

Regional Parks Policy Plan Update


Proposed System Changes

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Meeting
March 2, 2010

Ramsey County

- P-4 Vadnais Snail Lakes Regional Park—proposed Regional Park Boundary Adjustment
- T-14 Rice Creek South Regional Trail—proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor
- T-15 Trout Brook Regional Trail—proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor

Dakota County

- P-2 Thompson-Kaposia-Kaposia Landing (Port Crosby)—proposed Regional Park Study Area
-  Southwest Dakota County Regional Park Search Area—proposed deletion from the regional parks system
- T-5 Rosemount River Access Greenway Trail—proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor
- T-6 North Creek Greenway Trail—proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor

Scott County

- T-7 Big Rivers proposed Regional Trail Extension
- T-8 Prior Lake Outlet proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor
- T-9 Louisville proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor
- T-11 Elko New Market-Blakeley-Doyle Kenefick Connection proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor
- T-12 Elko New Market-Blakeley proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor
- T-13 Blakeley Bluffs proposed Regional Trail Extension

Regional Parks Policy Plan Update Ramsey County

Regional Parks

- Regional
- State
- Federal

Regional Trails

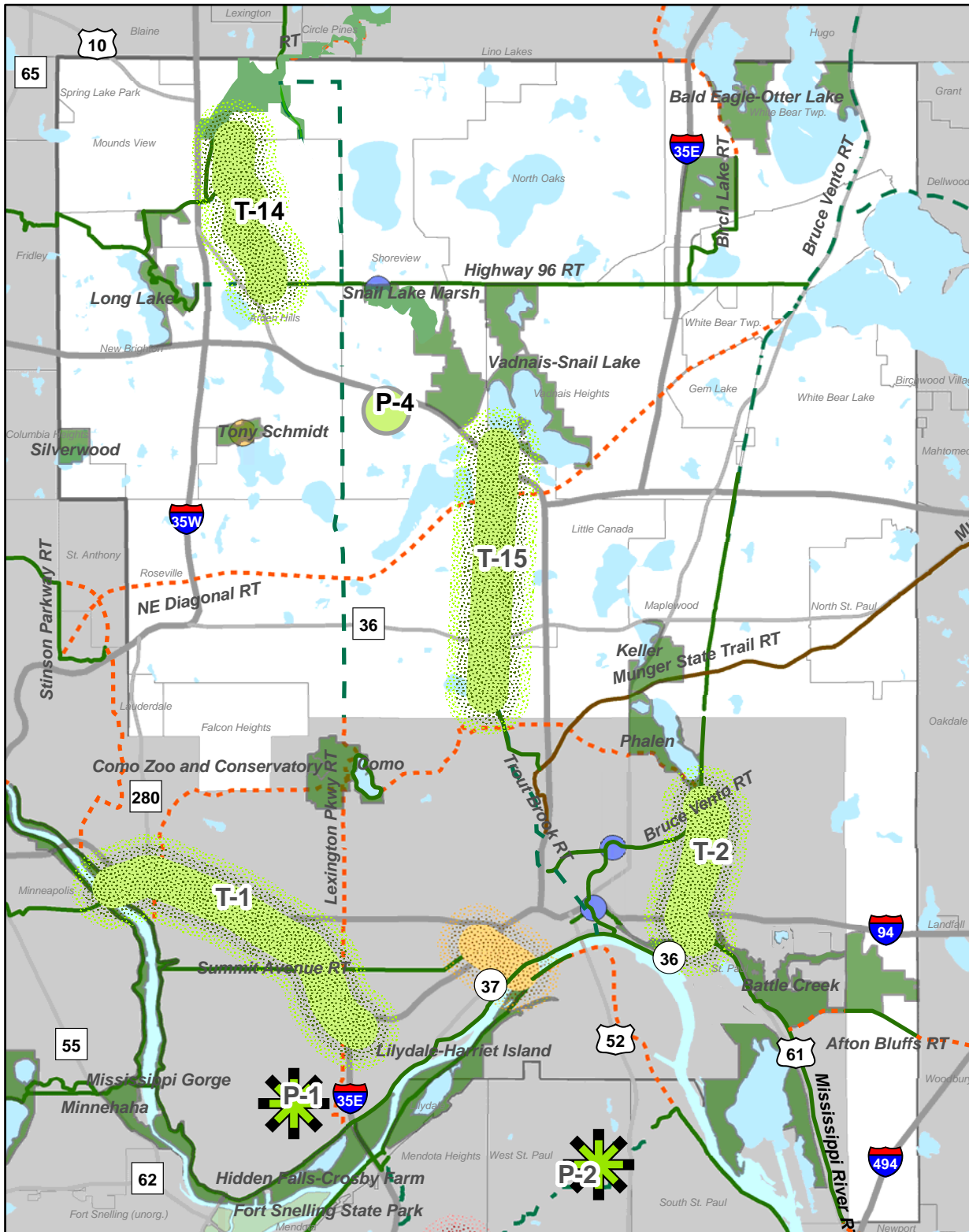
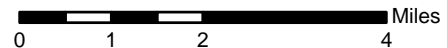
- Regional Existing
- Regional Planned
- Regional Proposed (No Master Plan)
- State Existing

Regional Park Search Areas (2005)

- Boundary Adjustment
- Recognition of Regional Status

Proposed System Additions (2010)

- T-14** Proposed Rice Creek South Trail
- T-15** Proposed extension of Trout Brook Regional Trail
- P-4** Proposed Boundary Adjustment add Island County Park to Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park



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

Map Designation:	P-4
Name:	Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park
Agency:	Ramsey County
Category:	Proposed Regional Park Boundary Adjustment
Acres:	93
Acquisition Costs:	\$0

Request

Ramsey County has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council consider expanding the boundary of Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park to include Island Lake County Park as part of the Parks Policy Plan update.

Background

Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park is located north of I-694 between I-35W and I-35E in Vadnais Heights and Shoreview. The park is comprised of five segments, including: Sucker Lake (273 acres), Vadnais Lake (303 acres), Grass Lake (271 acres), Snail Lake and Snail Lake Corridor (30 and 142 acres), for a total size of 1,019 acres. These segments of the regional park are interconnected by a network of park trails.

Island Lake County Park is located approximately one-third of a mile west of Snail and Grass Lakes and is bounded by I-694 to the north, Victoria Street to the east, the Canadian Pacific-Soo Line Railroad to the south and Lexington Avenue and private property to the west. Although it is located south of I-694, local paved trails along Victoria Street, Gramsie Road and Snail Lake Road (County Road F) provide access to Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park. Additionally, paved trails located on the east side of Grass Lake provide a trail bridge over I-694 to County Road E, which has paved shoulders providing a connection to Island Lake County Park. The City of Shoreview's Comprehensive Plan identifies a proposed local trail along County Road E. Sufficient right-of-way exists the entire distance between the I-694 bridge and Victoria Street to develop a separate trailway, although there are no immediate plans for development of the trail.

Island County Park consists of 93 acres surrounding the majority of Island Lake and includes three picnic shelters (two that seat 100 people each and one that seats 50 people), a large play area and two sand volleyball courts on the east side of the lake; a boat launch and fishing pier as well as a 9-hole golf course on the northwest side of the lake; and a natural area on the southwest side of the lake. The park also includes one mile of bituminous trails. For over 25 years, the park has hosted a series of regional waterski events sponsored by the Minnesota Waterski Association. Ramsey County has not conducted formal use counts or visitor origin studies; however, in 2009, 188 special use permits were issued for the park involving over 21,000 park visitors. Based on these permits, over 44 percent were non-local visits.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) has planned improvements for Interstate 694 between I-35W and I-35E. According to the 2006 Environmental Assessment that was prepared, the road project will impact Island County Park, although no direct acquisition of land from the park would be necessary. An existing park road is partially located on Mn/DOT right-of-way. This road would be removed and replaced with a 12-foot wide trail. Removal of the park road will discontinue access to the public boat launch, parking lot and fishing pier located on the northwest side of the lake. To mitigate the impacts to the boat launch and parking lot, Mn/DOT will relocate these facilities to the northeast portion of the park. The fishing pier will be relocated to the east side of Island Lake. The I-694 project has not been scheduled for construction yet.

Criteria

The criteria for regional parks that are outlined in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* are shown below in bold text. Since Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park is already recognized as a regional park, the criteria is being applied to the proposed expansion area—Island Lake County Park. Staff analysis is italicized.

A regional park should:

- **Be 200-500 acres in size (with 100 acres as a minimum).**
Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park consists of 1,019 acres. The proposed boundary expansion to include the 96-acre Island Lake County Park would bring the park to 1,112 acres, which is well above the minimum acreage required for a regional park.
- **Serve a service area of 3-5 communities.**
Island Lake Regional Park is located in Shoreview, with the following communities located within 1.5 mile radius: Arden Hills, Roseville, Little Canada, and Vadnais Heights. The close proximity to these communities as well as the convenient access to the park provided by I-694 and Victoria Street ensure that the park serves at least 3-5 communities. The primary service area for the existing Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park includes these communities and also stretches into North Oaks and New Brighton.
- **Be in a natural setting contiguous to water bodies or watercourses if possible.**

Island Lake County Park surrounds the majority of Island Lake; there are eight private residences with shoreline along the west side of the lake. The southwest portion of the park includes a series of wetlands and is maintained in a natural state. The existing Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park is also contiguous to several water bodies. Much of the park contains Regionally Significant Natural Resource and Ecological Areas as mapped by the Metropolitan Council and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

- **Provide nature oriented recreation such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping and trail uses.**

Activities provided at Island Lake County Park include picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming and trail uses, which are consistent with typical recreation at regional parks.



Parks and Recreation Department

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November 18, 2009

Jan Youngquist, Planner
Metropolitan Council
390 North Robert Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1805

RE: Regional Park System Plan Update

Dear Jan:

As a follow-up to our recent meeting concerning potential system plan updates, the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department requests that the Metropolitan Council consider a regional park boundary adjustment to the Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park. The proposed adjustment would incorporate Island Lake County Park into the regional park boundary. The current boundary includes properties on or encompassing Vadnais Lake, Sucker Lake, Snail Lake and Grass Lake. These properties total over 1,000 acres that are interconnected by a network of interior park trails. In addition, the Highway 96 Regional Trail Corridor which runs along the northern border of these regional park properties ties the various park units together and improves access from throughout the region.

