

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

390 North Robert Street, St. Paul, MN 55101
Phone (651) 602-1000 TDD (651) 291-0904

DATE: December 6, 2011
TO: Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission
FROM: Jan Youngquist, AICP; Planning Analyst-Parks (651) 602-1029
SUBJECT: (2011-xxx) Bassett Creek Regional Trail Master Plan, Three Rivers Park District (Referral No. 50013-1)
Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission District A (Seyon Nyanwleh) and District C (Emily Johnson Piper)

INTRODUCTION

Three Rivers Park District has submitted the Bassett Creek Regional Trail Master Plan for Metropolitan Council review and approval.

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* (Chapter 2 – Planning Strategy 1), describes the role of the master plan in the regional park system. The policy requires that any project proposed for funding in the Metropolitan Regional Parks Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) be consistent with a Metropolitan Council approved regional park master plan.

This staff report contains a review of the Bassett Creek Regional Trail Master Plan based on its consistency with the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and recommends approval of the master plan.

AUTHORITY TO REVIEW

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

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

BACKGROUND

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* identifies a planned regional trail to connect Clifton E. French Regional Park in Plymouth to Theodore Wirth Regional Park in Golden Valley. The planned regional trail was incorporated in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* based on Three Rivers Park District's *First Tier Trails, Greenways and Parks Master Plan*, which identified recreational and multi-modal transportation options in the first-tier suburban Hennepin County communities.

The Bassett Creek Regional Trail will be an approximately 7 miles long linking trail that will travel through Plymouth, New Hope, Crystal and Golden Valley. In addition to the connections between Clifton E. French Regional Park and Theodore Wirth Regional Park, the regional trail will also connect to the Medicine Lake Regional Trail and to a number of local parks, schools and trails. *Figure 1* depicts the location of the Bassett Creek Regional Trail.

Figure 1: Bassett Creek Regional Trail Location



MASTER PLAN REVIEW ANALYSIS

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that master plans for regional linking trails address the nine items listed below.

1. Boundaries and Acquisition Costs

The Bassett Creek Regional Trail will generally follow a route extending east from Clifton E. French Regional Park along 36th Avenue in Plymouth, over Trunk Highway 169 (TH 169) to Boone Avenue in New Hope. At Boone Avenue, the trail will travel through Northwood Park before reconnecting with 36th Avenue in Crystal, where it will travel to Nevada Avenue. From Nevada Avenue, the regional trail will traverse south to 32nd Avenue, east along 32nd Avenue, then south parallel to Trunk Highway 100 (TH 100). After the trail crosses TH 100, it will follow Lilac Drive, Unity Avenue, Minnequa Drive,

Westbend Road, Regent Avenue and Golden Valley Road (County Road 66) to connect to Theodore Wirth Regional Park.

The regional trail will be primarily located within existing street right-of-way and will include some existing trail segments. However, acquisition of easements will be necessary in areas where existing trail segments do not meet Three Rivers Park District design standards.

Three Rivers Park District's regional trail land acquisition process is based on a willing-seller approach. Strategies to acquire land for the regional trail include:

- Route the regional trail to utilize portions of the property with marginal development potential
- Acquire easements for the regional trail through owner or developer negotiations that may include redevelopment incentives
- Secure park dedication lands for the trail in advance of actual development
- Coordinate with City initiatives that may result in the acquisition of entire parcels, with the intent of reselling the property subject to a regional trail easement
- Acquire development rights to the property and negotiate development areas with the developer
- Accept a donation of property for the regional trail
- Obtain an easement from a property owner

For planning purposes, the trail route has been divided into seven segments. *Figure 2* depicts a map of the trail segments and *Figure 3* includes a description of each segment.

