

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

DATE: April 3, 2012
TO: Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission
FROM: Jan Youngquist, AICP; Planning Analyst-Parks (651) 602-1029
SUBJECT: (2012-xxx) *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* Amendment

INTRODUCTION:

The Metropolitan Council adopted the updated *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* in December 2010. The Council considered additions to the regional parks system based on staff proposals and requests from regional park implementing agencies. The updated *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* included the addition of a special recreation feature and 17 regional trail search corridors to the regional parks system, as well as the identification of a regional park study area. During the planning process, Three Rivers Park District indicated that it may have some regional trail corridors for consideration but were working through a visioning process and wanted to complete that before moving forward with any trail proposals. Council staff indicated to MPOSC and the Council that if Three Rivers Park District had any proposed additions to the regional system before the development of the next *Regional Parks Policy Plan* in 2014-2015, an amendment to the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* would be necessary.

Three Rivers Park District has requested that the Metropolitan Council consider adding two regional trail search corridors to the regional parks system. Additionally, Council staff has identified some policy clarifications and minor "housekeeping" changes and to the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

AUTHORITY TO REVIEW:

Minnesota Statute 473.147, Subdivision 1, requires that the Metropolitan Council, after consultation with the Parks and Open Space Commission, municipalities, park districts and counties in the metropolitan area, and after appropriate public hearings, prepare and adopt a long-range system policy plan for regional recreation open space as part of the council's Metropolitan Development Guide (i.e., the *2030 Regional Development Framework*).

The Statute also requires that the policy plan identify generally the areas which should be acquired by a public agency to provide a system of regional recreation open space comprising park district, county and municipal facilities which, together with state facilities, reasonably will meet the outdoor recreation needs of the people of the metropolitan area.

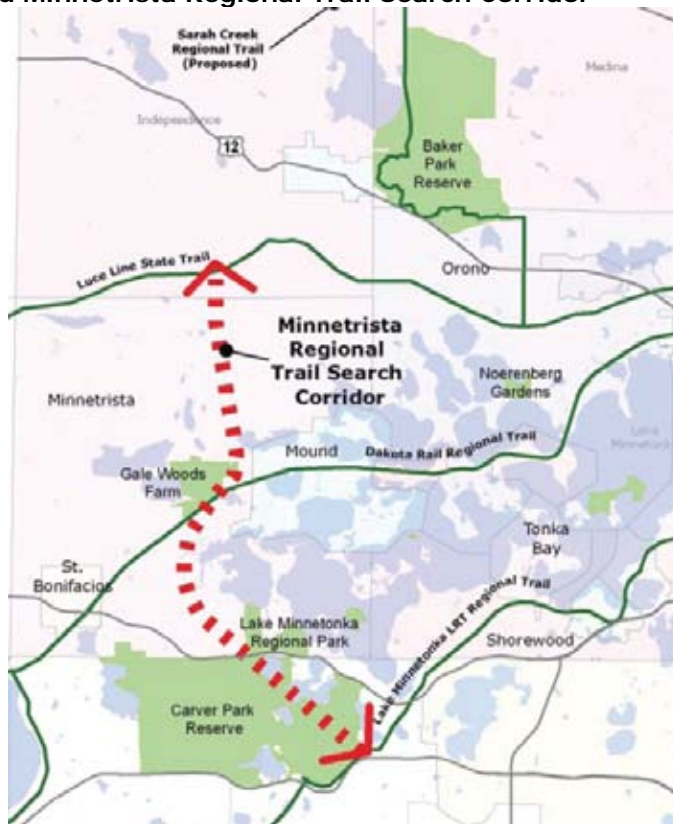
Minnesota Statute 473.147, Subdivision 2, indicates that an amendment to the policy plan may be proposed by the Council or the parks and open space commission. Before adopting the policy plan, the Council shall submit the proposed plan to the parks and open space commission for its review and the commission shall report its comments to the Council within 60 days. The Council is required to hold a public hearing on the proposed policy plan.