Island Lake County Park is located approximately one-third of a mile west of Snail and Grass lakes. It is directly linked to the regional park via paved bicycle/pedestrian trails located on Snail Lake Road (County Road F), Gramsie Road and Victoria Street. Controlled intersections where Snail Lake Road and Gramsie Road intersect Victoria Street accommodate safe travel between the park sites. In addition, paved trails located on the east side of Grass Lake include a trail bridge over I-694 that links to County Road E where paved shoulders provide a trail connection to the southeast corner of Island Lake County Park. Sufficient right of way exists on the south side of County Road E (adjacent to a railroad right of way, the entire distance from the I-694 trail bridge to Victoria Street) to establish a separate trailway. Attached is a map illustrating the geographic relationships between the Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park and the Island Lake County Park.

Island Lake County Park is a 93-acre park with lakeshore on much of the 70-acre Island Lake. Existing and proposed trails within the park connect to the Lexington Avenue Trail which was identified in the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Regional Park Policy Plan as a regional trail. Attached is an excerpt from the 2006 Ramsey County Parks and Recreation

Jan Youngquist
Page Two
November 18, 2009

Department's System Plan which describes and illustrates the features within Island Lake County Park. You will note that the principal activities (hiking, bicycling, boating, fishing and picnicking) are consistent with what is typically found in a regional park.

From a broader view, the inclusion of Island Lake County Park in the regional park provides exceptional opportunities for multiple paved trail loops of various lengths that connect regional park segments, regional trails, neighborhoods and a number of community assets.

Island Lake County Park is operated and maintained by the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department. Reservations for park use (special events, picnic shelter rentals, etc.) are centralized in the department. Park ordinances for management and control are applicable throughout the Ramsey County system. Policing is provided by the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department. The park maintenance crew responsible for Island Lake County Park is also responsible for the Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park. For over 25 years, Island Lake has annually hosted a series of regional waterski events conducted by the Minnesota Waterski Association. The prominent location, on I-694 and Victoria Street, make it an attractive venue for special events. While the department has not conducted visitor counts or user origin surveys at this site, shelter and special use permits provide a good indication of formalized use. In 2009, 188 special use permits were issued for the park involving over 21,000 park visitors. Based on the permits, over 44% were "non-local users."

In summary, given the opportunities for trail connectivity, the complementary nature of facilities provided and the historic use, I respectfully request that the Metropolitan Council consider Island Lake County Park for inclusion in the Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park complex. Please let me know if you have questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,

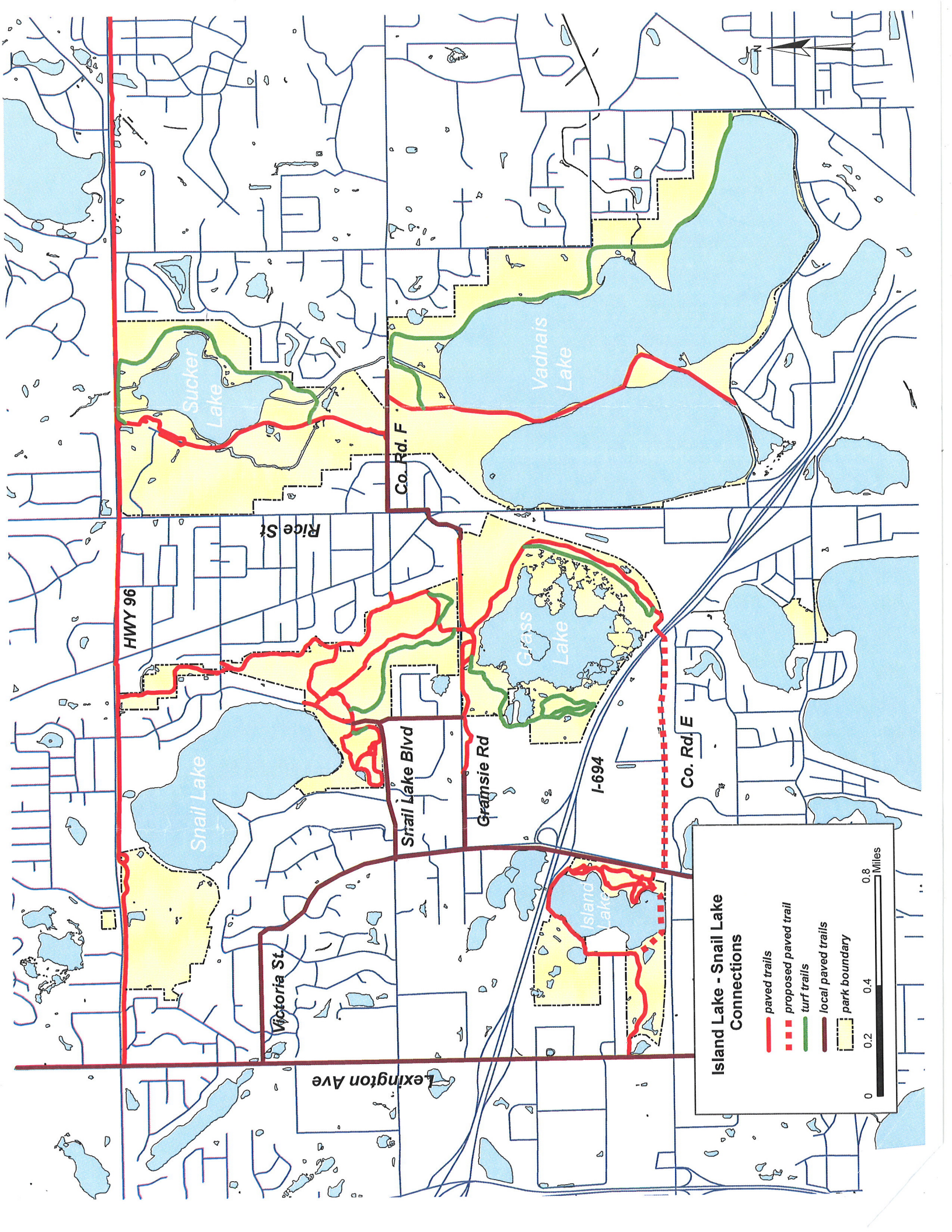


Gregory A. Mack
Director

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Encs.

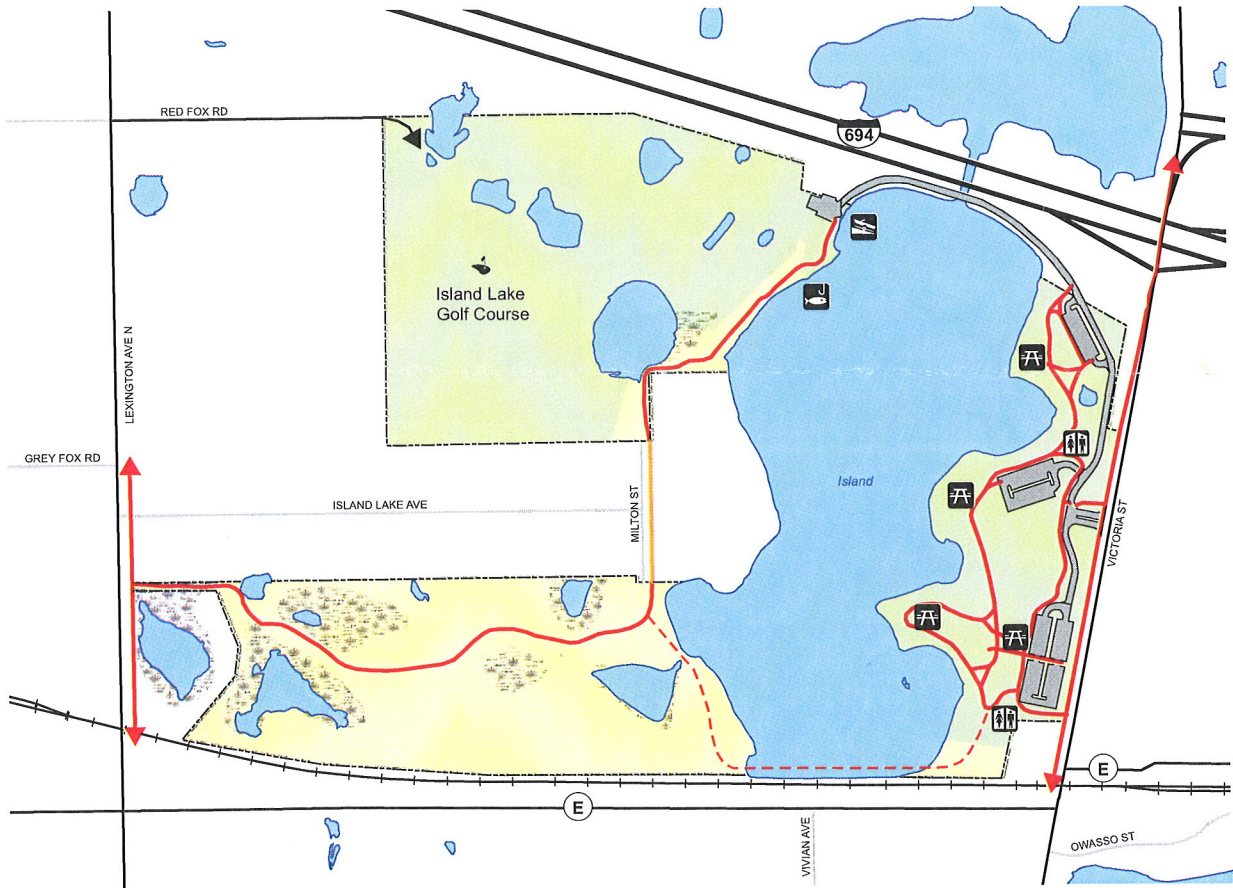
cc: Ken Wehrle



Island Lake - Snail Lake Connections

- paved trails
- - - proposed paved trail
- turf trails
- local paved trails
- park boundary

0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles



LEGEND

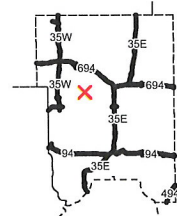
- Existing Paved Trails
- On Street Trails
- - - Proposed Paved Trails
- Recreation Areas
- Wetlands
- Park Boundary
- Boat Launch
- Fishing Pier
- Golf
- Picnic Area
- Restroom



Island Lake County Park

RECREATION DEVELOPMENT MAP

Ramsey County, MN
March 2006



RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

ISLAND LAKE COUNTY PARK

LOCATION AND SIZE

Island Lake County Park is located in the north-central part of Ramsey County in the city of Shoreview. The park is comprised of three distinct segments: the 22-acre picnic area on the east side of the lake; the 41-acre golf teaching center on the northwest side of the lake; and the 30-acre natural area on the southwest side of the lake. The park is bounded by County Road E on the south, Victoria Street on the east, I-694 on the north and Lexington Avenue on the west.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Island Lake is a small 70-acre shallow lake. The park consists of rolling topography with scattered trees. The park is lightly wooded and has an open feeling. The lake and park are ideally suited for water-ski events.

RECREATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Existing Development

A picnic area with interior roads, parking for 270 cars, two restrooms with water and sewer, three picnic shelters (two for 100 people with electrical outlets and one for 50 people), a large play area, one mile of bituminous trails, ball field, two sand volleyball courts, picnic tables and benches is located on the east side of the lake. A boat launch and parking lot for 5 car/boat trailers and a fishing pier are located on the northwest side of the lake. An aeration system maintains the fish population. A 41-acre golf teaching facility is located on the northwest side of the lake. It includes a clubhouse, maintenance shop, putting course, driving range and a par 3, 9-hole golf course. A bituminous trail extends from the boat launch to Milton Street and west to Lexington Avenue on the southwest side of the lake. This trail provides public access into the 30-acre natural area of the park.

Proposed Development

The boat launch parking lot will be redeveloped when the Victoria/I-694 interchange is reconstructed. Several location and design alternatives will be considered. In all alternatives, a paved pedestrian/bicycle trail will be provided parallel to I-694. This trail will maintain connections between the east and west portions of the park. A boardwalk is proposed to extend the trail along the south shore of Island Lake, resulting in a loop trail around the lake.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The 30-acre segment of the park on the southwest side of the lake is maintained in a natural condition. Wetlands within the golf course are maintained. The lake level fluctuates significantly from year to year. Lake elevations over 947.0 feet have historically resulted in shoreline erosion. Water surface management controls have been implemented to minimize the impact of high water levels.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Minnesota Department of Transportation plans to reconstruct the eastbound I-694 ramp to Victoria Street. At that time, the park road around the north end of the lake may be reconstructed. The bridge reconstruction should include a separate pedestrian/bicycle trail to maintain connections between the east and west segments of the park. Alternative locations for the boat launch, fishing pier and the impacts on other park facilities will be evaluated.

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

Map Designation:	T-14
Name:	Rice Creek South Regional Trail
Agency:	Ramsey County
Category:	Regional Trail Search Corridor
Miles:	2
Acquisition Costs:	TBD

Request

Ramsey County has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) and the Metropolitan Council consider the designation of a regional trail search corridor through the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP) site as part of the Parks Policy Plan update.

Background

The former TCAAP site is located in Arden Hills and is bounded by County Road I to the north, Lexington Avenue to the east, Highway 96 to the south and Highway 10-Interstate 35W to the west. TCAAP was built in 1941 and made over 16.5 billion rounds of small arms ammunitions through World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam “conflict”. It was decommissioned in the late 1970s and was declared a Superfund site in 1983.

The site consists of approximately 2,370 acres. The eastern two-thirds of the site is the home of the Arden Hills Army Training Site (AHATS), which is under the control of the Minnesota National Guard through a long-term lease agreement with the Army. In 1994, Congressman Bruce Vento formed a committee to develop a reuse plan for the entire site. Recommended land uses include open space, preservation of natural features, transit, housing, retail and employment. The conceptual Vento Plan called for the AHATS portion of the site to become a park preserve.

In 2006, the National Park Service transferred 113 acres of land along Rice Creek in the northwest portion of the TCAAP site to Ramsey County as part of the Federal Lands to Parks Program. A key segment of the Rice Creek North Regional Trail was developed on this property and opened to the public in 2008. A 49-acre wildlife corridor was included in the master plan for the Rice Creek North Regional Trail, but this land is still part of the TCAAP property.

The City of Arden Hills had submitted an offer to purchase the western 585 acres of the TCAAP site (including the 49-acre wildlife corridor) from the Army in 2006 and had been working with a development partner to plan for the purchase and redevelopment of the property. In 2009, the developer withdrew from the project. The Army, through the General Services Administration, is preparing to sell through a public auction in the summer 2010.

Ramsey County is proposing the Rice Creek South Regional Trail to be located on the eastern portion of the 585 acre site, which would connect the Rice Creek North Regional Trail to the Highway 96 Regional Trail. Conceptually, the trail corridor would be approximately 150 feet wide, would be located adjacent to the wildlife area to the south, and would include approximately 30 acres. Ramsey County is also proposing a 500 foot wide strip of land that would extend south from County Road I across the AHATS and TCAAP area to the north portion of the wildlife corridor. This land would serve as a trailhead and staging area for recreational access to the AHATS area for winter recreational activities, as well as provide access to the Rice Creek North Regional Trail and the wildlife corridor.

The Arden Hills City Council unanimously passed a resolution supporting transferring land from the TCAAP property to Ramsey County for the Rice Creek South Regional Trail Corridor, the AHATS trailhead and the Vento Wildlife Corridor (Resolution No. 2009-043) on December 21, 2009.

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed Resolution 2010-036 on January 19, 2010 which:

- Approved the additions of the 30 acre trail corridor, the 49 acre wildlife corridor and the 29 acre trailhead access to the Rice Creek Regional Trail;
- Authorized staff to prepare an amendment to the Rice Creek Regional Trail Master Plan that incorporates these additional properties;
- Authorized staff to seek transfer of these properties from the GSA to Ramsey County either directly or through a Federal agency sponsor; and
- Authorized staff to seek Congressional action, if necessary, to facilitate the environmental remediation and transfer of these properties to Ramsey County for regional trail purposes.

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 Rice Creek South Regional Trail does not duplicate an existing trail and will serve as a regional linking trail. The trail will connect the Rice Creek North Regional Trail, a destination trail, and the Highway 96 Regional Trail, a linking trail.

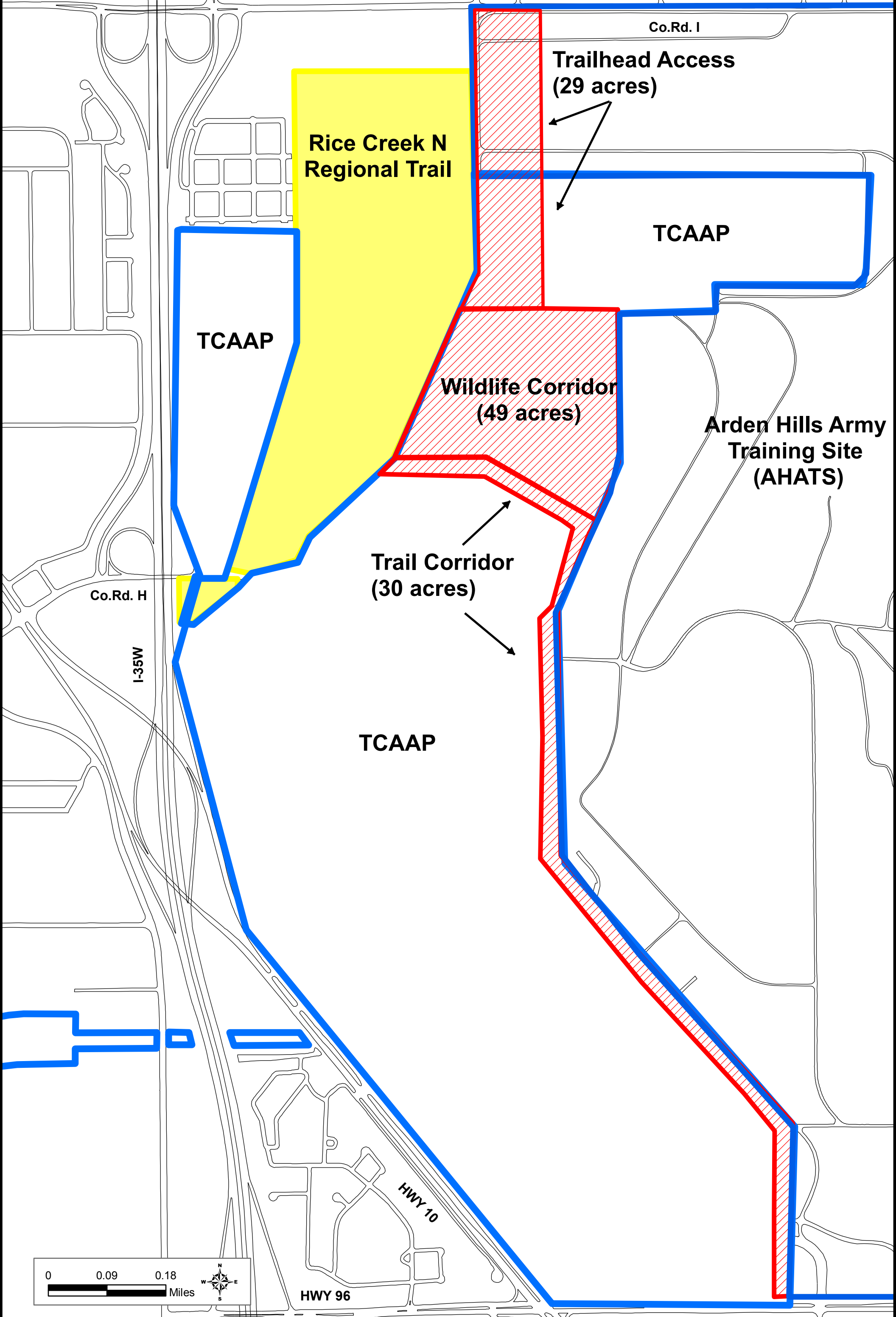
2. The trail must serve a regional audience based on visitor origin and service-area research on regional trails.

The Rice Creek North Regional Trail is jointly managed by Ramsey and Anoka Counties and will connect Long Lake Regional Park in New Brighton to the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve in Lino Lakes. The Highway 96 Regional Trail is complete from Arden Hills to White Bear Lake, where it will connect to planned portions of the Bruce Vento Regional Trail. The trail will also eventually connect to Long Lake Regional Park. These trail connections will ensure that the trail will 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 Arden Hills as a “developed” community, although the TCAAP property presents development opportunities. The proposed Lexington Avenue Regional Trail is a linking trail that parallels the proposed Rice Creek South Regional Trail. Although these trails will be approximately 1.25 to 1.5 miles apart, the Rice Creek South Regional Trail will provide a staging area and access to recreational opportunities at the AHATS site, which cannot be provided with the Lexington Avenue Regional Trail. The Rice Creek South Regional Trail will also provide access to natural resources along Rice Creek and the wildlife corridor, and to areas of potential development of housing, employment and retail in the remainder of the TCAAP site.

TCAAP Site and Proposed Acquisitions



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

Map Designation:	T-15
Name:	Trout Brook Regional Trail
Agency:	Ramsey County
Category:	Regional Trail Extension
Miles:	3.5
Acquisition Costs:	TBD

Request

Ramsey County has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) and the Metropolitan Council consider an extension of the Trout Brook Regional Trail from its terminus in Roseville to Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park in Vadnais Heights as part of the Parks Policy Plan update.