Figure 2: Bassett Creek Regional Trail Segment Map



Figure 3: Bassett Creek Regional Trail Segment Description

Segment	From	To	Along Through	Length
Plymouth				
A	Zachary Lane (adjacent to French Regional Park)	TH 169 Pedestrian Bridge	36th Avenue	1.10 mile
Plymouth New Hope				
B	TH 169 Pedestrian Bridge			0.06 mile
New Hope				
C	TH 169 Pedestrian Bridge	Nevada Avenue	36th Avenue Boone Avenue Northwood Park Winnetka Avenue 36th Avenue	1.63 mile
New Hope Crystal				
D	36th Avenue	32nd Avenue	Nevada Avenue	0.50 mile
Crystal				
E	Nevada Avenue	TH 100 Pedestrian Bridge	32nd Avenue Valley Place Park Bassett Creek Park	1.57 mile
Crystal Golden Valley				
F	TH 100 Pedestrian Bridge			0.18 mile
Golden Valley				
G	TH 100 Pedestrian Bridge	Theodore Wirth Parkway (Theodore Wirth Regional Park)	Lilac Drive Briarwood Nature Area Unity Avenue/Minnaqua Drive Westbend Road Regent Avenue Golden Valley Road/CR 66	1.98 mile
Total				7.03 miles

Three Rivers Park District estimates that easement acquisition costs for the Bassett Creek Regional Trail range from \$173,730 to \$186,098. *Figure 4* shows a breakdown of the estimated acquisition costs by trail segment.

Figure 4: Bassett Creek Regional Trail Estimated Easement Acquisition Costs

Segment	Estimated Quantity	Unit of Measurement	Easement Type	Estimated Cost	Estimated Total Cost
A1	423	Square Feet	Residential	\$7.50	\$3,173
A2	6,075	Square Feet	Public*/Commercial	\$7.50	\$45,563
B	0	Square Feet	N/A	\$7.50	\$0
C1	0	Square Feet	N/A	\$7.50	\$0
C2	2,560	Square Feet	Residential	\$7.50	\$19,200
C3	0	Square Feet	N/A	\$7.50	\$0
C4	2,112	Square Feet	Commercial	\$7.50	\$15,840
C5	0	Square Feet	N/A	\$7.50	\$0
D	0	Square Feet	N/A	\$7.50	\$0
E1	3,520	Square Feet	Residential	\$7.50	\$26,400
E2	0	Square Feet	N/A	\$7.50	\$0
E3	0	Square Feet	N/A	\$7.50	\$0
E4	0	Square Feet	N/A	\$7.50	\$0
E5	0	Square Feet	N/A	\$7.50	\$0
F	0	Square Feet	N/A	\$7.50	\$0
G1	0	Square Feet	N/A	\$7.50	\$0
G2	0	Square Feet	N/A	\$7.50	\$0
G3	0	Square Feet	N/A	\$7.50	\$0
G4-A	8,474	Square Feet	Residential/Commercial	\$7.50	\$63,555
G4-B	10,123	Square Feet	Residential/Commercial	\$7.50	\$75,923
				Total	\$173,730 - \$186,098

