposed System Changes

**Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Meeting
February 2, 2010**

St. Paul

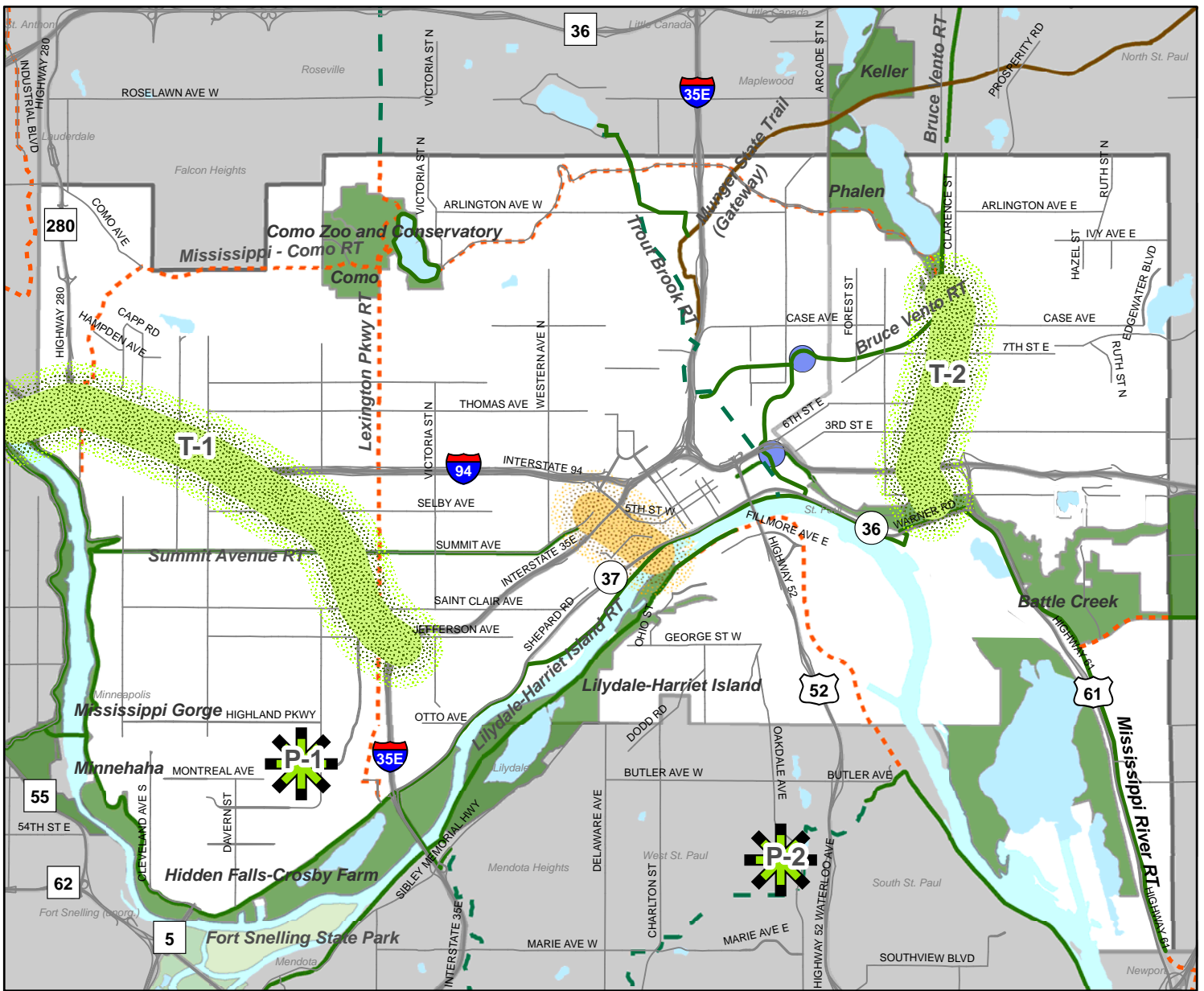
- P-1 Highland Park—proposed Regional Park Study Area
- T-1 Ayd Mill Trail—proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor
- T-2 Johnson Parkway Trail—proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor

Washington County

- T-3 Middle St. Croix Valley Trail—proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor
- T-4 Point Douglas Trail—proposed Regional Trail

Three Rivers Park District

- P-3 The Landing—proposed Special Recreation Feature



Regional Parks Policy Plan Update St. Paul



Regional Parks

- Regional
- State
- Federal

Regional Trails

- Regional Existing
- Regional Planned
- Regional Proposed (No Master Plan)
- State Existing

Regional Park Search Areas (2005)

- Boundary Adjustment

Regional Trail Search Corridors (2005)

- Recognition of Regional Status

Proposed System Additions (2010)



T-1

Proposed Trail would follow Ayd Mill Road and connect Midtown Greenway to proposed Lexington Pkwy Regional Trail

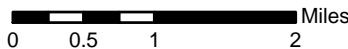


T-2

Proposed Trail would follow Johnson Parkway, connecting Phalen Regional Park, Bruce Vento Regional Trail, and Battle Creek-Indian Mounds Regional Park



Highland Park--Proposed Regional Park Study Area



**2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update
Proposed System Changes**

Map Designation:	P-1
Name:	Highland Park
Agency:	City of St. Paul
Category:	Proposed Regional Park Study Area
Acres:	257
Acquisition Costs:	\$0

Request

The City of St. Paul has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council consider Highland Park to be designated as a Regional Park Study Area in the Parks Policy Plan update.

Designation as a Regional Park Study Area does not guarantee that a park will become part of the regional parks system. It acknowledges that studies would need to be conducted to determine whether the facility warrants regional status. Once these studies are complete, the information will be presented to MPOSC and the Council for evaluation.

Background

Highland Park is a 257 acre local park that is primarily bounded by Highland Parkway to the north, Lexington Parkway to the east, West Seventh Street to the south, and Snelling Avenue to the west. The park includes the 18-hole Highland National Golf Course; a 9-hole golf course; an aquatic center that provides swimming, diving and lifeguarding lessons; disc golf; a picnic pavilion seating approximately 200 people; and a picnic shelter seating approximately 50 people. Circus Juventas, a youth performing arts circus school, is also located at Highland Park. The school has a lease with the City of St. Paul and built a 21,000 square foot “Big Top” on the site.

In November 2000, St. Paul requested that the Metropolitan Council recognize Highland Park as a regional park, which would allow the park to be eligible for regional parks funding. The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission reviewed the request and determined that more information was needed regarding visitation to the park, including the regional distribution of visitation.

A park visitor survey was conducted in 2001 to determine the number of local versus non-local visits to the park. Non-local visits are defined as visits by people living outside of St. Paul’s jurisdiction. Visitation estimates at regional parks do not include golfers, as

golf courses are enterprise facilities that do not serve as nature-oriented outdoor recreation. The benchmark applied for qualifying as a regional distribution of visitation was 40 percent non-local visits. Of the visitors surveyed, 92 percent were local visits from people living in St. Paul, and 8 percent were non-local visits from people living in Minneapolis, Eagan, Roseville and West St. Paul. Based on this information, the park was not recognized as a regional park.

Criteria

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* indicates that a regional park should be 200-500 acres in size (with 100 acres as a minimum); should serve a service area of 3-5 communities; should be in a natural setting contiguous to water bodies or watercourses if possible; and should provide nature oriented recreation such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping and trail uses.