Background

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* gave recognition of regional status to the Trout Brook Trail and authorized its extension through St. Paul. The existing portion of the trail is managed by Ramsey County and begins at Lake McCarrons County Park in Roseville and ends at the Gateway State Trail in St. Paul. St. Paul prepared a master plan amendment for the trail, which incorporates the Trillium Nature Sanctuary and extends the trail south through St. Paul to connect to the Sam Morgan Regional Trail. This segment of the trail will be managed by St. Paul. MPOSC reviewed the master plan amendment at its February 2, 2010 meeting and the Metropolitan Council approved it on February 24, 2010.

Ramsey County is proposing to extend the regional trail north from its terminus in Roseville through Little Canada to connect to Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park in Vadnais Heights. The National Park Service, through its Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), is partnering with the City of Little Canada to conduct a feasibility study to plan for trail alignment alternatives. The trail would require bridge crossings at Highway 36 and Interstate 694.

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 extension of the Trout Brook Regional Trail does not duplicate an existing trail and will serve as a regional linking trail. The trail will connect the Sam Morgan Regional Trail, the Gateway State Trail, Lake McCarrons County Park and Vadnais Snail Lakes Regional Park.

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




The trail will travel through St. Paul, Roseville, Little Canada and Vadnais Heights. With a connection to the Gateway State Trail, which leads from St. Paul to Pine Point Regional Park in Washington County, this trail will 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, Roseville, Little Canada and Vadnais Heights as “developed” communities. There are two regional trails that parallel the proposed extension of the Trout Brook Regional Trail—the proposed Lexington Avenue Regional Trail and the Bruce Vento Regional Trail, which are more than two and three miles away, respectively. The City of Little Canada has existing and planned local trails that may provide connection opportunities to the regional trail. The City’s comprehensive plan discusses the potential for townhouse or senior housing development in the north portion of the city near Lake Vadnais, in the general area of the proposed trail.

Regional Parks Policy Plan Update Dakota County



Regional Parks

-  Regional
-  State
-  Federal

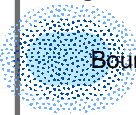

Regional Trails

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






Regional Park Search Areas (2005)

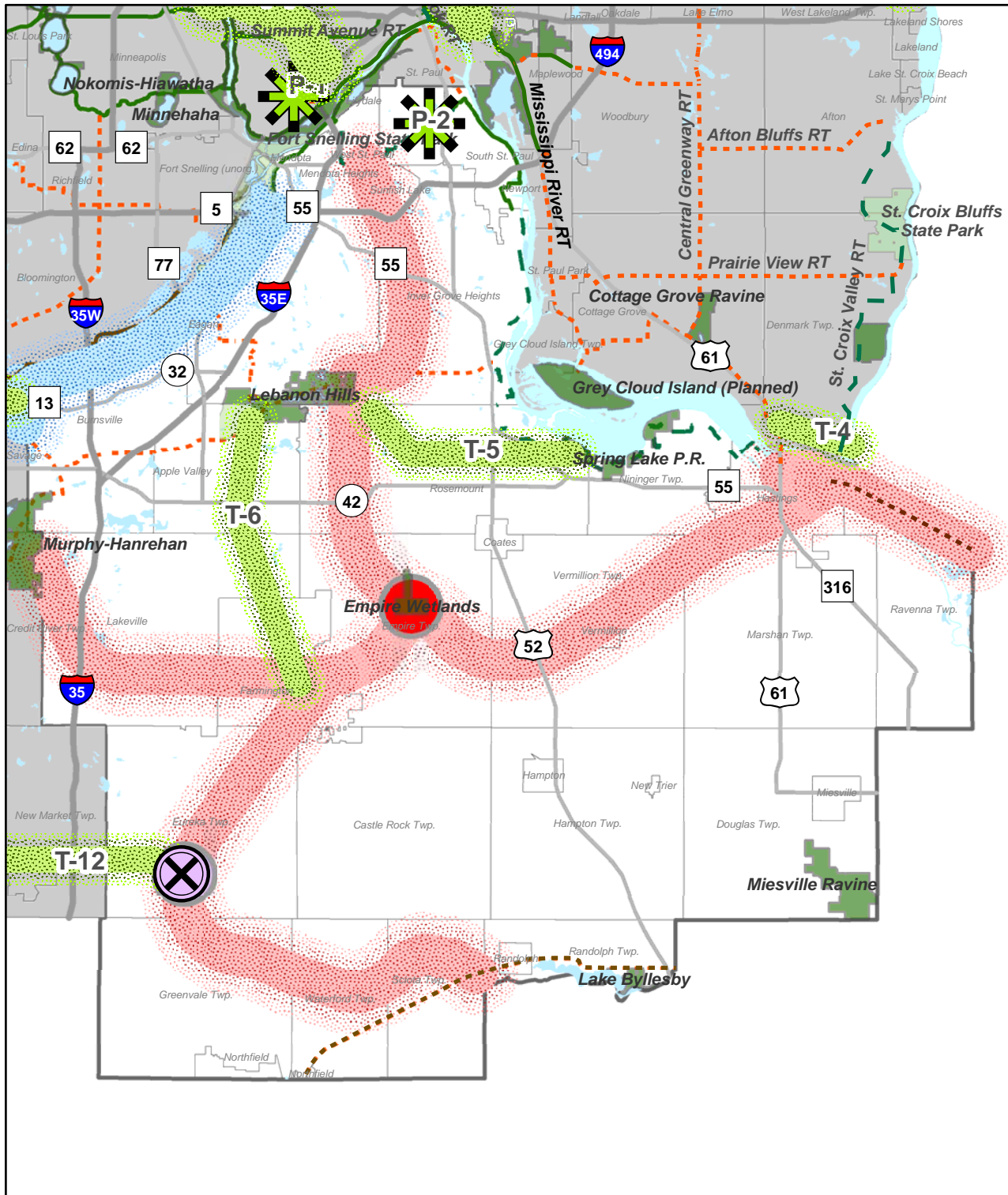
-  New Unit
-  Completing the System

Regional Trail Search Corridors (2005)

-  Boundary Adjustment
-  New Unit

Proposed System Additions (2010)

-  T-5 Rosemount River Access Trail
-  T-6 North Creek Greenway Trail
-  T-12 Elko New Market--Blakeley Connection
-  Thompson-Kaposia-Port Crosby Study Area: evaluate feasibility of regional park
-  Proposed deletion
Regional Park Search Area



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

Map Designation:	P-2
Name:	Thompson-Kaposia-Kaposia Landing
Agency:	Dakota County
Category:	Proposed Regional Park Study Area
Acres:	230
Acquisition Costs:	TBD

Request

Dakota County has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council consider the combination of Thompson County Park, Kaposia Park and Kaposia Landing 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

Thompson County Park is located in West St Paul and bounded by Butler Avenue and private property to the north, Highway 52 to the east, Emerson Avenue to the south and Sperl Street/Thompson Lake to the west. The park contains a picnic area and shelter, wooded trails, a playground, and Dakota Lodge, which is a sustainably designed building overlooking Thompson Lake. The lodge is used for senior activities, meetings and celebrations and seats 200 people for a meeting set-up and 160 people for dining. Future plans for the park include a new picnic shelter and picnic areas, an expanded event and social area near the lodge, a skating pond, an art walk with symbolic farm ruins, and park entrance improvements. Thompson County Park is connected to Kaposia Park by a bridge over Highway 52 as part of the North Urban Regional Trail.

Kaposia Park and Simon’s Ravine are located in South St. Paul and bounded by Butler Avenue and private property to the north, Concord Avenue to the east, private property to the south and Highway 52 to the west. The park is predominantly a large forested preserve that protects steep slopes, wetlands and drainages. Simon’s Ravine cuts diagonally through the park and is identified as a Regionally Significant Ecological Area by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Metropolitan Council.

Kaposia Disc Golf Course is the main feature of the park. Anecdotally, it is considered to be one of the top rated disc golf courses in the country. Other recreation features at the park include a pavilion, picnic shelter, playground, youth baseball/softball field, 2 tennis courts, a hockey rink, sand volleyball and hiking trails. Future improvements may include restoration of the historic pavilion and completion of the North Urban Regional Trail.

Kaposia Landing, formerly known as Port Crosby, is also located in South St. Paul and is bounded by the Mississippi River to the east and the Union Pacific Railroad line to the north, west and south. The property was formerly used as a construction/demolition debris landfill. The landfill was capped and converted from a landfill to be usable public recreation space. In addition, 5,000 feet of Mississippi River shoreline was stabilized and restored along the property. This work was done with grants from State bonding bills in 2004 and 2006 that were administered by the Metropolitan Council.

South St. Paul and Dakota County constructed approximately 5 miles of the Mississippi River Regional Trail, a significant portion of which is located along the west side of the Kaposia Landing property. An interior loop trail, three parking areas, and an off-leash dog park are now open at the site. The park can be accessed by a vehicular bridge at Concord Street and Bryant Avenue or by the pedestrian bridge located at the Simons Ravine trailhead.

Planned park development includes a baseball and 4 softball fields, picnic shelters, an interpretive center and viewing areas for wildlife and habitat.

Criteria

The criteria for regional parks that are outlined in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* are shown below in bold text. Staff analysis is italicized.

A regional park should:

- **Be 200-500 acres in size (with 100 acres as a minimum).**

The combination of Thompson County Park, Kaposia Park and Kaposia Landing as a regional park study area would consist of approximately 230 acres, which meets the standard for a regional park.

- **Serve a service area of 3-5 communities.**

Kaposia Park and Kaposia Landing are located in South St. Paul and Thompson County Park is located in West St. Paul. The parks are connected via the North Urban Regional Trail, which will continue through Mendota Heights and Lilydale where it will connect to the Big Rivers Regional Trail. The Mississippi River Regional Trail travels through Kaposia Landing, and will traverse Inver Grove Heights, Rosemount, Nininger Township

to Hastings. With these regional trails passing through the proposed regional park study area, it is likely that the park's service area will be at least 3 to 5 communities.

- **Be in a natural setting contiguous to water bodies or watercourses if possible.**

Thompson County Park is located on Thompson Lake, Kaposia Park contains a forested ravine including Regionally Significant Ecological Areas, and Kaposia Landing is located along the Mississippi River. Therefore, this criterion is met.