BACKGROUND:

Three Rivers Park District has requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission and the Metropolitan Council consider amending the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* to add the Minnetrista Regional Trail Search Corridor and the Intercity Regional Trail to the regional parks system. (See **Appendix A**, Request Letter from Kelly Grissman, Three Rivers Park District)

Minnetrista Regional Trail Search Corridor: The proposed 9-mile long Minnetrista Regional Trail will begin at the Luce Line State Trail in Independence and will connect Gale Woods Farm Special Recreation Feature, Dakota Rail Regional Trail, Lake Minnetonka Regional Park and Carver Park Reserve in Minnetrista to the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail in Victoria. (See **Figure 1**) The trail will be a linking trail, although portions of the trail corridor may have destination qualities.

FIGURE 1: Proposed Minnetrista Regional Trail Search Corridor



Planning for this regional trail would occur prior to or in conjunction with development in the area. This approach is typically more acceptable to the public and provides more options and efficiencies than attempting to retrofit a trail after an area has been developed. A proposed 490-acre planned unit development adjacent to Lake Minnetonka Regional Park provides an impetus for planning this trail. The City of Minnetrista is working with the site developer to obtain a trail easement through the development. The trail easement would allow Three Rivers Park District to work with the City of Minnetrista to implement the trail. Additionally, an agreement between the City of Minnetrista and Three Rivers Park District states that the City will construct a grade-separated trail crossing of Highway 7 to connect

Lake Minnetonka Regional Park to Carver Park Reserve, which will also facilitate development of this proposed regional trail. (See **Appendix B**)

Intercity Regional Trail: The proposed 7-mile long Intercity Regional Trail will begin at Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park (part of the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway) in Minneapolis and travel through Richfield and Bloomington as it connects to the proposed Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail and the planned Minnesota Valley State Trail within the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. (See **Figure 2**) If a feasible crossing of Long Meadow Lake at the old Cedar Avenue bridge can be made, the regional trail will also provide a connection to Dakota County and the planned Minnesota River Greenway Regional Trail. The trail will include key crossings of Trunk Highway 62, Interstate 494, and Highway 77.

FIGURE 2: Proposed Intercity Regional Trail



FIGURE 3: Redevelopment Areas



In addition to connections between regional parks system facilities, the proposed trail will travel through several redevelopment areas with high density housing, commercial and office uses. (See **Figure 3**) In Richfield, the Richfield Commons redevelopment area includes the Cedar Point Commons commercial development and future senior housing. The Interstate 494 redevelopment area is planned to be an urban village consisting of shops, services, entertainment and a range of housing options. In Bloomington, the South Loop/Mall of America expansion and redevelopment area is being developed as a mixed use district including residential, office, retail, entertainment, and hospitality uses. This area is anticipated to include 4,100 residential units and an additional 8,000 jobs. The proposed Intercity Regional Trail, in conjunction with the proposed Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail, will provide connections to these redevelopment areas, as well as to the Mall of America.

Three Rivers Park District has been working with the cities of Bloomington, Richfield and Minneapolis as well as the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Hennepin County, US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Metropolitan Airport Commission to identify the trail route and complete a master plan for the trail. (See **Appendix C**)

ANALYSIS:

Proposed Regional Trails

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

Siting and Acquisition Strategy 3: New trails, or trail segments, that serve a regional audience are a significant priority for the regional parks system.

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:

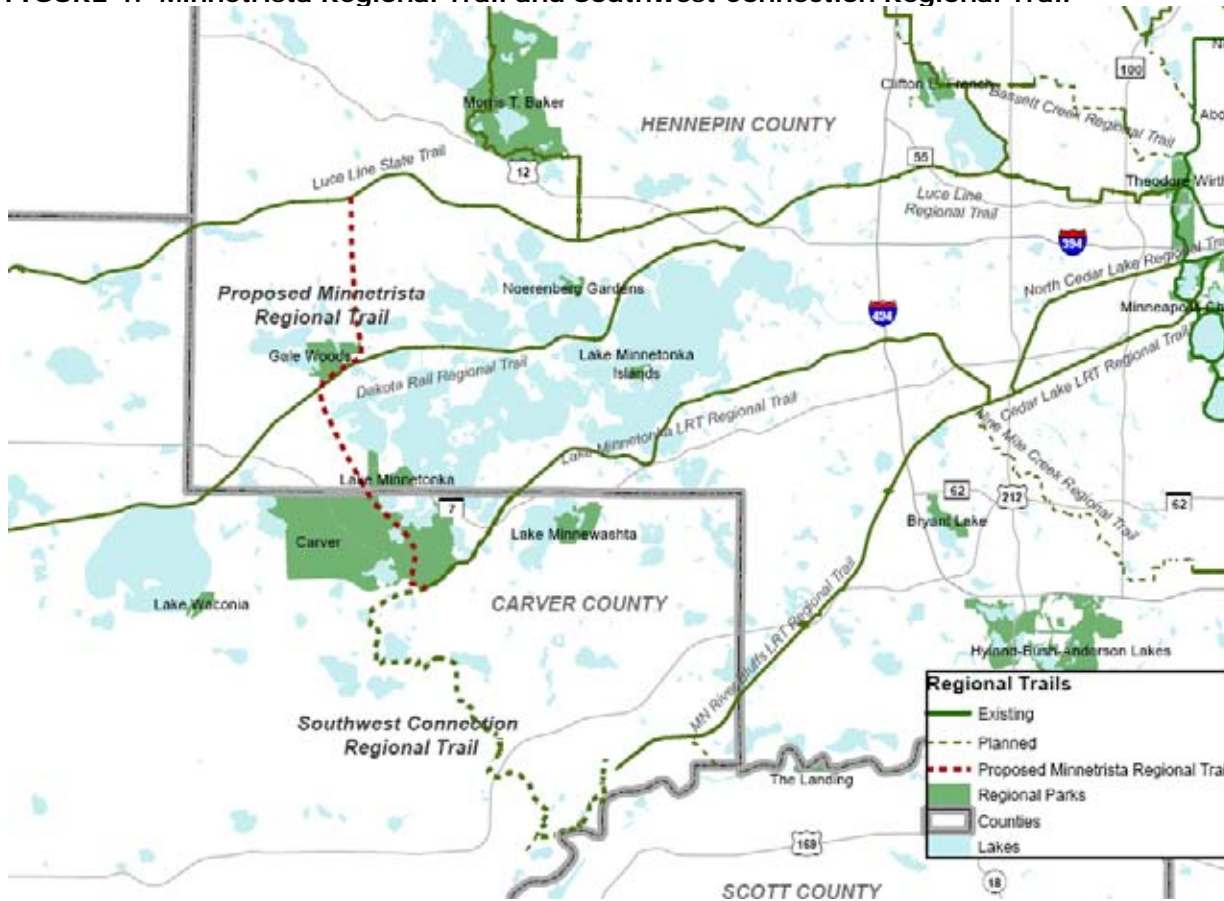
(A) Destination Regional Trail. Be a destination itself, providing a high-quality recreation experience that traverses significant natural resource areas where the trail treadway will have no adverse impact on the natural resource base;

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

Minnetrista Regional Trail Search Corridor: *This regional trail search corridor does not duplicate an existing trail and will serve as a linking trail, although it may include segments with destination qualities. The trail will link six regional parks system facilities, including three regional parks and three regional trails. Connections may also be made to the Southwest Connection Regional Trail in Carver County, which is a planned north-south regional trail connecting the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail and the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail. Most of the regional trails in the southern portion of suburban Hennepin County are located on former railroad corridors that radiate westerly from Minneapolis as a hub. The proposed Minnetrista Regional Trail Search Corridor will provide*

an important north-south connection between these regional trails, helping create a looped system. (See **Figure 4**)

FIGURE 4: Minnetrista Regional Trail and Southwest Connection Regional Trail



Intercity Regional Trail Corridor: This proposed regional trail does not duplicate an existing trail and will serve as a linking trail. The trail will link Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park, Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail, the Minnesota Valley State Trail, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and potentially the Minnesota River 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.