At 257 acres, Highland Park meets the size requirements for a regional park, although approximately 170 acres of the park is comprised of the two golf courses. With the exception of Bunker Beach Water Park at Bunker Hills Regional Park, swimming activities in the regional system are typically focused on lakes in natural settings. Swimming lessons at pools are typically provided as part of a local parks and recreation program.

The remainder of the park provides disc golf, picnic facilities, trails and open space, which are all typical amenities in the regional parks system. The park is not contiguous to any water bodies, but includes steep topography with a dense tree canopy along the bluff sloping down to West Seventh Street. Additional studies would need to be conducted to determine the park's service area and visitation patterns.

City of Saint Paul
Parks and Recreation
Highland Park

Highland National
18 Hole Golf Course
and
Driving Range



9 Hole Disc
Golf Course



Montreal Ave

To Lexington Pkwy

To Snelling Ave

Golf Club house

9 Hole Golf Course

Edgumbe Rd

Key

- Golf Course
- Parking Lot
- Play Area
- Picnic Shelter
- Picnic Grounds
- Restrooms
- Building Structures
- Trails - Off Street
- Side Walk

Police Station

Police Parking Lot

Aquatic Building

Highland Aquatic Center

Circus Juventas

Booya Shed

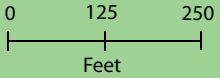
Picnic Pavilion

Pedestrian Bridge

7th St

Deaton St

Benson Ave



**2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update
Proposed System Changes**

Map Designation:	T-1
Name:	Ayd Mill Trail
Agency:	City of St. Paul
Category:	Regional Trail Search Corridor
Miles:	4.3
Acquisition Costs:	TBD

Request

The City of St. Paul has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council consider the designation of a regional trail search corridor along Ayd Mill Road.

Background

Ayd Mill Road runs diagonally through St. Paul from Selby Avenue to Interstate 35E along the Canadian Pacific Railroad corridor. The road has been the subject of a great deal of debate over the years. In the 1960s, the road was envisioned as a freeway connection between Interstates 94 and 35E. The plan was resisted by neighbors worrying about noise, pollution and traffic. The road was subsequently developed as a connection between Selby and Jefferson Avenues.

In 1999, an Environmental Impact Statement was prepared that examined various alternatives for the roadway, with a preferred alternative selected in 2004. The preferred alternative included a four lane roadway, two lanes in each direction, with a direct connection to I-35E on the south end and an extension of Ayd Mill Road to St. Anthony Avenue, a frontage road to I-94, on the north end. The ramp to I-35E opened in the early 2000s, although an extension to St. Anthony Avenue has not been made.

The St. Paul City Council passed a resolution in 2009 stating its position supporting a two lane roadway, with one lane in each direction, to be connected north to St. Anthony Avenue. The City Council supports improving the existing roadway to look more like a city street with an adjacent pedestrian/bicycle trail. The resolution calls for the City to initiate a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement process to study the effects of the following options: no-build/no-connection, reducing the existing roadway to two lanes, and both a two lane and a four lane connection to St. Anthony Avenue.

The Canadian Pacific Railroad corridor runs parallel to Ayd Mill Road and stretches northwest from the road's terminus at Selby Avenue toward I-94 and Highway 280, then loops southwest to cross the Mississippi River into Minneapolis. The railroad is still

active. The St. Paul Public Works Department has examined options for the development of a bicycle/pedestrian trail along Ayd Mill Road between Snelling/Marshall Avenue and Victoria Street, which would likely require an easement from Canadian Pacific Railroad. Negotiations with the railroad have been difficult.

Although the trail project has been spearheaded by Public Works, the City's comprehensive plan identified this as a potential regional trail due to its proposed connection to the Midtown Greenway Trail in Minneapolis.

Criteria

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* outlines the following criteria for regional trails. Staff analysis is italicized.

Strategy 1(c): Siting criteria and land acquisition funding priorities for regional trails

To qualify for regional trail status, an existing or proposed trail must meet the following criteria:

1. The trail should not duplicate an existing trail. The trail may include a portion of an existing county or local trail if the trail serves one of the following functions:

(A) Destination Regional Trail. Be a destination itself, providing a high-quality recreation experience that traverses significant natural resource areas where the trail treadway will have no adverse impact on the natural resource base;

(B) Linking Regional Trail. Link two or more units of the regional recreation open space system.

The proposed Ayd Mill Trail does not duplicate an existing trail and will serve as a regional linking trail. The trail will connect to the Midtown Greenway Trail in Minneapolis and provide a unique diagonal route through the southwest portion of St. Paul, with opportunities to connect to Mississippi Gorge Regional Park, Summit Avenue Regional Trail, and the proposed Lexington Parkway Regional Trail.

2. The trail must serve a regional audience based on visitor origin and service-area research on regional trails.

With a connection to the Midtown Greenway Trail in Minneapolis and to the proposed Lexington Parkway Regional Trail, Ayd Mill Trail will likely serve a regional audience. The proposed Lexington Parkway Regional Trail extends north into suburban Ramsey County, where it will connect to other regional trails,

and extends south to the I-35E Mississippi River crossing to trails in Dakota County, thus providing additional opportunities for regional connections.

New **Linking Regional Trails** should be located within the developing or developed area of the region. For Linking Regional Trails, any two trails running parallel to each other and not separated by natural or human-built barriers should be at least 1.5 miles apart so as not to overlap the localized service area of those trails. Whenever possible, Linking Regional Trails should be located to reasonably maximize inclusion of high quality natural resources and connections to local trails, areas of lifecycle and affordable housing, and areas of infill and redevelopment.

The 2030 Regional Development Framework classifies St. Paul as a “developed” community, so this criterion has been met. The closest regional trail to the proposed Ayd Mill Trail is the Summit Avenue Regional Trail. There will be an overlap of the service area for the two trails. However, the trails will not be parallel to one another, since Ayd Mill runs diagonally northwest to southeast and Summit Avenue runs east to west. The Ayd Mill Trail will provide trail access north of I-94, which is a significant human-built barrier. The northwest segment of the trail is in close proximity to the Central Corridor LRT project, which will likely spur infill and redevelopment efforts in the area.

**2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update
Proposed System Changes**

Map Designation:	T-2
Name:	Johnson Parkway Trail
Agency:	City of St. Paul
Category:	Regional Trail Search Corridor
Miles:	2.15
Acquisition Costs:	TBD

Request

The City of St. Paul has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council consider the designation of a regional trail search corridor along Johnson Parkway.

Background

Johnson Parkway is a tree lined street located on the east side of St. Paul, which starts at the intersection of Wheelock Parkway and East River Drive at Phalen Regional Park and leads south to Burns Avenue and Mounds Boulevard at Battle Creek-Indian Mounds Regional Park. St. Paul envisions an off-road trail along most of the parkway; however, there may be some areas where the trail will have to be on-road due to a narrowing right-of-way.

St. Paul has plans for a Grand Rounds parkway system, with connections to the Grand Rounds in Minneapolis. The proposed trail along Johnson Parkway is the only segment of St. Paul's Grand Rounds that is not designated as part of the regional parks system.

Criteria

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* outlines the following criteria for regional trails. Staff analysis is italicized.