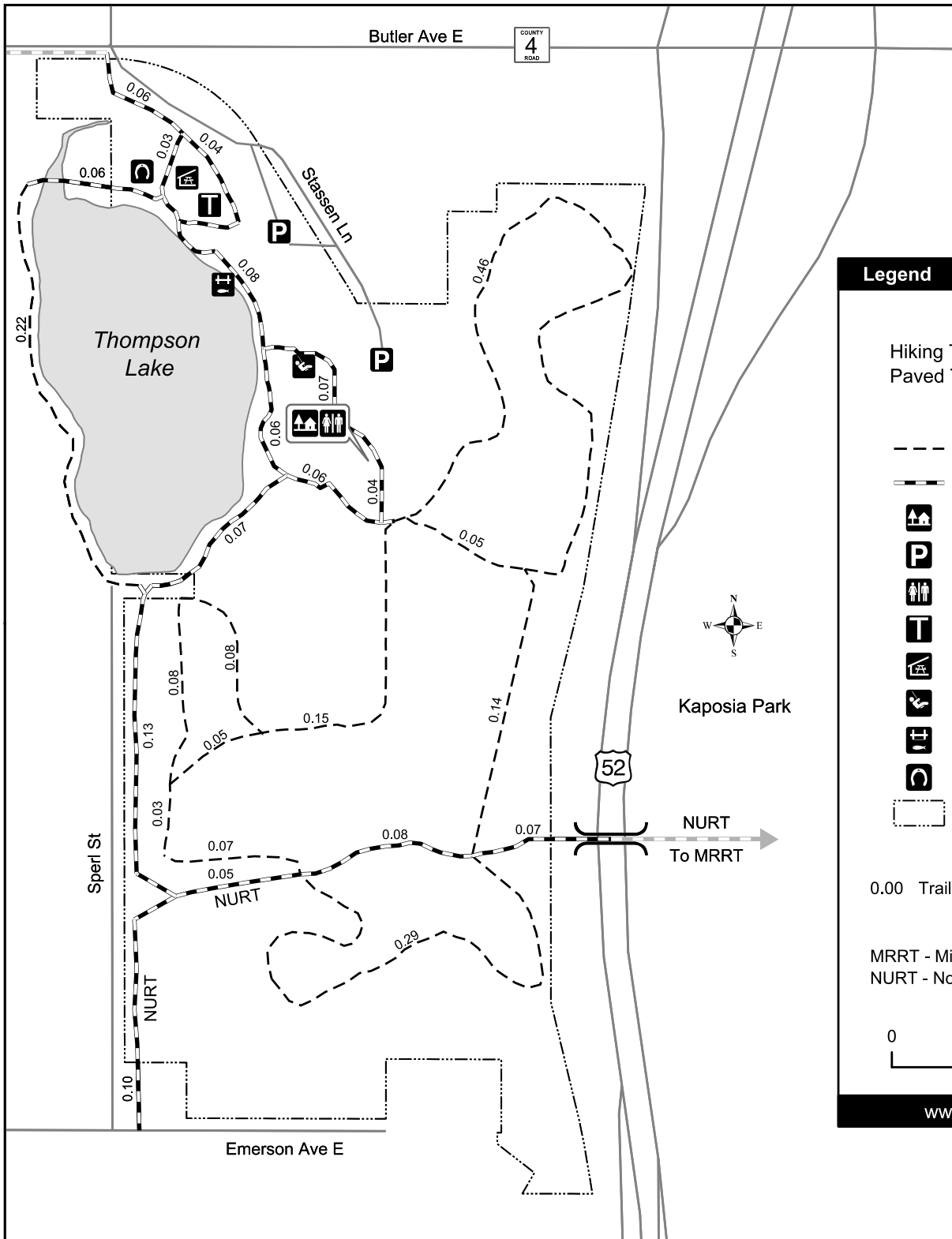
- **Provide nature oriented recreation such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping and trail uses.**

Picnic facilities, trails, dog parks, disc golf, interpretive centers and wildlife observation areas are typical facilities provided in regional parks. Since the regional park system is a natural resources based system, the existing and proposed hockey rinks, tennis courts, baseball and softball fields are not typical regional park facilities and are considered to be better suited for local parks.

Thompson County Park

2009 Spring-Summer-Fall Trail Map

Park hours: 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.



Legend

Hiking Trails - 1.63 miles
 Paved Trails - 1.11 miles

- Hiking
- Paved Trail
- Dakota Lodge
- Parking
- Restroom
- Portable Toilet
- Picnic Shelter
- Playground
- Fishing Pier
- Horseshoes
- Park Boundary

0.00 Trail Segment Distance in Miles

MRRT - Mississippi River Regional Trail
 NURT - North Urban Regional Trail

0 0.05 0.1 Miles

www.dakotacounty.us





not to scale

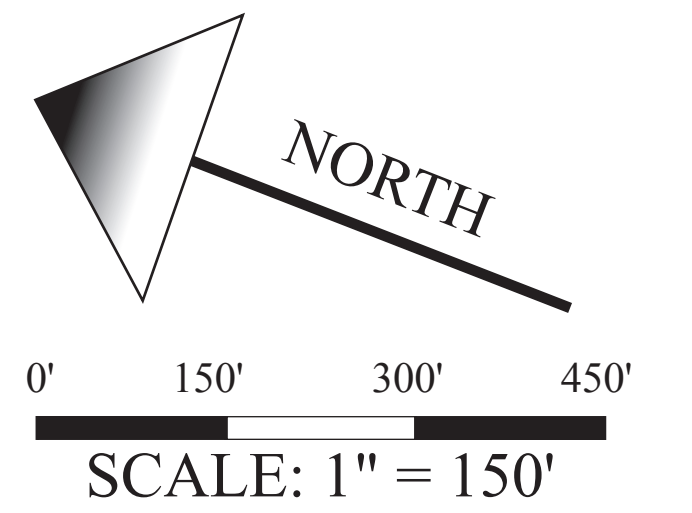
LETTER =PHOTOPOINT



Final Master Plan

Kaposia Landing

South St. Paul, Minnesota

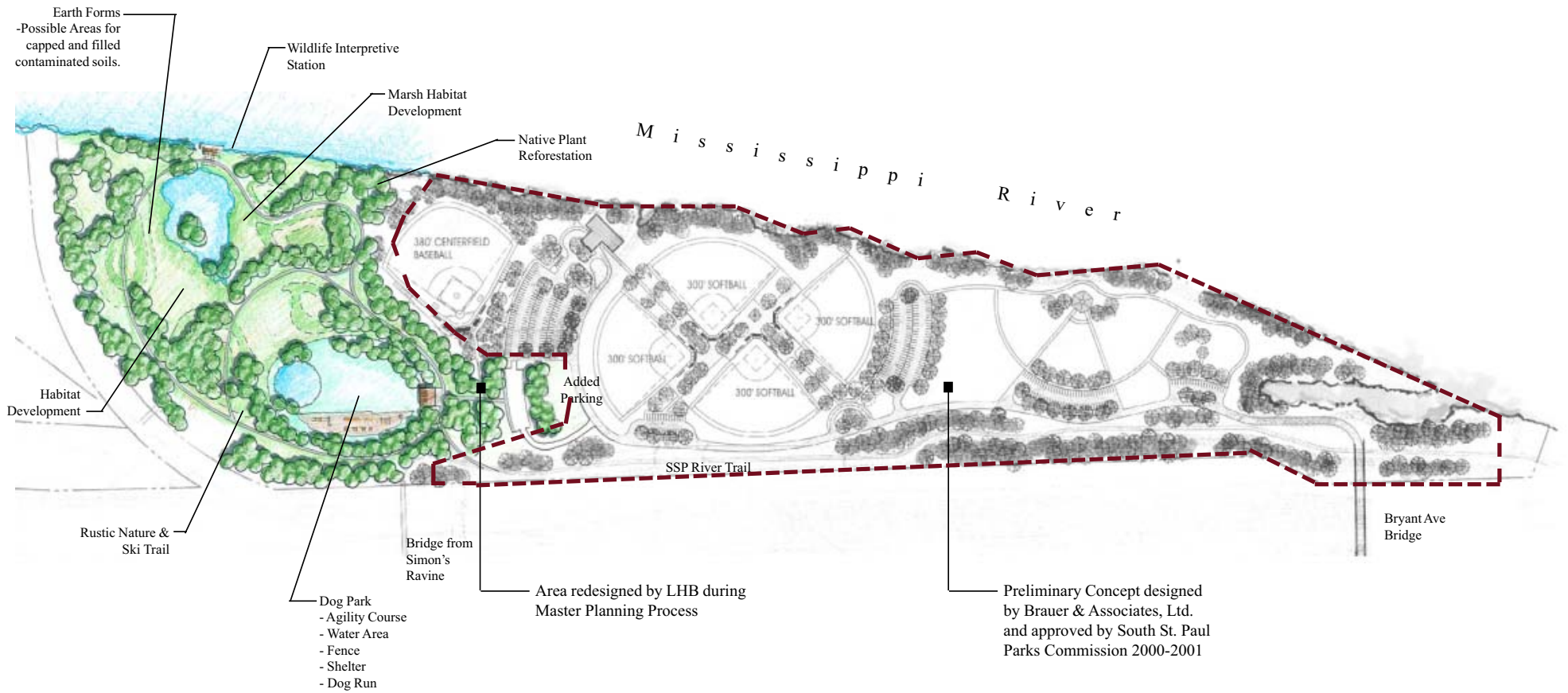


Prepared by:


LAND USE PLANNING AND DESIGN
BRAUER
 & ASSOCIATES, LTD.

B&A Project #06-04
 Date: March 30, 2006

Park Maintenance Building



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

Map Designation:	
Name:	Southwest Dakota County Regional Park Search Area
Agency:	Dakota County
Category:	Proposed Deletion
Acres:	400*
Acquisition Costs:	\$2,000,000*

* Estimates taken from the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*

Request

Dakota County has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council consider deleting the Southwest Dakota County Regional Park Search Area from the regional parks system as part of the Parks Policy Plan update.

Background

A regional park search area was designated in the southwest portion of Dakota County as a “Completing the System” component of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. “Completing the System” regional park search areas are anticipated to be developed post-2030, although land acquisition is encouraged as properties become available.

This search area was identified based on the presence of one of the few large lakes in southern Dakota County as well as Regionally Significant Natural Resource Areas as mapped by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Metropolitan Council. The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* indicated that the regional park search area was subject to the outcome of the Dakota County Park System Plan, which was completed in 2008 and was incorporated into the County’s comprehensive plan.