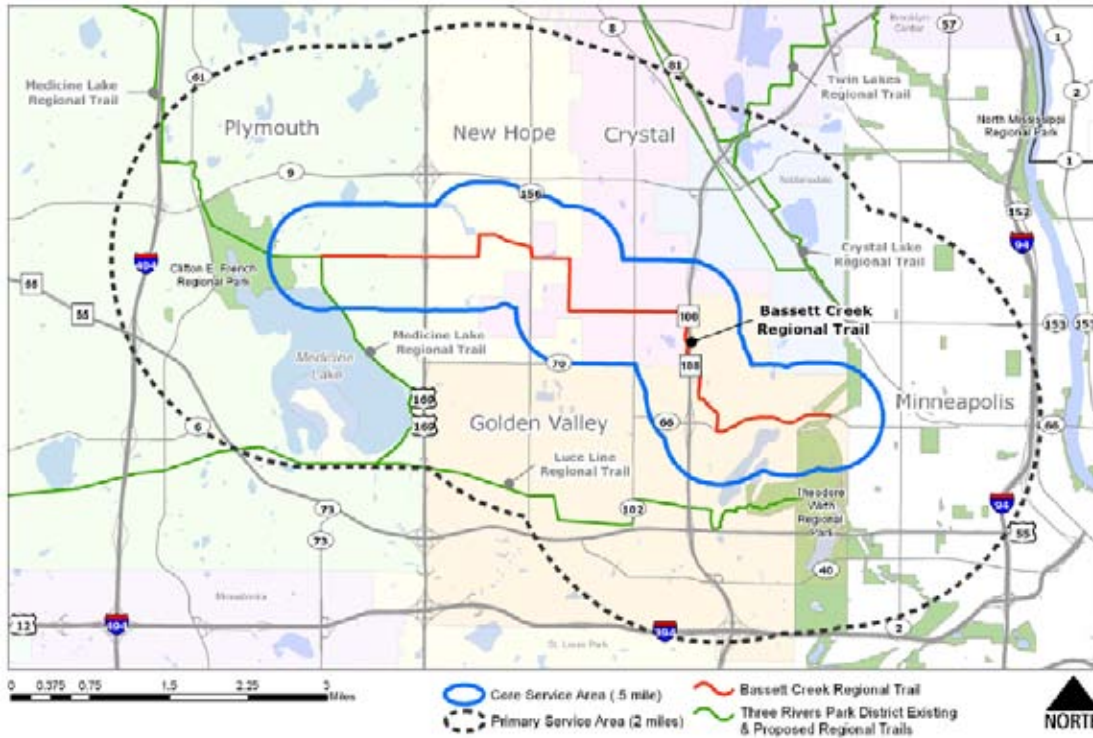
* Public land under ISD 281 Robbinsdale School District jurisdiction - potential to negotiate.

2. Demand Forecast

Three Rivers Park District estimates that once fully developed, the Bassett Creek Regional Trail will generate approximately 176,425 annual visits. Significant use of the trail will occur in spring, summer and fall. Three Rivers Park District does not operate or maintain its regional trails in the winter season, which is defined as November 15 to March 31. Local communities may maintain the trails under an independent use agreement with Three Rivers Park District. Therefore, winter use of the Bassett Creek Regional Trail will depend on weather conditions as well as whether the trail is being maintained by local municipalities.

Figure 5 depicts the core and primary service areas for the regional trail. The majority of trail users are anticipated to come from these service areas.

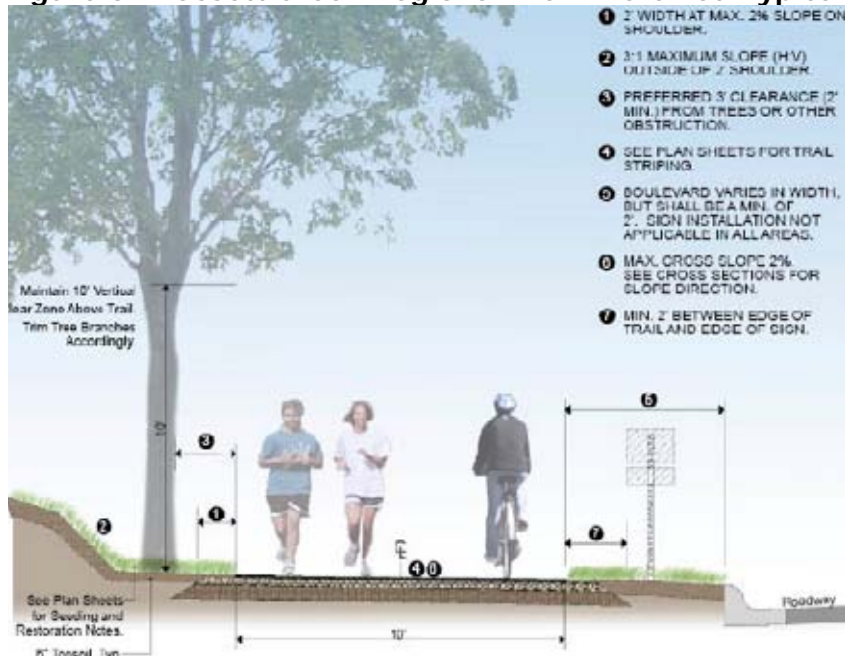
Figure 5: Bassett Creek Regional Trail Core and Primary Service Areas