Minnetrista Regional Trail Search Corridor: The proposed regional trail will travel through Hennepin and Carver Counties. The trail will connect to the Luce Line State Trail, which travels 63 miles from Plymouth to Winsted; to the Dakota Rail Regional Trail, which travels 21 miles from Wayzata to Mayer and will eventually extend to western edge of Carver County; and to the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail, which travels 16 miles from Hopkins to Victoria. Therefore, the Minnetrista Regional Trail will likely serve a regional audience.

Intercity Regional Trail Corridor: The proposed regional trail will travel through the jurisdiction of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board as well as Three Rivers Park District as it connects Nokomis-Hiawatha Regional Park in Minneapolis to the planned

Minnesota Valley State Trail within the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Bloomington. The proposed trail will also connect to the proposed Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail, which will travel through Hopkins, Edina, Richfield and Bloomington. Connections to the planned Minnesota River Greenway Regional Trail in Dakota County will be made if a feasible crossing of Long Meadow Lake can be achieved. Therefore, the Intercity Regional Trail will likely serve a regional audience.

- 3. New linking regional trails should be located in 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. For Destination Regional Trails or Greenways, there should be no spacing minimums or maximums; instead, the decision to locate a trail should be based on the availability of high quality natural resources or the opportunity for natural resources restoration, enhancement and protection.**

Minnetrista Regional Trail Search Corridor: *The trail will travel through Minnetrista, Victoria, and Independence. The Metropolitan Council's 2030 Regional Development Framework classifies Victoria as a "developing" community. Minnetrista is classified as a mix of "developing," "diversified rural," and "agricultural" areas, and Independence is classified as "diversified rural" and "agricultural". The portion of Minnetrista in which the trail will travel is within the "developing" area; therefore, the portion of the trail between Carver Park Reserve and Gale Wood Farm meets the criteria of a linking regional trail.*

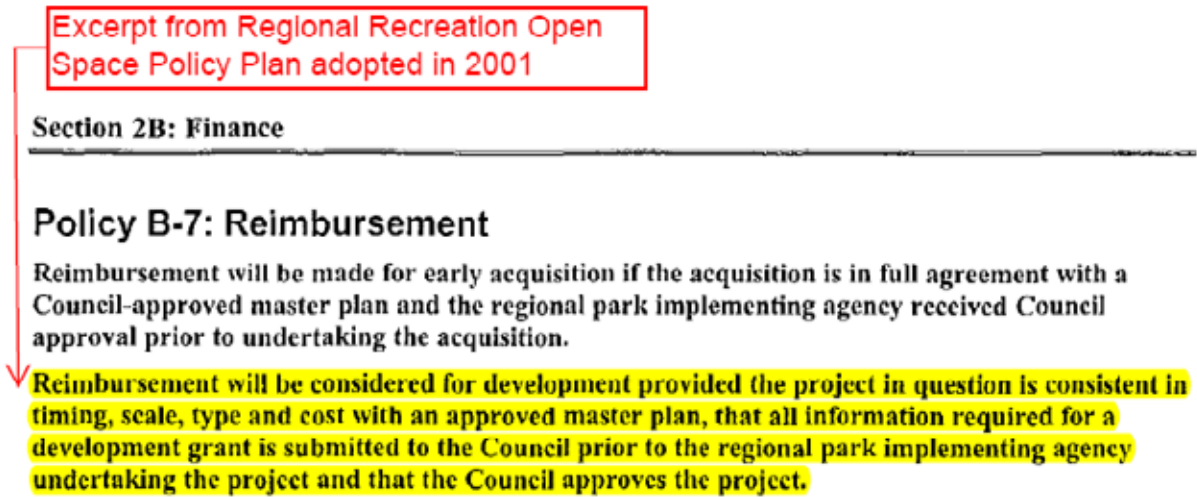
Between Gale Woods Farm Special Recreation Feature and the Luce Line State Trail, the trail travels through "diversified rural" and "agricultural" planning areas. These areas are where opportunities to create a destination-like trail may exist. The 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan does not have stipulations regarding the spacing or planning area of the community for destination regional trails. The proposed trail corridor can be viewed as a hybrid—a linking trail with destination-like qualities. There are no existing or planned regional trails that run parallel to the Minnetrista Regional Trail.