Strategy 1(c): Siting criteria and land acquisition funding priorities for regional trails

To qualify for regional trail status, an existing or proposed trail must meet the following criteria:

1. The trail should not duplicate an existing trail. The trail may include a portion of an existing county or local trail if the trail serves one of the following functions:

(A) Destination Regional Trail. Be a destination itself, providing a high-quality recreation experience that traverses significant natural resource areas where the trail treadway will have no adverse impact on the natural resource base;

(B) Linking Regional Trail. Link two or more units of the regional recreation open space system.

The proposed Johnson Parkway Trail does not duplicate an existing trail and will serve as a regional linking trail. The trail will connect Phalen-Keller Regional Park, Bruce Vento Regional Trail, and Battle Creek-Indian Mounds Regional Park.

2. The trail must serve a regional audience based on visitor origin and service-area research on regional trails.

The proposed Johnson Parkway Trail will connect Phalen-Keller and Battle Creek-Indian Mounds Regional Parks. Both of these regional parks are jointly managed by St. Paul and Ramsey County and inherently serve a regional population. St. Paul operates Phalen and Indian Mounds and Ramsey County operating Keller and Battle Creek parks.

Johnson Parkway Trail will also provide a connection to Bruce Vento Regional Trail, which leads to the Gateway segment of the Munger State Trail less than two miles away. The state trail leads from the Trout Brook Regional Trail in St. Paul to Pine Point Regional Park in Stillwater Township. With these connections between regional and state facilities, the proposed Johnson Parkway Regional Trail will likely serve a regional audience.

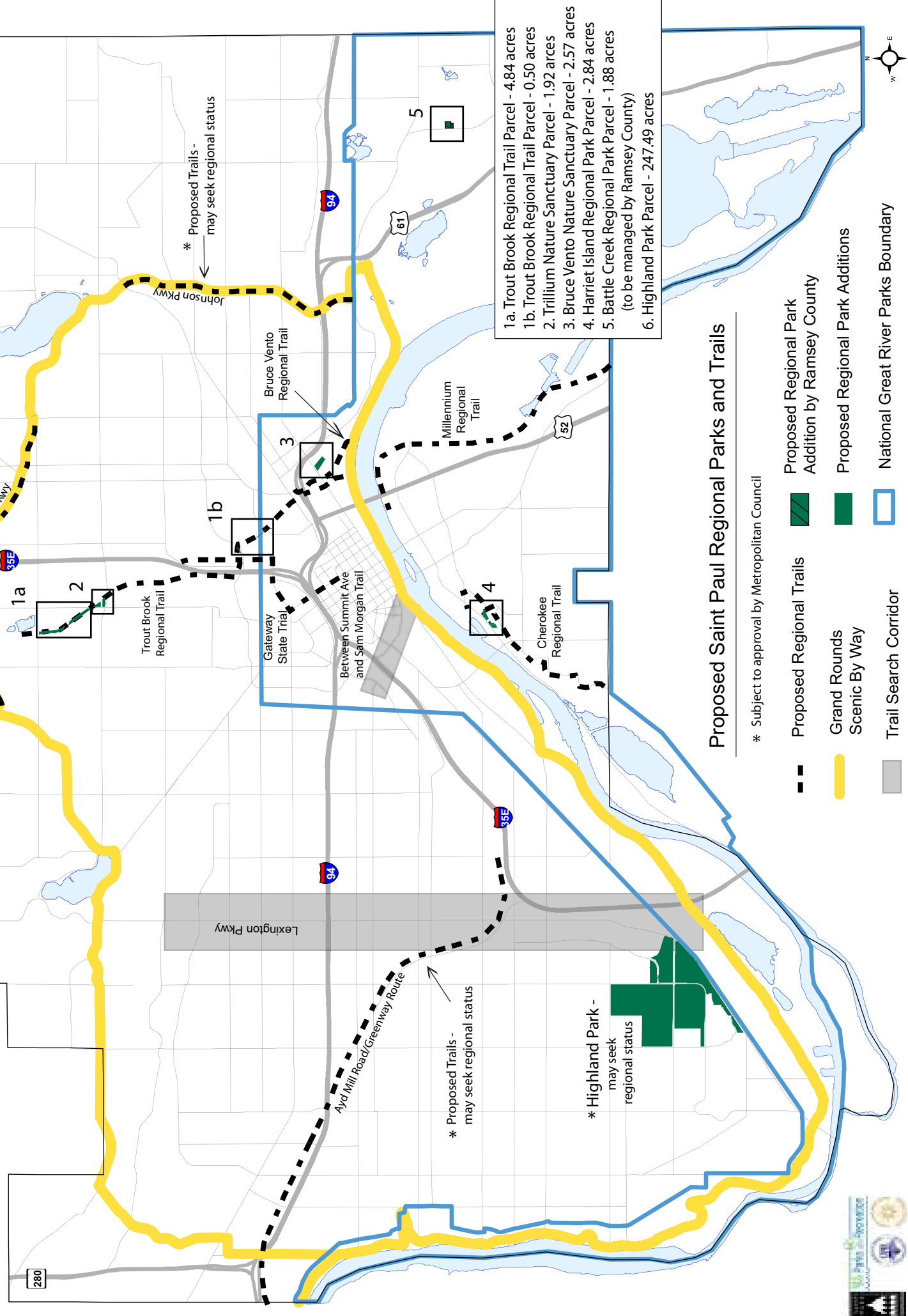
New **Linking Regional Trails** should be located within the developing or developed area of the region. For Linking Regional Trails, any two trails running parallel to each other and not separated by natural or human-built barriers should be at least 1.5 miles apart so as not to overlap the localized service area of those trails. Whenever possible, Linking Regional Trails should be located to reasonably maximize inclusion of high quality natural resources and connections to local trails, areas of lifecycle and affordable housing, and areas of infill and redevelopment.

The 2030 Regional Development Framework classifies St. Paul as a “developed” community, so this criterion has been met. The closest regional trail to the proposed Johnson Parkway Trail is the Bruce Vento Regional Trail. There will be an overlap of the service area for the two trails near their intersection. From the point of their intersection, Johnson Parkway travels south and the Bruce Vento Regional Trail leads west toward Payne Avenue and then south to the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, where it will run parallel to the Johnson Parkway

Trail. The trails will be more than 1.5 miles apart in the area where they run parallel to one another.

The Johnson Parkway Trail will travel under I-94, providing a safe connection between two areas separated by the freeway. The parkway travels through areas that provide affordable housing. Significant redevelopment has occurred in the Payne-Phalen neighborhood.

City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation



- 1a. Trout Brook Regional Trail Parcel - 4.84 acres
- 1b. Trout Brook Regional Trail Parcel - 0.50 acres
- 2. Trillium Nature Sanctuary Parcel - 1.92 acres
- 3. Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary Parcel - 2.57 acres
- 4. Harriet Island Regional Park Parcel - 2.84 acres
- 5. Battle Creek Regional Park Parcel - 1.88 acres (to be managed by Ramsey County)
- 6. Highland Park Parcel - 247.49 acres

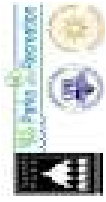
Proposed Saint Paul Regional Parks and Trails

- * Subject to approval by Metropolitan Council
- Proposed Regional Trails
- Grand Rounds Scenic By Way
- Trail Search Corridor
- █ Proposed Regional Park Addition by Ramsey County
- █ Proposed Regional Park Additions
- National Great River Parks Boundary

* Proposed Trails - may seek regional status

* Proposed Trails - may seek regional status

* Highland Park - may seek regional status





CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Mayor Christopher B. Coleman