3. Development Concept

The regional trail will be primarily located within existing street right-of-way and parkland owned by local municipalities and government agencies. The optimum trail consists of a 10 foot wide paved surface separated from the roadway by at least a 2-foot wide clear zone to provide a buffer between trail users and vehicles. However, in some cases the trail will need to be temporarily on-street or reduced in width for short segments until additional right-of-way can be acquired. *Figure 6* shows a preferred regional trail section.

Figure 6: Bassett Creek Regional Trail Preferred Typical Trail Section



The master plan describes the trail and sidewalk infrastructure currently in place for each defined segment and the recommended future trail construction, which is summarized in *Figure 7*. Three Rivers Park District intends to utilize the existing trail segments as-is for the life of the pavement or until local road reconstruction or adjacent redevelopment projects allow the upgrade of any nonconforming regional trail segments.

Figure 7: Bassett Creek Regional Trail Current Conditions & Recommended Development

Segment	Current Conditions	Recommended Trail Development
A	• 8' wide bituminous trail	• Widening/reconstruction of trail to preferred regional trail standards
	• 5' wide sidewalk	
B	• 14' wide pedestrian/bicycle bridge over TH169	• No modifications
C	• 10' wide bituminous trail	• Minor upgrades: ADA curb ramps
	• 5' wide sidewalk	• Widening/reconstruction of trail to preferred regional trail standards
	• Aggregate path	
D	• No off-street accommodations	• Stripe an on-street bike lane in the short term • Construct off-street trail to preferred regional trail standards in the long term
E	• No off-street accommodations	• Construct off-street trail to preferred regional trail standards
	• 8' wide sidewalk	
	• 5' wide sidewalk	
	• 8' wide bituminous trail	
	• 10' wide bituminous trail	• No modifications. If a proposed residential subdivision is developed and requires a shift in the trail alignment, the cost for trail relocation will be borne by the City of Crystal or by the developer.
F	• 14' wide pedestrian/bicycle bridge over TH100	• No modifications
G	• 8' wide bituminous trail	• Widening/reconstruction of trail to preferred regional trail standards
	• 5' wide sidewalk	• Determine the location and construct trail along Golden Valley Road in conjunction with future street redesign/reconstruction
	• 6' wide sidewalk on south side of Golden Valley Road	

Two of the proposed recommendations are associated with pending agreements between Three Rivers Park District and the local municipalities. Once this master plan has been approved by the Metropolitan Council and adopted by Three Rivers Park District, the agreements will be put into place.

- Segment D is located along Nevada Avenue between 32nd and 36th Avenues on the border of New Hope and Crystal. Currently, there are no off-street accommodations for pedestrians or bicycles. The master plan recommends striping an on-street bike lane along Nevada Avenue as a short term solution. Since bike lanes are a local jurisdiction's responsibility and Three Rivers Park District does not have property rights to develop or maintain roadway bike lanes,

the master plan proposes that the bike lane striping would be a local municipality expense. This proposal is supported by the local communities.

- Segment E6 includes an existing trail parallel to TH 100 that currently meets Three Rivers Park District’s preferred design standards. The trail alignment may shift slightly if a proposed residential subdivision in Crystal is developed. If this development requires reconstruction of the trail, the cost for trail relocation will be paid by the City of Crystal or the developer.

Because the regional trail will be located in an urban setting, there will be a number of locations where the trail will cross established roadways. These crossings are proposed to be marked with safety signage and surface paint to alert trail users as well as motorists. The trail corridor will also include rest stops and wayfinding signage to provide trail users with location information along the route. The locations for the rest stops will be evaluated and incorporated into the final design of the trail.