Intercity Regional Trail Corridor: *The trail will travel through Minneapolis and Bloomington, which are both classified as "developed" communities in the Council's 2030 Regional Development Framework. There are no existing or planned regional trails within 1.5 miles that run parallel to the proposed Intercity Regional Trail.*

Finance Strategy 6--Reimbursement Policy Clarification

Council discovered that a portion of the Council-approved language regarding the reimbursement policy was erroneously omitted from the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* that was adopted in 2005 and 2010. The language was included in the reimbursement policy from the *Regional Recreation Open Space Policy Plan* adopted by the Council in 2001. (See **Figure 5**—omitted language is highlighted)

Figure 5: Reimbursement Policy from 2001 Regional Recreation Open Space Policy Plan



The addition of this language to the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* as part of this amendment does not represent a change in policy. Council staff has consistently applied this policy in reviewing reimbursement requests from the regional park implementing agencies. Staff also identified ways in which to better clarify the policy and remove obsolete language.

Figure 6 shows the current Finance Strategy 6 from pages 2-23 to 2-25 of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* with the proposed text changes tracked. Text that is blue and underlined indicates additions; text that is red with a strike-through indicates deletions. **Figure 7** is a list describing the proposed text clarification changes.

Figure 6: Finance Strategy 6: Reimbursement Policy with Clarification Changes

- 1 **Finance Strategy 6: The Metropolitan Council may reimburse implementing agencies for**
- 2 **the costs of acquiring some lands before they have been made part of the regional parks**
- 3 **system or for development projects undertaken before they can be financed through the**
- 4 **Metropolitan Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program.**
- 5
- 6 **Reimbursement for acquisition of land not currently designated in the Regional Parks**
- 7 **Policy Plan**
- 8 Reimbursement will be considered for early acquisition of land ~~that is not~~ currently
- 9 designated as regional recreation open space by the Metropolitan Council in the 2030
- 10 Regional Parks Policy Plan under certain conditions. ~~if the acquisition is in full agreement~~
- 11 ~~with a Council-approved master plan as required under MN Statute 473.313 and the regional~~
- 12 ~~park implementing agency received Council approval prior to undertaking the acquisition.~~
- 13
- 14 If land is acquired or protected under an option to purchase by a regional park implementing agency,
- 15 or an entity under contract with that agency while the Metropolitan Council considers adding the land
- 16 to the ~~2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan Regional Recreation Open Space Policy Plan~~ via a public
- 17 hearing process, the Council will consider reimbursing the park agency for the costs to acquire or
- 18 protect the land via an option to purchase under the following conditions:
- 19
- 20 • The Council is informed in writing of the land acquisition or option to purchase before it occurs.

- 21 • The Council makes a preliminary finding via staff analysis that the proposed regional park unit is
 22 consistent with Siting and Acquisition Strategy 1 Strategy 1 (a): siting criteria for units of the
 23 Regional Park System, and the size/service area requirements for the applicable regional park
 24 system unit are met.
- 25 • The Council conducts a public hearing to designate the acquired land as regional recreation
 26 open space based on a draft acquisition master plan containing the acquired land or land held
 27 under an option to purchase. The hearing is conducted under the requirements of MN Statute
 28 473.147.
- 29 • Based on the findings/conclusions of the public hearing, the Council designates the land as
 30 regional recreation open space and approves an acquisition master plan that contains the
 31 acquired land or land held under an option to purchase.

32
 33 If these conditions are met as required by MN Statutes 473.147, and 473.313 the Council will
 34 consider reimbursing the park agency via a grant as permitted under MN Statute 473.315 for the
 35 following costs:

- 36
- 37 • Appraisal costs incurred by the acquiring park agency or entity under contract with the agency.
- 38 • Surveying costs incurred by the acquiring park agency or entity under contract with the agency.
- 39 • Legal fees incurred by the acquiring park agency or entity under contract with the agency.
- 40 • Fees for service provided by an entity under contract by the park agency to negotiate and
 41 purchase the land or obtain an option to purchase.
- 42 • Principal payments made towards the purchase price including principal payments on a contract
 43 for deed or bond, or payments made on an option to purchase.
- 44 • 180 percent of township or city taxes due on the parcel at the time of closing as required by MN
 45 Statutes 473.147.