400 City Hall Annex
25 West 4th Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102
www.stpaul.gov/parks

Telephone: 651-266-6400
Facsimile: 651-292-7311

January 27, 2010

Ms. Jan Youngquist
Metropolitan Council
390 North Robert Street
Saint Paul, MN 55101

RE: Agency Input on Proposed Regional Park System Plan Changes

Dear Ms. Youngquist:

The following Regional Park and Trail additions/expansions are hereby proposed by Saint Paul Parks and Recreation for consideration by the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission for inclusion in the Metropolitan Regional Park and Open Space System. We have listed the trail and park areas under separate categories as follows:

REGIONAL PARKS:

1. Highland Park- (Proposed new regional park)

Highland Park is a 264 acre City of Saint Paul park defined by Highland Parkway on the north, Hamline Avenue on the east, West Seventh Street on the south, and Snelling Avenue to the west. An on-street bike trail is planned to connect the park to the Sam Morgan Regional Trail less than three blocks away (with 66,000 annual visits). The park recently completed major renovations including a new pool facility, new picnic area, restrooms, play area, trail/bridge enhancements, new parking lot, lighting, and disc golf course at a cost of \$4M dollars. An additional pool bath house renovation is planned for 2012 at a cost of \$1.8M. We are also undertaking a study of the area surrounding the intersection of Montreal and Edgcombe to improve park access/identification and determine a use for the historic pool building and adjacent park land located here.

We believe this park should continue to remain in the Regional Park System Plan as a "proposed regional Park study area". The activities within the park listed below, draw a significant amount of visitors from outside the City of Saint Paul; however, we have not taken any accurate counts of these activities to enable us to accurately determine the percentage of regional users. Because of this fact, we are not in a position to prove the park's regional draw at this time.



CAPRA Accreditation

An Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Employer



National Gold Medal Award

Park Amenities and Activities:

- Small Group picnic area and shelter, restrooms, play area, nature trail
- Large Group picnic area, pavilion, restrooms, kitchen facilities, play area, parking, site lighting
- “Booya’ building
- Executive 9 hole and regulation 18 hole golf courses
- Park Maintenance Facility
- Cross Country Skiing
- Renovated Swimming Pool, diving well, kids splash pad
- Disc Golf course

Regional Activities:

- Circus Juventes
- Picnicking
- Swimming
- Disc golf

REGIONAL TRAILS:

1. Johnson Parkway Regional Trail- (proposed addition to the regional park system)

This proposed 2.15 mile trail will provide an important missing link between Phalen Regional Park (344,500 annual visitors) and Indian Mounds Regional Park (60,300 annual visitors); which further links to the Bruce Vento Regional Trail (33,200) and the Sam Morgan Regional Trail (66,500). The trail is planned to be constructed within current Saint Paul Parks ROW along the wide, sometimes divided Johnson Parkway. This segment of trail is also part of Saint Paul’s Grand Rounds framework plan, completed in 2000, which calls for high quality on-road bicycle lanes with striping and signage. In addition, there does appear to be considerable space for an off-road trail, especially if the road was narrowed as part of a larger City-wide project. Determination of the actual alignment will be considered during the Master Plan process, which will be initiated when funding becomes available.

2. Ayd Mill Road Trail- (proposed addition to regional trail system)

This proposed 4 mile trail will provide a much needed St. Paul extension of the existing Minneapolis Midtown Greenway trail. From 2007 to 2008, ridership along the Midtown Greenway has increased 25%, bringing the overall total of trips to 563,688 between March 2007 and June 2008. At the Hennepin Avenue station along the Greenway, there has been a 38% increase in bicycling (178,368 trips in 2007 to 246,923 trips in 2008, or an increase of 68,554 trips). The Ayd Mill trail would connect the Midtown Greenway in Minneapolis to the existing Sam Morgan Regional Trail in Saint Paul, via a dedicated trail bridge across the Mississippi River.

Although the exact alignment has not been defined, a trail search corridor has been identified for this future addition to the regional trail system in Saint Paul.

We have attached a map identifying the proposed park and trail system additions. Please contact Jody Martinez at 266-6424 if additional information is required.

Sincerely,

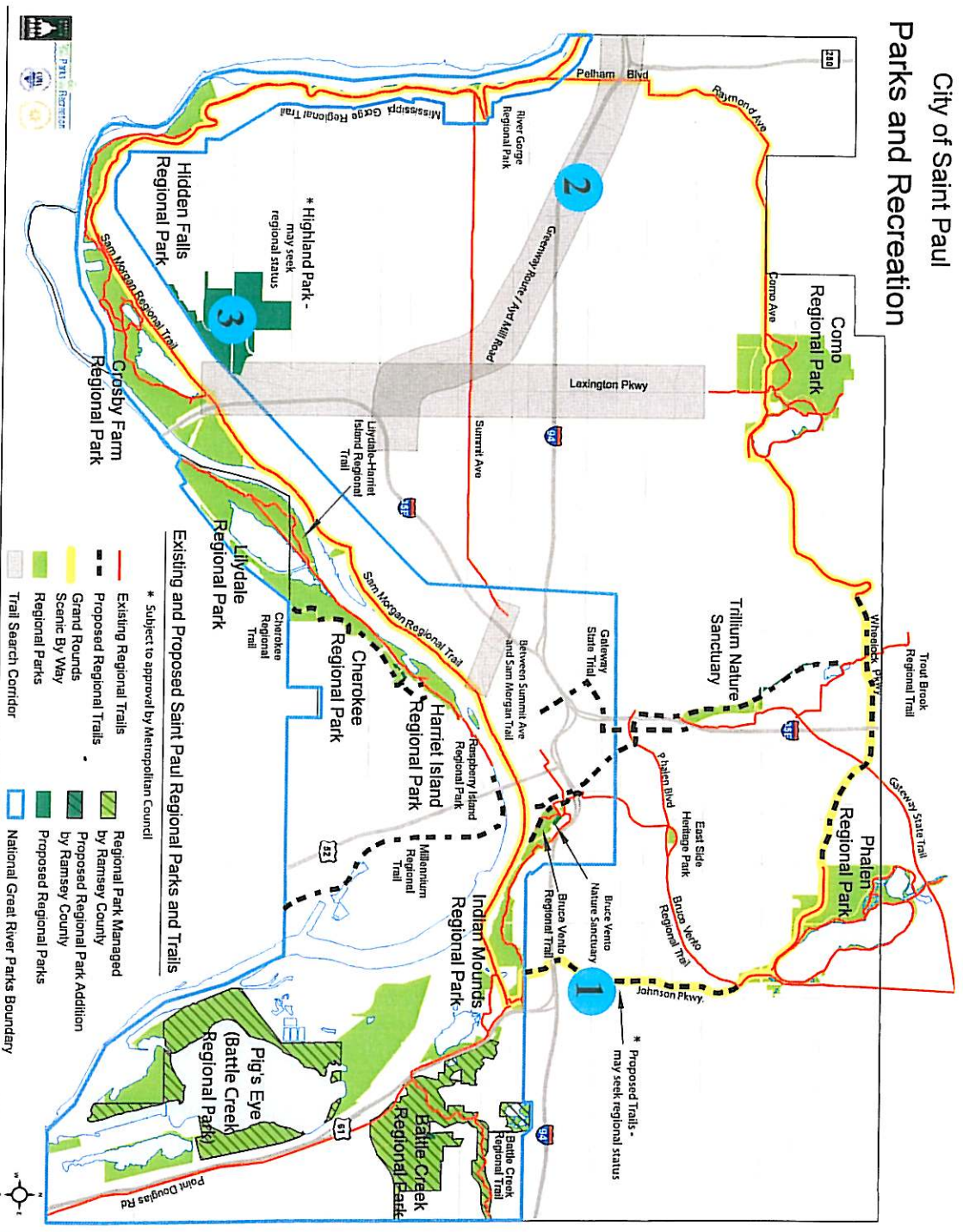
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael Hahm', with a stylized, cursive script.