Trail development includes the costs to prepare the site, reconfigure roadways as required, modify drainage patterns where necessary, pave the trail, and install signage, striping and landscaping. The estimated costs for development of the Bassett Creek Regional Trail range from \$2,235,725 and \$2,357,125. The master plan also delineates the cost of trail enhancement items, such as signage and rest stops. The trail construction and enhancement item costs are described in *Figure 8*.

Figure 8: Bassett Creek Regional Trail Estimated Construction Costs

Cost Estimate Notes		
Regional Trail Construction Summary	Unit	Cost
New construction	3.65 miles	\$1,613,325 - \$1,734,725
Reconstruction	1.87 miles	\$601,350
Striping and/or signage	0.80 miles	\$21,050
<u>Meets Park District standards</u>	<u>0.71 miles</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Subtotal	7.03 miles	\$2,235,725 - \$2,357,125
Additional Trail Enhancement Item Costs		
	Unit	Cost
Segment D, Nevada Avenue bike lane*	0.50 miles	\$26,500
Segment E6, trail reconstruction**	0.45 miles	\$177,750
Level B Wayfinding Signage (\$25,850 each)	3	\$77,550
Level C Wayfinding Signage (\$6,050 each)	3	\$18,150
French Regional Park Signage	1	\$19,800
Theodore Wirth Regional Park Signage***	1	\$1,500
Traffic signage and devices	7.03 miles	\$21,090
<u>Rest stops</u>	<u>7.03 miles</u>	<u>\$47,101</u>
Park District Enhancement subtotal		\$389,441
* Optional short term solution at City expense		
** Costs borne of the City of Crystal and/or developer		
*** In conjunction with Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) kiosk signage		

4. Conflicts

The master plan includes a section that analyzes the opportunities and challenges of implementing the regional trail route. *Figure 9* illustrates the rationale for selection of the route and the potential challenges that Three Rivers Park District and the local communities may face when the trail segment development is implemented.

Figure 9: Bassett Creek Regional Trail Opportunities and Challenges

Segment A - Plymouth
Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides connection to French Regional Park, Medicine Lake Regional Trail, residential neighborhoods, Armstrong High School Trail and Plymouth Middle School. • Utilizes an existing trail segment from Zachary to Pilgrim Lanes. • Accommodates adequate right-of-way to achieve preferred regional trail design guidelines.
Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires crossing 36th Avenue from the north to the south side of the roadway at Pilgrim Lane. • Requires utility relocates, several roadway intersection crossings and potentially a small retaining wall.
Segment B - Plymouth New Hope
Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizes a newly constructed grade separated pedestrian bridge across TH 169.
Segment C - New Hope
Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides connection to Northwood Park, residential neighborhoods, Sonneysen Elementary School and commercial businesses. • Utilizes an existing trail segment from TH 169 to Boone Avenue.
Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires ADA curb ramp upgrades at roadway intersection crossings between TH 169 and Boone Avenue. • Requires a northern diversion from 36th Avenue between Boone and Winnetka Avenues to connect to Northwood Park. • Requires potential compromise of regional trail design standards for locations where public right-of-way is limited. • Does not use existing trail segment on Boone Avenue between 36th and 32nd Avenues.