The County completed an extensive planning process to develop the Park System Plan; a regional park in this area was not a component of the plan. The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* included a regional trail search corridor in this area. The Park System Plan expanded its trail planning to incorporate a comprehensive greenway system. Some of the objectives of the proposed greenways are to improve water quality, contribute to improved habitat and provide convenient and accessible recreational open space through linear parks. The Park System Plan identified a regional greenway corridor along the west side of Chub Lake, which is in the general “Completing the System” regional park search area. Therefore, the objectives of the park search area may be met with the development of a greenway.

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

Map Designation:	T-5 and T-6
Name:	Rosemount River Access Greenway Regional Trail North Creek Greenway Regional Trail
Agency:	Dakota County
Category:	Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor
Miles:	T-5: 5 miles T-6 : 9 miles
Acquisition Costs:	TBD

Request

Dakota County has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council consider the designation of two regional trail search corridors as part of the Parks Policy Plan update.

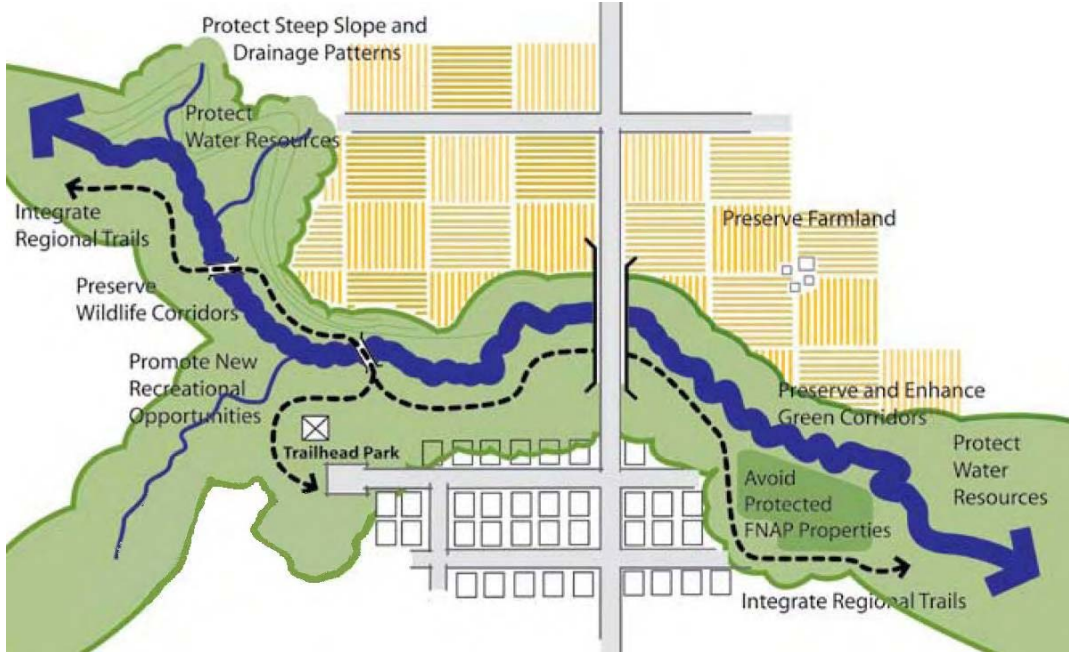
The proposed Rosemount River Access Greenway Regional Trail Search Corridor travels through Rosemount to connect the proposed Vermillion Highlands Greenway Regional Trail to the planned Mississippi River Regional Trail and Spring Lake Park Reserve. (T-5)

The North Creek Greenway Regional Trail Search Corridor travels through Farmington, Lakeville and Apple Valley to connect the Minnesota Zoo and the proposed Terrace Oaks Greenway Regional Trail to the proposed Vermillion River Greenway Regional Trail. (T-6)

Background

Dakota County completed its Park System Plan in 2008. In addition to planning for a new regional park in the Vermillion Highlands area of Empire Township, the Park System Plan placed a large focus on developing a comprehensive greenway network throughout the County. The County’s greenway vision is to “create a seamless and interconnected greenway framework of parks, natural areas, lakes, and rivers, from which to provide convenient and high quality recreation for our citizens and protect and restore Dakota County’s natural systems.”

The network of greenways is envisioned to be developed through partnerships between the County, cities, townships, school districts, and the private sector. The greenway concept is to interconnect popular destinations such as parks, schools, open space, civic spaces, new development, and businesses with a greenway trail setting. Other objectives of the proposed greenways are to improve water quality, contribute to improved habitat and provide convenient and accessible recreational open space through linear parks, as depicted in the following graphic:



The County's Parks System Plan envisions 13 future trails, all of which are identified as regional trails in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, with the exception of the proposed Rosemount River Access Greenway Regional Trail and North Creek Greenway Regional Trail.

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.

Neither the proposed Rosemount River Access Greenway Regional Trail (T-5) nor the North Creek Greenway Regional Trail (T-6) duplicate an existing trail. Dakota County's greenways can serve as both destination and linking trails. Both proposed regional trail search corridors provide connections to regional parks and trails.

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

The proposed regional trail search corridors will traverse several communities in Dakota County and will connect to the greater County greenway/regional trail network, which provides for connections to regional trails in St. Paul, Washington County and Scott County. These trails, with their connections to other regional parks and trails, may draw 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 Rosemount River Access Greenway Regional Trail Search Corridor (T-5) will travel through Rosemount, which is designated partially as a "developing" community and partially as an "agricultural geographic planning area" in the 2030 Regional Development Framework. The proposed Highline Greenway Regional Trail and the proposed Vermillion River Greenway Regional Trail parallel this proposed regional trail search corridor, but they are both located more than 2 miles away.

The proposed North Creek Greenway Regional Trail Search Corridor (T-6) will travel through Farmington, Lakeville and Apple Valley. The 2030 Regional Development Framework classifies Apple Valley as a "developed" community, and Lakeville and Farmington as "developing" communities. The proposed Vermillion Highlands Greenway Regional Trail parallels this proposed regional trail search corridor, but it is located more than 2 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, some of the objectives of the proposed greenways are to improve water quality, contribute to improved habitat and provide convenient and accessible recreational open space through linear parks, which meets the criteria for a destination trail.

There are Regionally Significant Natural Resource and Ecological Areas as mapped by the Minnesota DNR and Metropolitan Council in the vicinity of the both ends of the proposed Rosemount River Access Greenway Regional Trail Search Corridor. Additionally, the City of Rosemount's comprehensive plan includes a proposed Interpretive Trail Corridor, whose trail design will integrate functional use, scenic value, historical and environmental interpretation, and ecological restoration. This trail is envisioned to connect downtown Rosemount to the Mississippi River. Collaboration between the County and the City could be evaluated during the development of a master plan for the regional trail.

The proposed North Creek Greenway Regional Trail could follow its namesake, North Creek, portions of which are surrounded by Regionally Significant Natural Resource Areas of outstanding quality.

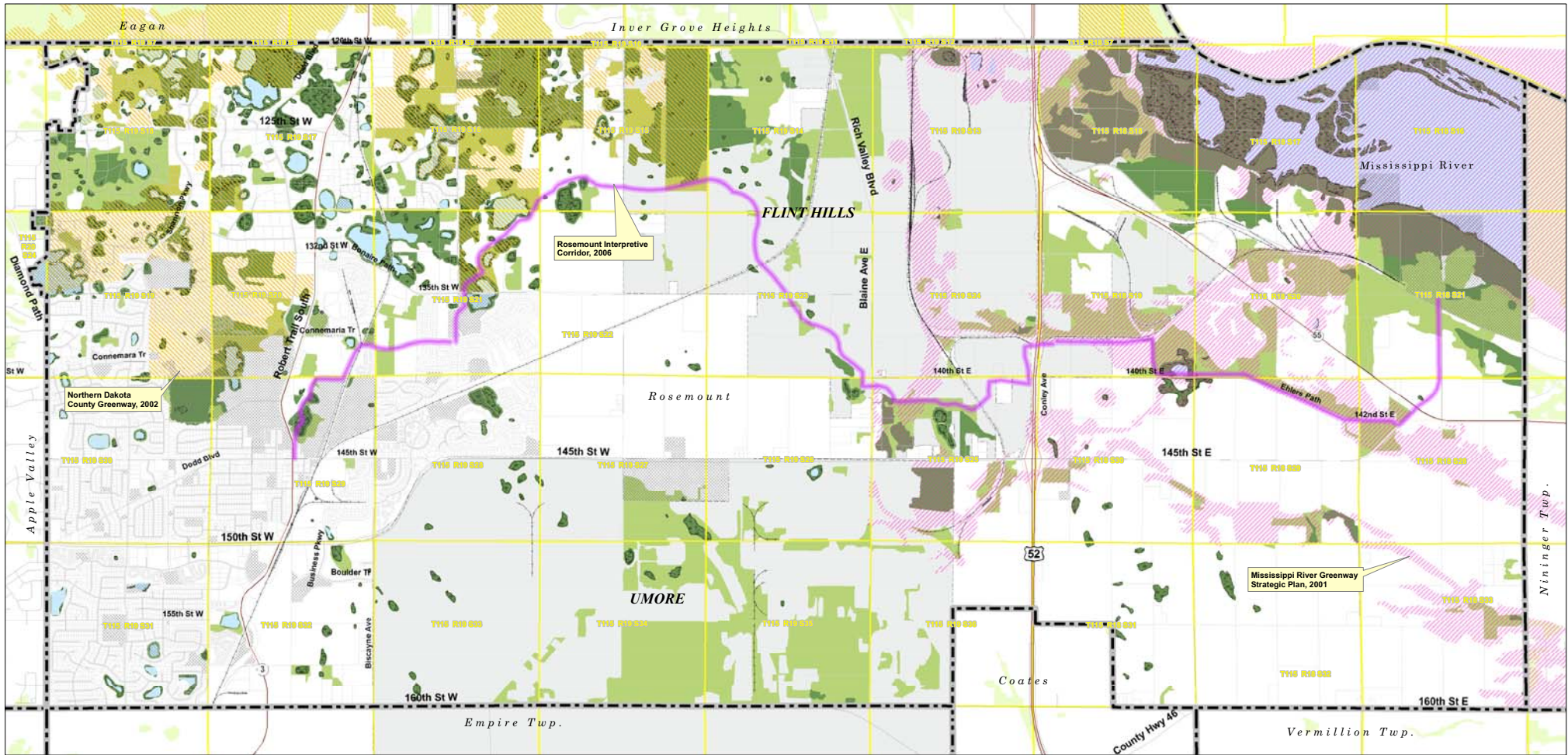
Planned and Proposed Trails:

Several trail alignments were proposed in the last Park System Plan or recommended by the Metropolitan Council. Not all routes shown on the map have been planned in detail, funded, or given an official name.