Michael Hahm, CPRP
Director of Parks and Recreation

Existing and Proposed Saint Paul Regional Parks and Trails

City of Saint Paul

Parks and Recreation






Proposed Additions

- 1** Johnson Parkway
(2.15 mile regional trail)
- 2** Ayd Mill Greenway
(4 mile regional trail search corridor)
- 3** Highland Park
(264 acre regional park)







Regional Parks Policy Plan Update Washington County


Regional Parks

-  Regional
-  State
-  Federal

Regional Trails

-  Regional Existing
-  Regional Planned
-  Regional Proposed (No Master Plan)
-  State Existing

Regional Park Search Areas (2005)

-  Recognition of Regional Status

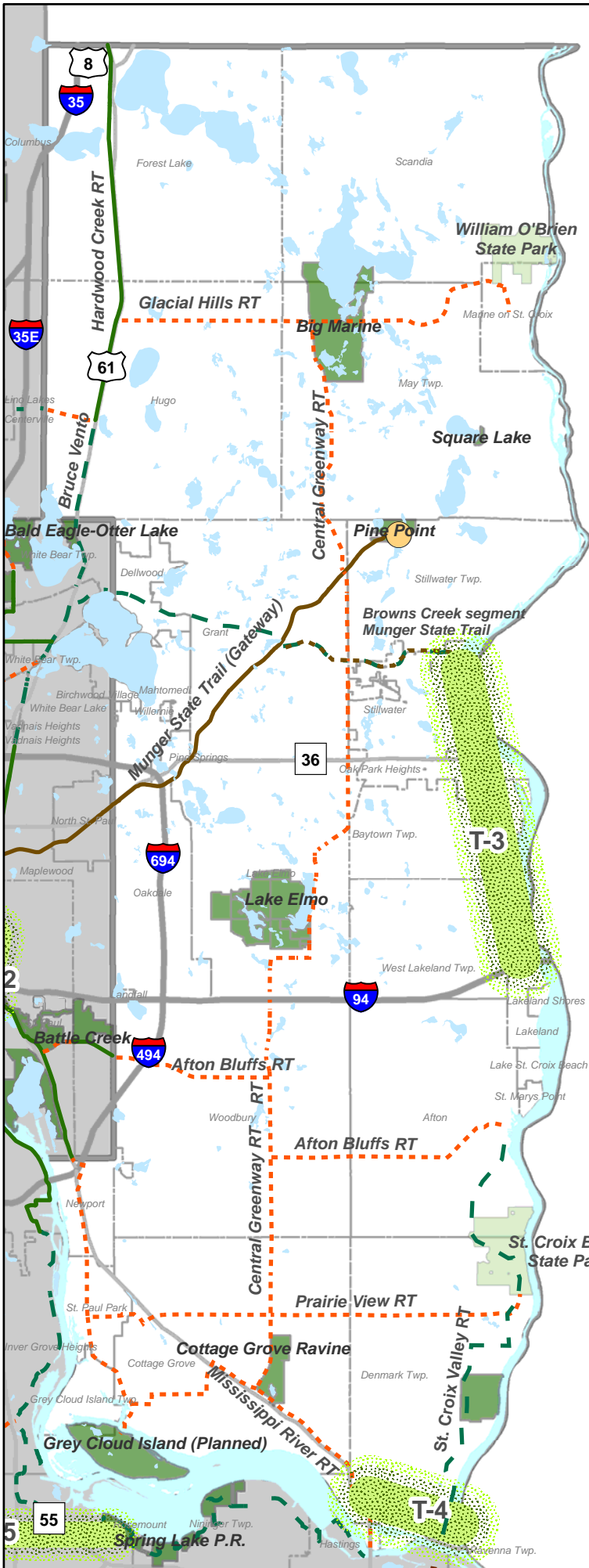
Proposed System Additions (2010)

- T-3** Regional Trail Search Corridor connecting proposed Brown's Creek State Trail in downtown Stillwater to local trails in Lakeland
- T-4** Proposed regional trail connecting the proposed Mississippi River Regional Trail, St Croix Regional Trail and trails in Wisconsin. Washington County owns the corridor.

0 2.5 5 10 Miles



Draft for MPOSC January 7, 2010



**2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update
Proposed System Changes**

Map Designation:	T-3
Name:	Middle St. Croix Valley Trail
Agency:	Washington County
Category:	Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor
Miles:	8
Acquisition Costs:	TBD

Request

Washington County has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council consider the designation of a regional trail search corridor between downtown Stillwater and Lakeland in the western portion of the county.

Background

In 2001, the Metropolitan Council approved the Lakes Links master plan, which included a regional trail connecting the Bruce Vento Regional Trail in White Bear Lake, the Gateway segment of the Munger State Trail in Grant and downtown Stillwater. In 2007, the Legislature authorized the Browns Creek segment of the Munger State Trail, which would serve as the portion of the regional trail heading east from the Gateway State Trail to downtown Stillwater, along the Minnesota Zephyr rail line.

The proposed regional trail search corridor will begin at the terminus of the Browns Creek State Trail and continue south to Lakeland, where there may be opportunities to connect to local trails that lead to the planned St. Croix Valley Regional Trail in Afton.

Criteria

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* outlines the following criteria for regional trails. Staff analysis is italicized.

Strategy 1(c): Siting criteria and land acquisition funding priorities for regional trails

To qualify for regional trail status, an existing or proposed trail must meet the following criteria:

1. The trail should not duplicate an existing trail. The trail may include a portion of an existing county or local trail if the trail serves one of the following functions:

(A) Destination Regional Trail. Be a destination itself, providing a high-quality recreation experience that traverses significant natural resource areas where the trail treadway will have no adverse impact on the natural resource base;

(B) Linking Regional Trail. Link two or more units of the regional recreation open space system.

The proposed Middle St. Croix Valley Trail does not duplicate an existing trail. Since this is a proposed regional trail search corridor, the alignment of the trail has not been identified and it is unknown whether the trail will be a destination or a linking trail. The trail may provide opportunities to connect state, regional and local trails and could potentially follow the St. Croix River, which has been designated by the National Park Service as a National Scenic Riverway.

2. The trail must serve a regional audience based on visitor origin and service-area research on regional trails.

With a connection to the Browns Creek portion of the Gateway State Trail and the close proximity to Wisconsin, the Middle St. Croix Valley Trail will likely serve a regional audience.

New **Linking Regional Trails** should be located within the developing or developed area of the region. For Linking Regional Trails, any two trails running parallel to each other and not separated by natural or human-built barriers should be at least 1.5 miles apart so as not to overlap the localized service area of those trails. Whenever possible, Linking Regional Trails should be located to reasonably maximize inclusion of high quality natural resources and connections to local trails, areas of lifecycle and affordable housing, and areas of infill and redevelopment.