Segment D - New Hope Crystal
Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers adequate public right-of-way to begin trail route's southerly transition along Nevada Avenue.
Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires Nevada Avenue (partial) roadway reconstruction to provide an off-street trail. There are no immediate roadway reconstruction plans from either New Hope or Crystal.
Segment E - Crystal
Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers connection to residential neighborhoods, Valley Place and Bassett Creek Parks and commercial businesses. Utilizes existing trail segments through Valley Place Park and from Xenia Avenue to the TH 100 pedestrian bridge.
Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires several roadway crossings, specifically the intersection of Douglas Drive/ County Road 102 (CR 102) - a minor arterial. Requires utility relocates in select locations and potentially a small retaining wall.
Segment F - Crystal Golden Valley
Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizes a grade separated pedestrian bridge across TH 100.
Segment G - Golden Valley
Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers connection to residential neighborhoods, Sheild Park, commercial/institutional businesses and Theodore Wirth Regional Park (Minneapolis Grand Rounds). Utilizes existing trail segments from TH 100 pedestrian bridge to Regent Avenue.
Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires Golden Valley Road/ CR 66 roadway reconstruction to provide an off-street trail. There are no immediate roadway reconstruction plans from Hennepin County. Requires creative solution through residential areas where limited right-of-way and recent road and/or sidewalk work has been completed.

5. Public Services

The development and operation of Bassett Creek Regional Trail is not anticipated to require any non-recreational public services or facilities such as roads or sewers. Additionally, regional trail corridors do not typically require utility services such as electricity, sanitary sewer and water service.

6. Operations

Rules, regulations and ordinances

The Bassett Creek Regional Trail will be operated under Three Rivers Park District ordinances which define the rules and regulations for the use of its regional parks and trails. A copy of the ordinances is posted on the Park District website. Rules and regulations are also posted throughout the Park District's properties and facilities. Posted information includes park hours, permitted and prohibited activities, fees, maps of the park and/or trail, and emergency contact information. Three Rivers Park District Police and Park Service Officers regularly patrol park and trail property and will enforce ordinances via citations when necessary.

Operations –Public Safety

Three Rivers Park District's Safety Section consists of Park Police Officers, Park Service Officers and support staff. Specific patrol of the Bassett Creek Regional Trail will be the primary responsibility of staff assigned to French Regional Park, although all public safety staff patrol trails on an as-needed basis.

Operations –Maintenance

In order to create an efficient and cost-effective work force, Three Rivers Park District organizes and budgets maintenance services in six geographic divisions. The French Work Cluster will provide maintenance services for the Bassett Creek Regional Trail.

Three Rivers Park District will maintain the trail between April 1 and November 14. Local municipalities that have a winter trail operations permit are responsible for operations and maintenance during the winter.

Maintenance Costs

Much of the equipment and tools for maintenance of the trail are already in place through the cost savings associated with the work cluster program. When the trail is fully developed, the annual routine maintenance costs are estimated to be \$5,000 in 2011 dollars.

Public Safety Costs

The projected annual operating costs for public safety services for this trail are estimated to be \$21,000 in 2011 dollars, which includes salary and benefits for seasonal patrol. Additionally, uniforms and gear will cost approximately \$3,000.

Funding Sources

Annual operating costs are funded through the Park District's general fund budget, with property taxes as the primary source of funds. Revenue is also received from the State of Minnesota as part of the Operations and Maintenance Fund allocation administered by the Metropolitan Council. Some of the annual rehabilitation costs also may be funded from the Three Rivers Park District Park Maintenance and Rehabilitation Fund, which includes revenues from the State of Minnesota as well as the Park District's general obligation bonds.

7. Citizen Participation

A task force was established to inform the planning process for this regional trail. The task force included representatives from:

- Cities of Crystal, Golden Valley, New Hope and Plymouth
- Hennepin County Transportation
- Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

The responsibilities of the task force included coordinating with local governing bodies, assisting in public participation opportunities, developing trail route selection guiding principles, providing information and support to identify feasible trail routes and assisting Three Rivers Park District with local approval processes.

Three Rivers Park District presented general trail information and the preliminary trail route to affected communities at City Council and Park Board meetings during the fall of 2010. An open house was held in June 2011 for the general public to review the work of the task force planning efforts and provide comments.

After receiving input from the task force and the public open house attendees, Three Rivers Park District released the draft Bassett Creek Regional Trail Master Plan for public review. The public review period was open for 30 days. The City Councils of Crystal, Golden Valley, New Hope and Plymouth all adopted resolutions of support for the Bassett Creek Regional Trail Master Plan.