Future Trails:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cannon Valley Regional Trail Link 2. Eagan Greenway Regional Trail 3. Rosemount River Access Greenway Regional Trail * 4. Highline Greenway Regional Trail 5. Lake Marion Greenway Regional Trail 6. Minnesota River Greenway Regional Trail 7. Mississippi River Regional Trail: Hastings to Red Wing | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. North Creek Greenway Regional Trail * 9. Rich Valley Greenway Regional Trail 10. Terrace Oaks Greenway Regional Trail 11. Vermillion Highlands Greenway Regional Trail 12. Chub Creek Greenway Regional Trail 13. Vermillion River Greenway Regional Trail <p><i>* Regional status to be proposed or under discussion with the Metropolitan Council</i></p> |
|---|---|



HIGHEST PRIORITY

Natural areas that are the most important water quality and habitat resources in the City

1. Open water
Data Source: City of Rosemount
 2. Wetlands
Data Source: City of Rosemount
 3. A buffer up to 75' around open water and wetlands
Data Source: City of Rosemount Wetland Management and Protection Requirements.
 4. Land within the 100 and 500 year floodplains.
Data Source: FEMA
 5. The areas have been identified by the Minnesota County Biological Survey as a Natural Community.
Data Source: Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District, Dakota County Priority Natural Areas
 6. Natural/semi-natural land cover* with at least one of the following characteristics:
 - a. Land with native vegetation.
 - b. Presence or habitat for a state endangered, threatened special concern plant or animal.
 - c. Land is within 300' of a lake, stream or water body.
Data Source: Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District, Dakota County Priority Natural Areas
- *Natural/semi-natural land cover as classified in the Minnesota Land Cover Classification for Dakota County developed by the MNDNR.

LOWER PRIORITY

Lower priority areas are natural areas that have habitat and water quality value but have experienced some disturbance or are dominated by non-native species.

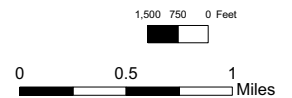
1. The land has natural/semi-natural land cover but does not meet any of the criteria outlined under Highest Priority.
Data Source: Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District, Dakota County Priority Natural Areas
2. Lands identified by the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System as having the presence of man-made impervious surfaces but with those surfaces covering less than 25% of the land. The minimum size for these areas to be included is 50 acres.
Data Source: MN Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Land Cover Classification System
3. Other areas with significant tree cover.
Data Source: City of Rosemount Staff

OTHER NATURAL AREA AND GREENWAY PLANNING EFFORTS

- Mississippi River Greenway, 2001
Data Source: Hosington Koegler Group
- Northern Dakota County Greenway, 2002
Data Source: Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Rosemount Interpretive Corridor, 2006
Data Source: Hosington Koegler Group

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- City Boundary
- Publicly Held Land
- Railroad
- Major Land Holders, UMORE & Flint Hills Resources
- Natural / Seminatural Land Cover in Adjacent Communities
- Open Water
- Section Lines

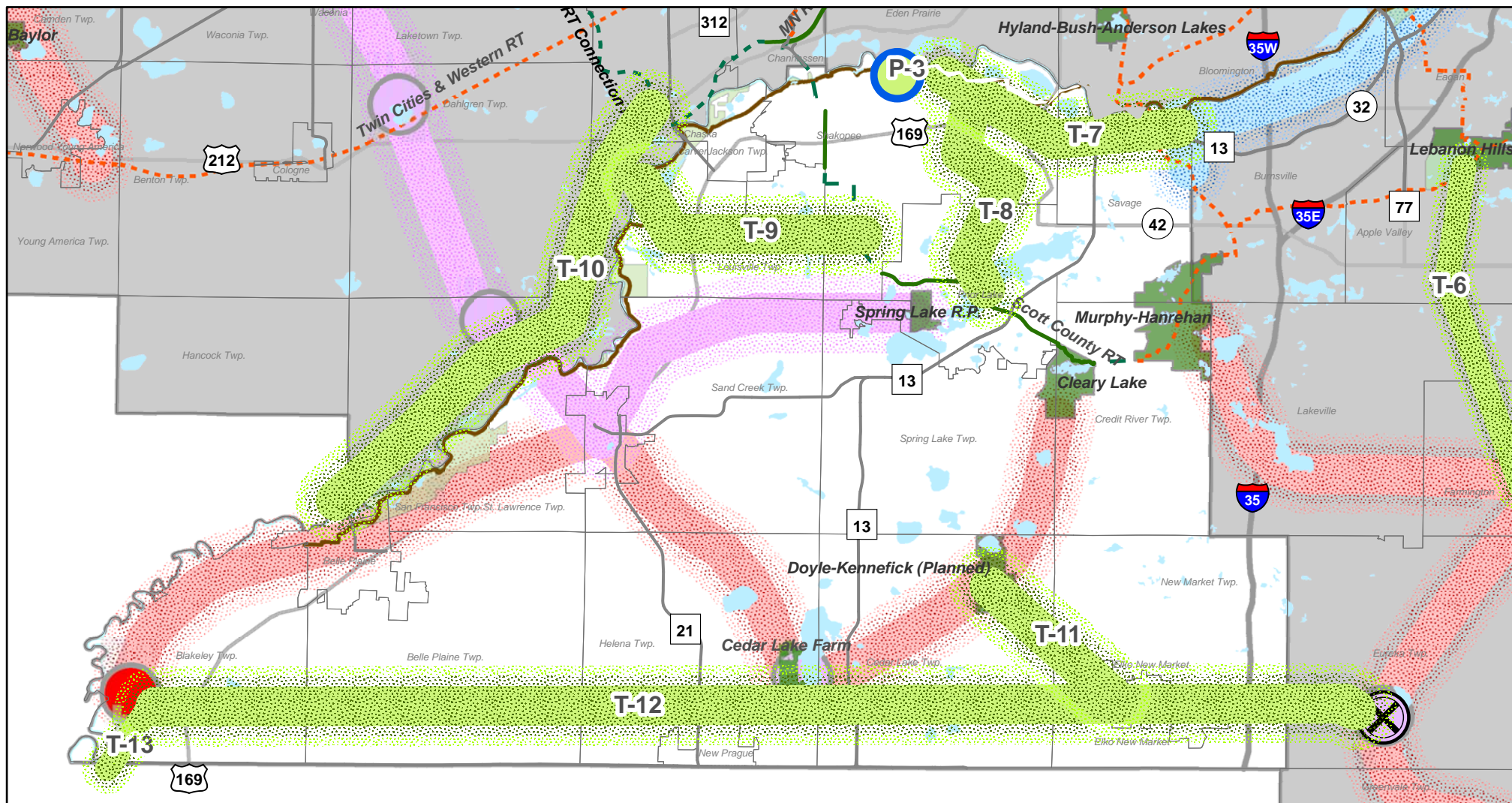


Natural Areas

Rosemount Natural Area Identification

October 5, 2006

Hosington Koegler Group, inc.



Regional Parks Policy Plan Update--Scott County

Proposed System Additions (2010)

Regional Parks

- Regional
- State
- Federal

Regional Trails

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

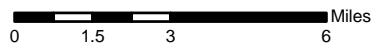
Regional Park Search Areas (2005)

- New Unit
- Completing the System

Regional Trail Search Corridors (2005)

- Boundary Adjustment
- New Unit
- Completing the System

- T-7** Big Rivers RT Connection
- T-8** Prior Lake Outlet Trail
- T-9** Louisville Trail
- T-11** Elko New Market-Blakeley-Doyle Kennefick Connection
- T-12** Elko New Market--Blakeley Trail
- T-13** Blakeley Bluffs RT Extension



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

Map Designation:	T-7
Name:	Big Rivers Regional Trail
Agency:	Scott County
Category:	Proposed Regional Trail Extension
Miles:	5
Acquisition Costs:	TBD

Request

Scott County has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) and the Metropolitan Council consider an extension of the Big Rivers Regional Trail Search Corridor as part of the Parks Policy Plan update.

Background

The existing Big Rivers Regional Trail begins in Lilydale where it connects to trails in Lilydale-Harriet Island Regional Park and travels approximately 4 miles southwest along the Minnesota River to the border of Mendota Heights and Eagan. Dakota County operates the regional trail. The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* identified an extension of the Big Rivers Regional Trail from Mendota Heights to Burnsville, at the border of Dakota and Scott Counties. Dakota County included this regional trail search corridor in its Park System Plan. The trail alignment will be determined when a master plan is developed.

Scott County's 2030 Parks and Trails Plan proposes to extend the regional trail search corridor from the border of Dakota and Scott Counties, through Savage, to connect to the Minnesota Valley State Trail in Shakopee. One potential challenge in planning the trail will be a heavy industrial area that includes Port Cargill, which is located between Highway 13 and the Minnesota River in the northeast portion of Savage.

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 Big Rivers Regional Trail extension does not duplicate an existing trail. Depending on the alignment, the proposed trail may be a destination and/or a linking trail. Much of the land along the Minnesota River consists of Regionally Significant Natural Resource and Ecological Areas as mapped by the Minnesota DNR and the Metropolitan Council. The trail may provide opportunities to connect to the proposed Scott County East Regional Trail, the Minnesota Valley State Trail, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, and The Landing, which Three Rivers Park District has proposed to be considered for inclusion in the regional parks system as part of the Parks Policy Plan update.

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

The proposed trail is a continuation of the proposed Big Rivers Regional Trail in Dakota County, which connections trails leading to Harriet Island in St. Paul. The proposed trail will also connect to the Minnesota Valley State Trail, which leads more than 20 miles along the Minnesota River to Belle Plaine. These connections will likely result in a regional audience for the proposed regional trail.

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, lands along the Minnesota River in Scott County include large swaths of Regionally Significant Natural Resource and Ecological Areas. These areas may provide opportunities to create a destination trail that includes high quality natural resources.

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 Savage and Shakopee as “developing” communities. The closest regional trail that parallels the proposed Big Rivers Regional Trail Extension Search Corridor is the Scott County West Regional Trail, which is more than 5 miles away.

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

Map Designation:	T-8
Name:	Prior Lake Outlet Regional Trail
Agency:	Scott County
Category:	Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor
Miles:	6
Acquisition Costs:	TBD

Request

Scott County has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) and the Metropolitan Council consider the designation of a regional trail search corridor along the Prior Lake Outlet Channel as part of the Parks Policy Plan update.

Background

Scott County conducted a significant planning process to develop its 2030 Parks and Trails Plan. The Parks and Trails Plan proposes several trails throughout the County, including County transportation trails along County roads, regional trails identified in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, and regional trails to be considered for inclusion in the regional parks system as part of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* update.