The proposed trail may go through Stillwater, Oak Park Heights, Bayport, West Lakeland Township and Lakeland. The 2030 Regional Development Framework classifies Stillwater as a “developed” community; Bayport and Oak Park Heights as “developing” communities; and West Lakeland Township and Lakeland as “diversified rural” communities. The closest regional trail that would parallel the Middle St. Croix Valley Trail is the proposed Central Greenway Regional Trail, which is more than 3 miles away.

For **Destination Regional Trails**, there should be no spacing minimums or maximums; instead, the decision to locate the trail should be based on the availability of existing high-quality natural resources or the opportunity for

natural resources restoration, enhancement and protection. Destination Regional Trails should be located to reasonably maximize the amount of high-quality natural resources within the trail corridor boundaries.

As mentioned above, the trail could potentially follow the St. Croix River, a National Scenic Riverway. High quality natural resources exist along the route within the rural areas. The trail alignment would be determined as part of a master planning process.

**2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update
Proposed System Changes**

Map Designation:	T-4
Name:	Point Douglas Trail
Agency:	Washington County
Category:	Proposed Regional Trail
Miles:	2
Acquisition Costs:	\$0

Request

Washington County has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council consider recognizing the proposed Point Douglas trail as a regional trail.

Background

Washington County owns a two mile stretch of land along the Mississippi River from Highway 61 to the confluence with the St. Croix River at the Wisconsin border. The property is a former railroad corridor that was abandoned. The proposed trail will be a scenic destination trail along the river at the toe of a large bluff. The trail corridor will provide opportunities for natural resource restoration. The bluff includes areas that have been identified by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Metropolitan Council as Regionally Significant Natural Resource Areas of Moderate Quality. Views across the river include Regionally Significant Natural Resource Areas of Outstanding Quality.

Criteria

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* outlines the following criteria for regional trails. Staff analysis is italicized.

Strategy 1(c): Siting criteria and land acquisition funding priorities for regional trails

To qualify for regional trail status, an existing or proposed trail must meet the following criteria:

1. The trail should not duplicate an existing trail. The trail may include a portion of an existing county or local trail if the trail serves one of the following functions:

(A) Destination Regional Trail. Be a destination itself, providing a high-quality recreation experience that traverses significant natural resource areas where the trail treadway will have no adverse impact on the natural resource base;

(B) Linking Regional Trail. Link two or more units of the regional recreation open space system.

The proposed Point Douglas Trail does not duplicate an existing trail and will serve as a regional destination trail. The trail will not impact the natural resource base of the area, since it will be located on a former rail bed. In addition to providing a remote and scenic recreational experience, the trail will also connect to other units of the regional parks system, including the planned St. Croix Valley Regional Trail and the proposed Mississippi River Regional Trail, which will cross the Mississippi River to Dakota County. The trail will also provide a connection to Point Douglas County Park.

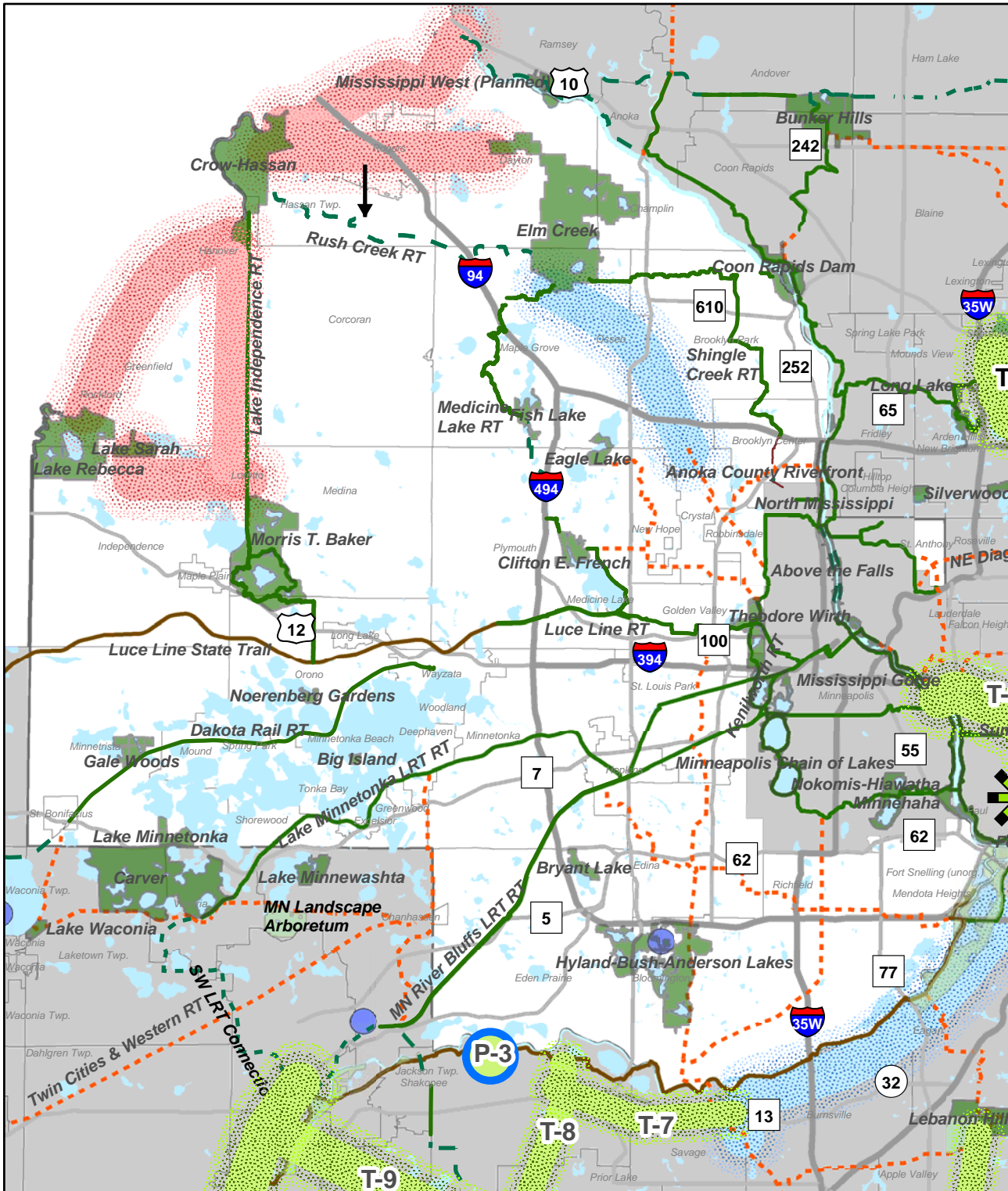
2. The trail must serve a regional audience based on visitor origin and service-area research on regional trails.

The proposed Point Douglas Trail provides opportunities to cross the Mississippi River, connecting to regional trails in Dakota County as well as opportunities to cross the St. Croix River and connect to trails in Wisconsin. With these crossings, the trail will likely serve a regional audience.

For **Destination Regional Trails**, there should be no spacing minimums or maximums; instead, the decision to locate the trail should be based on the availability of existing high-quality natural resources or the opportunity for natural resources restoration, enhancement and protection. Destination Regional Trails should be located to reasonably maximize the amount of high-quality natural resources within the trail corridor boundaries.

The regional parks system is focused on natural resources with proximity to water bodies or watercourses. A destination trail may essentially serve as a linear park. The proposed Point Douglas Trail is located along the Mississippi River with views of areas with high quality natural resources. The trail project provides opportunities for natural resource restoration.