8. Public Awareness

Three Rivers Park District uses a number of tools to promote its regional parks and trails, including the annual distribution of a District-wide map, the website, direct mail, press releases, brochures, and on-site promotion. Three Rivers Park District also collaborates with community, business and government organizations to promote its facilities, programs and services.

9. Accessibility

The Three Rivers Park District facilities associated with this master plan will be developed in accordance with ADA standards and guidelines. All unconstructed and reconstructed segments of the regional trail and trail amenities such as rest stops, parking, restrooms and water access will be designed to accommodate individuals with disabilities.

Since the regional trail travels through urban areas, it will cross major roadways. Three Rivers Park District will investigate opportunities to modify or add signal timing, crossings and signage to ensure that the trail is safe and accessible for all users.

The trail passes through a variety of neighborhoods with varying demographics, providing access to people with diverse range of social and cultural backgrounds. Three Rivers Park District does not charge entrance fees to its regional parks, park reserves or regional trails.

REVIEW BY OTHER COUNCIL DIVISIONS:

Community Development – Environment and Surface Water Management (Jim Larsen 651-602-1159) – No concerns.

Transportation (Ann Braden 651-602-1705) – No concerns

Metro Transit (Michael Mechtenberg 612-349-7793) – No concerns.

Transportation—Aviation (Russ Owen 651-602-1721) – The Bassett Creek Regional Trail does not appear to be near a regional aviation facility; therefore, the master plan is in conformance with the *2030 Transportation Policy Plan* and consistent with Council aviation policy.

Environmental Services – Sewers (Anna Bessel 651-602-1125) – After reviewing the plan, it was determined that the portion of the trail corridor located in Golden Valley lies within the vicinity of Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) facilities and related easements. Because the planned trail corridor is adjacent to or coincides with MCES facilities, plans must be submitted to assess any potential impact to the regional system. Therefore, after preliminary plans for the project are completed, it is requested that one set be forwarded to Scott Dentz of MCES for review and comment. The plans should include all trail construction activities that are planned within the City of Golden Valley. Coordination with MCES should occur to ensure that MCES facilities will not be negatively affected by any construction activities. The plans may be mailed to the following address:

Scott Dentz
3565 Kennebec Drive
Eagan, MN 55122-1058

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The Bassett Creek Regional Trail Master Plan, Three Rivers Park District (Referral No. 50013-1) is consistent with the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.
2. The estimated costs to implement the master plan are between \$2,798,896 and \$2,932,664. The estimate is comprised of \$173,730 to \$186,098 in easement acquisition costs; \$2,235,725 to \$2,357,125 in estimated construction costs; and \$389,441 in trail enhancement costs, including signage.
3. A portion of the regional trail route is located in the vicinity of MCES facilities and related easements. In order to maintain the integrity of the regional sewer system, development plans for the regional trail should be submitted to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review and comment.
4. Three Rivers Park District intends to enter into agreements with local municipalities regarding the costs of (1) striping a bike lane along Nevada Avenue in Segment D on the border of New Hope and Crystal and (2) reconstructing the existing trail in Segment E6 if necessitated by a residential

subdivision development along TH 100 in Crystal. Since these costs will not be the responsibility of Three Rivers Park District, the costs should not be eligible for regional parks funding.

5. Approval of this master plan does not commit the Council to any funding at this time. Future development funding based on this master plan would be done through the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Council action is required to approve the CIP and to approve specific grants to Three Rivers Park District.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Bassett Creek Regional Trail Master Plan (Referral No. 50013-1).
2. Require that prior to development of new trail segments, development plans be sent to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review and comment in order to ensure the integrity of the interceptor system.
3. Advise Three Rivers Park District that the construction costs described in the master plan for Segment D (striping a bike lane along Nevada Avenue) and for Segment E6 (reconstruction of the existing trail parallel to TH 100 as part of a future residential subdivision) are not eligible for regional parks funding.