The proposed Prior Lake Outlet Regional Trail will connect the proposed Big Rivers Regional Trail extension located along the Minnesota River in Shakopee to Lower Prior Lake and the Scott County West Regional Trail in Prior Lake. The trail search corridor is approximately 6 miles long and follows the general alignment of the Prior Lake Outlet Channel. In the early 1980s, a man-made outlet was constructed in order to relieve flooding problems on Prior Lake. A series of intermittent streams and wetlands was connected to the outlet and enhanced to carry floodwaters from Prior Lake north to the Minnesota River. Along the way, the channel travels through lakes and wetlands, and also picks up additional stormwater from surrounding communities. The Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District is currently implementing a multi-year outlet and channel improvement project.

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 Prior Lake Outlet Regional Trail does not duplicate an existing trail. Depending on the final trail alignment determined through development of a master plan, it could be either a destination or a linking trail. A trail along the outlet channel could provide a pleasant recreational destination. The trail would link the proposed Big Rivers Regional Trail in Shakopee to the Scott County Regional Trail in Prior Lake.

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

The proposed trail would travel through Prior Lake and Shakopee to connect to the proposed Big Rivers Regional Trail extension, which will travel into Dakota County. By providing connections to the Big Rivers Regional Trail, the proposed regional trail may attract 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 Prior Lake and Shakopee as “developing” communities. The closest trail to parallel the proposed Prior Lake Outlet Regional Trail is the proposed Scott County East Regional Trail, which is more than 4 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.

The area surrounding the Prior Lake Outlet Channel has been mapped as a Metro Conservation Corridor by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. These corridors have been identified as focus areas for restoring a habitat network in the Twin Cities to protect and improve the health of native vegetation, fish and wildlife species. Areas along the channel in Shakopee have also been identified as Regionally Significant Natural Resource and Ecological Areas by the Minnesota DNR and Metropolitan Council. These resources could support the development of a destination trail.

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

Map Designation:	T-9
Name:	Louisville Trail
Agency:	Scott County
Category:	Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor
Miles:	8
Acquisition Costs:	TBD

Request

Scott County has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council consider the designation of a regional trail search corridor through Louisville Township and Shakopee including a Minnesota River crossing to Carver County as part of the Parks Policy Plan update.

Background

The proposed 8-mile long Louisville Regional Trail will begin at the Scott County West Regional Trail in Shakopee, follow the Union Pacific railroad line and provide a river crossing to Carver County.

The Union Pacific Railroad has a spur line that leads from near the Renaissance Festival site in Louisville Township, across the Minnesota River to downtown Chaska, providing service to United Sugars. In 2007, a bridge trestle collapsed. The railroad removed the trestle and closed the bridge. The railroad decided to abandon the line, since it only served one customer.

Scott County, Carver County, the Metropolitan Council, and the cities of Shakopee, Chaska and Carver began working together to acquire the corridor. Scott and Carver Counties identified the potential to connect regional trails across the river; Chaska saw opportunities for potential redevelopment; Carver was interested in flood protection opportunities since the current rail bridge creates log jams in the river; and Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Division identified portions of the corridor on both sides of the river that could be used for regional sewer interceptor purposes. Therefore, acquisition of the corridor could provide a number of public benefits.

These entities signed a joint powers agreement and submitted an offer to Union Pacific based on an appraisal. However, the parties could not agree on a price, so the railroad is proceeding through the abandonment process. The outcome of the situation is yet to be determined. Designation of a regional trail search corridor in this area and subsequent

approval of a master plan by the Metropolitan Council would allow Scott and Carver Counties to be eligible for regional parks funding for acquisition and development.

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 Louisville Trail does not duplicate an existing trail. Depending on the final trail alignment determined through development of a master plan, it could be either a destination or a linking trail. Areas along the Minnesota River would provide a destination trail setting. The trail will link the Scott County West Regional Trail to the proposed Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail extension in Carver County.

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

The trail will travel through Shakopee, Louisville Township and cross over the Minnesota River to connect to Carver County's network of proposed regional trails. Therefore, the Louisville 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 railroad corridor travels through the Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area in Scott County before it crosses the Minnesota River. This area contains Regionally Significant Natural Resource and Ecological Areas as identified by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Metropolitan Council. These areas will provide opportunities to create a destination trail that includes high quality natural resources. The regional trail search corridor also passes by two large lakes on the border of Shakopee and Louisville Township.

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

Map Designation:	T-11 T-12
Name:	T-11 Elko New Market-Blakeley-Doyle Kennefick Connection Regional Trail T-12 Elko New Market-Blakeley Regional Trail
Agency:	Scott County
Category:	Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor
Miles:	T-11: 4 miles T-13: 32 miles
Acquisition Costs:	TBD

Request

Scott County has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) and the Metropolitan Council consider the designation of two regional trail search corridors in the southern portion of the County.

The proposed Elko New Market-Blakeley-Doyle Kennefick Regional Trail will connect the planned Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park in Cedar Lake Township to the proposed Elko New Market-Blakeley Regional Trail in Elko New Market, for a distance of approximately 4 miles. (T-11)

The proposed Elko New Market-Blakeley Regional Trail will travel the approximately 30 miles through the southern portion of Scott County and connect the proposed Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve, Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park, and the proposed Chub Creek Greenway Regional Trail in Dakota County. The length of the trail in Dakota County would be approximately 2 miles. (T-12)

Background

Scott County conducted a significant planning process to develop its 2030 Parks and Trails Plan. The Parks and Trails Plan proposes several trails throughout the County, including County transportation trails along County roads, regional trails identified in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, and regional trails to be considered for inclusion in the regional parks system as part of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* update.

The Parks and Trails Plan indicates that current trail opportunities consist primarily of constructing trails within county road rights-of-way at the time of road reconstruction and describes potential options for the development of future off-road trails. The off-road trails could be developed along railroad rights-of-way that may be abandoned in the

future, large utility rights-of-way such as major transmission lines and pipelines, or within a corridor obtained by park dedication/acquisition at the time of development. The Parks and Trails Plan indicates that trails should serve multiple functions such as transportation and recreation whenever possible and also envisions a loop system that connects regional park and rural towns, such as Jordan, Belle Plaine, New Prague and Elko New Market.

The proposed Elko New Market-Blakeley Regional Trail (T-12), along with two regional trail search corridors already identified in the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan, will complete a trail loop between Jordan, Belle Plaine, the proposed Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve, New Prague and Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park.

The proposed Elko New Market-Blakeley-Doyle Kennefick Regional Trail (T-11), along with the Elko New Market-Blakeley Regional Trail (T-12) and a regional trail search corridor already identified in the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan, will complete a trail loop between the planned Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park, Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park and Elko New Market.

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.

Neither the proposed Elko New Market-Blakeley-Doyle Kennefick Regional Trail (T-11) nor the proposed Elko New Market-Blakeley Regional Trail (T-12) duplicate an existing trail and both could serve as a destination or linking trail, depending on the trail alignment determined in a master plan. These trails will provide opportunities to connect several units of the regional parks system, including the proposed Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve, Cedar Lake Farm Regional

Park, and the planned Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park in Scott County and the proposed Chub Creek Greenway Regional Trail in Dakota County.

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

The proposed regional trails are in close proximity to Scott County's borders with Sibley, LeSueur, Rice and Dakota Counties. The proposed Elko New Market-Blakeley Regional Trail (T-12) will connect to the proposed Chub Creek Greenway Regional Trail in Dakota County. Therefore, these trails will likely attract 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 Jordan, Belle Plaine and Elko New Market as "rural centers", which are considered older developed small towns that serve as a center for the rural area. There are no existing or proposed regional trails that run parallel to either of the proposed regional trail search corridors.

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 southern portion of Scott County is rural and contains several streams, wetlands and Regionally Significant Natural Resource and Ecological Areas as identified by the Minnesota DNR and the Metropolitan Council. These resources would provide a good setting for the development of a destination trail corridor.

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

Map Designation:	T-13
Name:	Blakeley Bluffs Regional Trail
Agency:	Scott County
Category:	Proposed Regional Trail Extension
Miles:	2
Acquisition Costs:	TBD

Request

Scott County has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) and the Metropolitan Council consider an extension of the Blakeley Bluffs Regional Trail Search Corridor from the Blakeley Bluffs Regional Park Search Area to the boundary between Scott and LeSueur Counties as part of the Parks Policy Plan update.

Background

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* identified a Regional Trail Search Corridor in Scott County to connect proposed regional trails in Jordan to the Blakeley Bluffs Regional Park Search Area in the southwest portion of the County. Scott County's 2030 Parks and Trails Plan plans for this regional trail and proposes to extend the regional trail search corridor south to the border of Scott and LeSueur Counties, where there will be opportunities to connect to Ney Nature Center.

Ney Nature Center is a LeSueur County Park and Environmental Learning Center located on the bluffs of the Minnesota River. The nature center is open for hiking, cross-county skiing and bird watching and includes facilities that are used for education, and private rentals such as meetings and weddings.

If the proposed trail is incorporated into the regional parks system, the trail would be eligible for regional park funds for the segment that lies in Scott County. A trail connection in LeSueur County to Ney Nature Center would not be eligible for regional park funds, since it is outside of the Metropolitan Council's seven county jurisdiction.

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 Blakeley Bluffs Regional Trail Search Corridor extension does not duplicate an existing trail and will be a destination trail. The trail will provide opportunities to connect the proposed Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve to Ney Nature Center.

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

The regional trail search corridor extension is in close proximity to the borders between Scott, Sibley and LeSueur Counties and is proposed to connect to Ney Nature Center in LeSueur County. Therefore, the trail will attract 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.

Land along the Minnesota River in this portion of the County include large swaths of Regionally Significant Natural Resource Areas of Outstanding Quality as identified by the Minnesota DNR and the Metropolitan Council. These areas include bluffs and ravines with stunning views.

Scott County 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update



Scott County Regional Park and Trail System

Legend

- Regional Park
- Regional Park (To Be Acquired)
- Regional Park Search Area*
- Future Study Area
- State Park
- State WMAs
- Federal Wildlife Refuge Area
- Regional Trail Corridor Search Area*
- Proposed Trail Corridor Search Area (will seek regional status)
- County Trail Corridor** (unincorporated area)
- State Trail Corridor
- U.S. & State Highway
- County Highway (paved)
- County Highway (gravel)
- Railroad
- Trail River Crossing
- State Grant-In-Aid Snowmobile Trails (2007 route)
- Snowmobile Park and Rides

*As identified in the Metropolitan Council 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan. A master plan has been approved for the Scott County West Regional Trail.

**All County roadways within urban areas are designated as County Trail Corridors.