Regional Parks Policy Plan Update Three Rivers Park District



Regional Parks

- Regional
- State
- Federal

Regional Trails

- Regional Existing
- Regional Planned
- Regional Proposed (No Master Plan)
- State Existing

Regional Park Search Areas (2005)

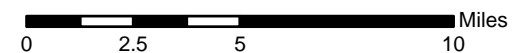
- Boundary Adjustment

Regional Trail Search Corridors (2005)

- Boundary Adjustment
- New Unit

Proposed System Additions (2010)

- P-3 The Landing (formerly known as Murphy's Landing) is proposed to be a Special Recreation Feature



2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan Update Proposed System Changes

Map Designation:	P-3
Name:	The Landing
Agency:	Three Rivers Park District
Category:	Proposed Special Recreation Feature
Acres:	86
Acquisition Costs:	\$0

Request

Three Rivers Park District has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council consider the inclusion of “The Landing”, formerly known as Murphy’s Landing, as a special recreation feature in the regional parks system.

Background

The Landing is located at Highway 101 and Shenandoah Drive in Shakopee, along the Minnesota River. The Landing was established in 1969 and acquired by Three Rivers Park District in 2002. It is an 86 acre park that provides a historical perspective of life in a river town in the 1800s. The park is open for tours, educational events, group events and weddings. Approximately 40 historic buildings have been relocated to the site, which are accessible through guided tours that provide an interpretation of a variety of lifestyles, conditions and stories. Horse-drawn trolley service is also provided on a limited schedule. On weekends in December, the settlers’ holiday traditions are showcased.

Previously, admission has been charged for entrance to the park. Beginning in 2010, Three Rivers Park District will modify its operations to allow free access to the park for people wanting to walk around or have a picnic. Fees will be charged for tours and events.

Special Recreation Features

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* defines special recreation features as follows:

Area that preserves, maintains and provides specialized or single-purpose recreational activities such as golf course, nature center, marina, zoo, conservatory, arboretum, display gardens, arena, gun club, downhill ski area, and sites of historic or archeological significance.

There are currently six special recreation features in the regional parks system, including: Como Zoo, Como (Marjorie McNeely) Conservatory, Noerenberg Gardens, Gale Woods Farm, Square Lake, and Silverwood.

Criteria

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* outlines the following criteria for inclusion of a proposed special recreation feature in the regional parks system. Staff analysis is italicized.

Strategy 1(d): Special recreation facilities (features)

Special recreation facilities proposed for inclusion in the regional parks system must meet the following criteria for eligibility consideration:

1. Are unique and complement or enhance the services already offered by the regional system.

The Landing offers unique programming, which includes an educational component based on interpreting life in the Minnesota River Valley in the late 1800s. Several of the buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places. These types of activities are not offered elsewhere in the regional parks system.

2. Are capable of functioning within the existing management structure of the regional parks system.

Three Rivers Park District is one of the ten regional park implementing agencies within the existing management structure of the regional parks system. The Landing is the only park owned and operated by Three Rivers Park District that is not within the regional parks system.

3. Do not duplicate or compete with recreation facilities adequately provided by the private sector.

The Landing is the only park facility in Minnesota designed and managed to demonstrate the experience of a Minnesota River town through history education.

4. Do not drain funds from other facilities in the system either because they have an existing or committed financial base or because a prior agreement for a public subsidy has been reached that is in the public's interest.

Three Rivers Park District has owned and operated The Landing since 2002; therefore, the park has an existing financial base and will not drain funds from other facilities in the system.

5. Demonstrate the existence or potential for drawing a sizable number of people from throughout the metropolitan area.

Three Rivers Park District estimates that there were 21,000 visits to The Landing in 2008. This is low in comparison to most parks in the regional system. However, The Landing is only open on a seasonal basis—it is open daily from March to November and on weekends in December. Even after taking its non-winter use into consideration, its visitation would be among the lowest of regional park facilities . The change in operations removing the admission fee to the park may draw more visitors, however. With the exception of Como Zoo and Conservatory, special recreation features in the regional system typically have lower visitation than other facilities; however, because of their special programming, they draw a higher percentage of regional (non-local) visits.

The Landing clearly demonstrates regional visitation patterns. Three Rivers Park District estimates that 68 percent of visitors come from outside the Park District's taxing jurisdiction. Of those, 28 percent were from outside the seven county metropolitan area.

6. Are approved through the master plan process.

Designation as a regional parks system facility would allow the park to be eligible for State funds for operations and maintenance. In order to be eligible for capital improvement funding, a master plan for the park would need to be approved by the Council.

THE LANDING

Minnesota River Heritage Park

Legend

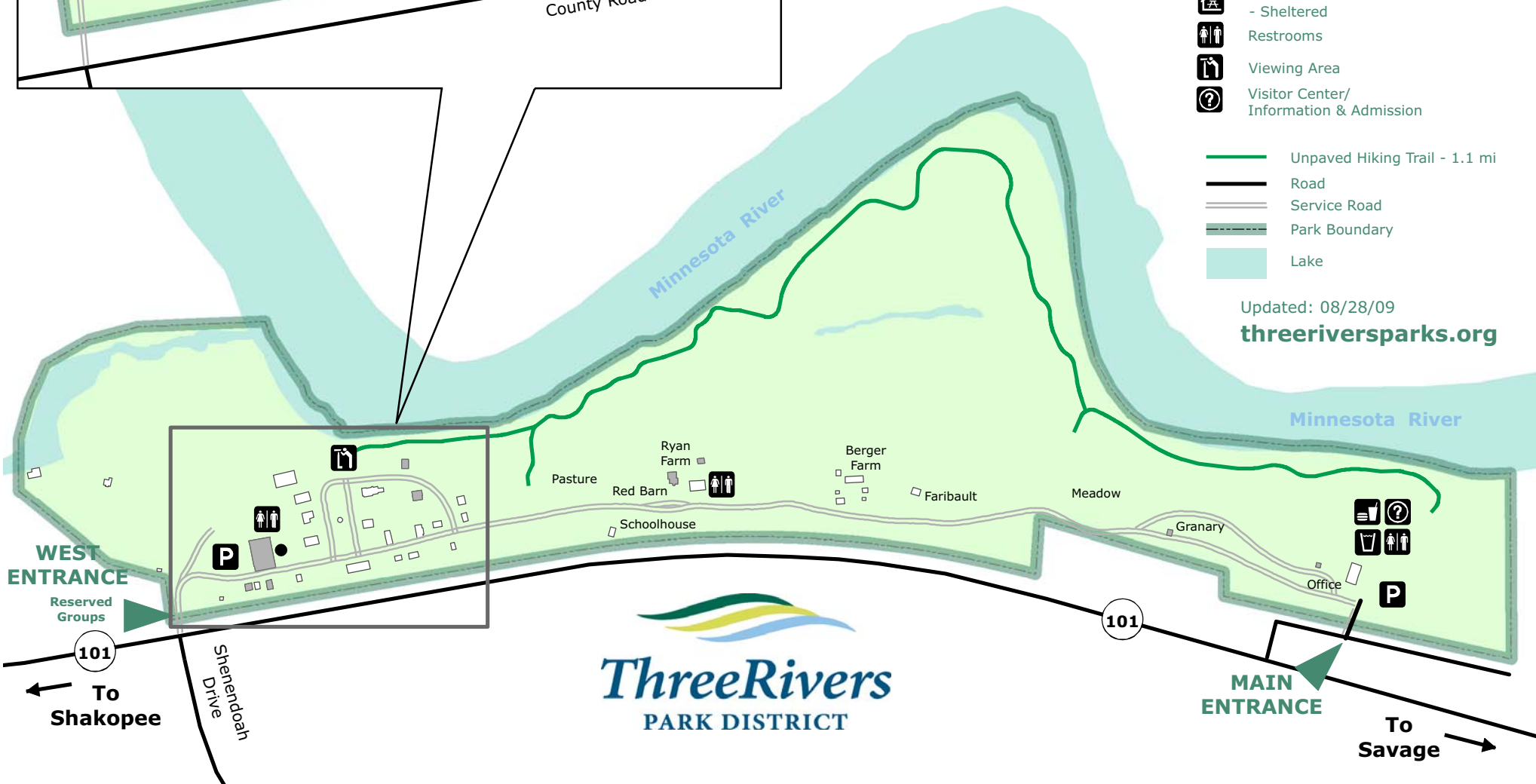
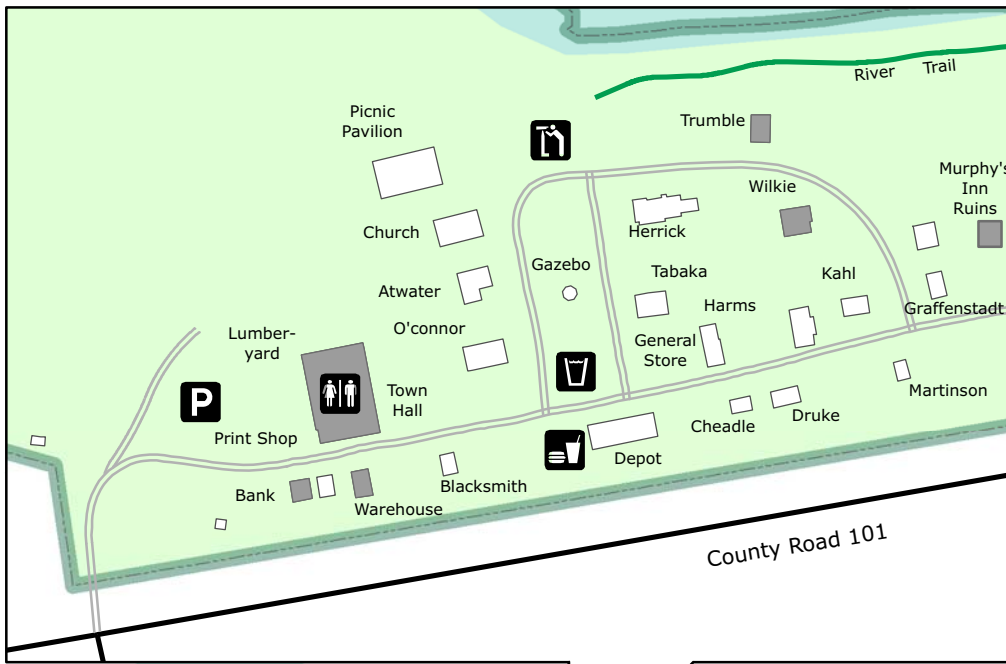
- Unpaved Hiking Trail - 1.1 mi
- Interior Exhibit by Guided Tour Only
- Exterior Exhibit Only
- Concessions
- Drinking Water
- Parking
- Reservation Picnic Area - Sheltered
- Restrooms
- Viewing Area
- Visitor Center/ Information & Admission

- Unpaved Hiking Trail - 1.1 mi
- Road
- Service Road
- Park Boundary
- Lake

Updated: 08/28/09
threeriversparks.org



0.1
 Mile



December 18, 2009

Three Rivers
Park District
Board of
Commissioners

Jan Youngquist
Metropolitan Council
390 N. Robert St.
St. Paul, MN 55101

Sara Wyatt
District 1

Dear Jan:

Marilynn Corcoran,
Vice Chair
District 2

Three Rivers Park District would like to request that the Metropolitan Council consider inclusion of "The Landing," formerly known as Historic Murphy's Landing, as part of the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan revision process. The Park District feels the Landing fits the definition of a regional special recreation feature and should be recognized as a regional facility.

Mark Haggerty
District 3

Special Recreation Features require "a unique managing or programming effort on the part of the Regional Park Implementing Agency." The Landing offers an educational experience within natural, cultural, and historic features that are certainly unique to the region.

Dale Woodbeck
District 4

In 2002, the Park District assumed ownership and operating responsibility for The Landing. The rationale for acquiring this facility was based upon the Park District's enabling legislation, Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 398, which charges the Park District to acquire, develop, and maintain large parks, wildlife sanctuaries, **historical sites**, forests, and other reserves.

Rosemary Franzese
District 5

A significant public education program has been central to its mission of promoting environmental stewardship through outdoor education and recreation from the Park District's inception. This public education effort is accomplished in many ways throughout the park system. In addition to the traditional environmental education that occurs through nature centers, park visitors learn of land use and life cycles while viewing a contemporary working farm or they may gain a better understanding of the natural world while taking an arts class at an environmental arts center. At The Landing, visitors are introduced to environmental education concepts as they learn how humans interacted with the Minnesota River environment through the centuries.

Larry Blackstad, Chair
Appointed

Barbara Kinsey
Appointed

The Landing has several unique characteristics, which contribute to its regional significance:

Cris Gears
Superintendent

- **A regional scale-** The Landing is comprised of 86 acres, which allows for some of the spatial realities of a 19th century Minnesota River town to be realized and experienced. Approximately 40 historic buildings have been re-located to the site providing a treasure trove of historic interpretation opportunities. This is the only park facility in Minnesota designed and managed specifically to provide park guests with an in-depth experience of a Minnesota River town through living history education.

- **A multi-faceted interpretive program** - The educational program is based on interpreting life in the Minnesota River Valley in the late 1800's. A program of this breadth is able to embrace many facets of life rather than being restricted to a single historic figure or structure. A diversity of lifestyles, conditions and stories are interpreted among the approximately 40 buildings found at The Landing.
- **Public access** - The Landing is owned by a public agency committed by policy to public education.
- **National Register of Historic Places Designation** - Several key buildings including the Oliver Faribault House, the Murphy's Inn Ruins, the Berger Farm Complex, the Pond Grist Mill, and Native American historic and pre-historic sites comprise the Shakopee Historic District which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- **Visitation** - Park District staff estimates 21,000 visits to the Landing in 2008. Based on original data, 68% of those visitors were from outside the Park District's taxing jurisdiction. Of those, 28% were from outside the seven county metro area.

The Park District operates The Landing as a living history museum, which provides an environment where park visitors can interact directly with knowledgeable interpreters. Access to The Landing has occurred through scheduled groups or public programs. While program attendance has been strong, access by the general public has not been accommodated which has prevented park attendance from reaching its potential. The Park District has recently modified its operation to allow free park access to the park in 2010.

The Park District understands that inclusion in the policy plan would still require approval of a development Master Plan prior to being eligible for any future funding through the Metropolitan Council.

The Park District appreciates your consideration of this facility within the 2030 Policy Plan and would welcome the opportunity to share more information regarding The Landing with the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission as they consider this issue.

Thank you,



Boe R. Carlson, Associate Superintendent
Division of Administration

C: Cris Gears, Superintendent
Tom McDowell; Associate Superintendent Recreation and Education
Don DeVeau, Director of Planning and Development