46
 47 Since the acquisition of the land will primarily benefit the acquiring agency, to comply with MN Statute
 48 16A.695 requirements on the expenditure of State bonds, to minimize the total costs of acquisition
 49 and to be consistent with reimbursements made on other projects, these costs are not grant eligible:

- 50
- 51 • Acquisition costs incurred to acquire a local park, which is later designated a regional park.
- 52 • Interest incurred by the acquiring agency or entity under contract with the agency on bonds it
 53 issued to buy the land, or interest incurred on a contract for deed payment.
- 54 • Projected investment revenue lost by the acquiring agency or entity under contract with the
 55 agency, based on what it might have earned on funds it spent to acquire the land or to buy an
 56 option to purchase the land.
- 57 • Interest on inter-agency or intra-agency loans used to finance the acquisition payment(s) or
 58 option to purchase.

59
 60 **Reimbursement for development projects undertaken before they can be financed through the**
 61 **CIP**

62
 63 Reimbursement will be considered for development projects provided that the project in question is
 64 consistent in timing, scale, type and cost with an approved master plan; that all information required
 65 for the development grant is submitted to the Council prior to the regional park implementing agency
 66 undertaking the project; and that the Council approves the project. State funds are not eligible to be
 67 used for reimbursement grants when the park agency uses the reimbursement to pay off its bonds or
 68 an account that was used to initially finance the project. In those cases, only Council bonds may be
 69 used. In cases where the park agency uses the proceeds from the reimbursement grant to finance
 70 new capital projects, State funds as well as Council bonds may be used to finance the grant.
 71

72 Reimbursement will be considered based on whether the development or rehabilitation project fits the
73 criteria— not on how the implementing agency plans to spend the reimbursement grant. However,
74 agencies should state how they would spend the reimbursement grant so that State funds as well as
75 Council bonds can be used when possible. This would eliminate any need for amendments to the
76 Council's Unified Capital Budget since the CIP would accurately reflect how the funds were being
77 spent and inform the public and elected officials how the funds will be spent.

78
79 ~~If an agency chooses to spend reimbursement grant funds on a Phase 1 project, the subsequent~~
80 ~~Phase 2 or continuing phased project request should not be ranked with other Phase 2 or continuing~~
81 ~~phased projects, but be ranked along with other unphased projects in the parks CIP. Additional~~
82 ~~phases should be outlined in the first phase request and the Council must concur that this is one~~
83 ~~project versus several projects that could stand on their own.~~

84
85 Since Council bonds are limited to financing only 40 percent of the total biennial CIP, the following
86 steps will be taken when considering reimbursement requests in a biennial CIP:

- 87
- 88 • Park agencies should submit their CIP funding requests with the understanding that
 - 89 reimbursement grants should not exceed 40 percent of an agency's biennial CIP allocation.
 - 90 • If the total requests for reimbursement grants exceeds 40 percent of the total biennial CIP,
 - 91 agencies should submit plans to the Metropolitan Council as to how they intend to spend the
 - 92 reimbursement grant, in order to ascertain whether or not State bonds can also be used to
 - 93 finance the reimbursement grant in addition to Council bonds. If the amount of reimbursements
 - 94 requiring Council bond funding exceeds the amount of Council bonds available for that biennial
 - 95 CIP, park agencies will be asked to reduce-modify their CIP requests for reimbursements for that
 - 96 biennium so that the amount requested for reimbursement does not exceed the amount available,
 - 97 and request funds to finance new project(s).
 - 98 • ~~If the adjusted requests for reimbursements that require Council bonds still exceed the amount of~~
 - 99 ~~available Council bonds for that biennium, the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission~~
 - 100 ~~will rank reimbursement requests according to the ranking criteria in place at that time.~~

101
102 The Metropolitan Council will use best efforts to implement this reimbursement policy as described
103 above. However, the Council does not, under any circumstances, represent or guarantee that
104 reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to
105 reimbursement.

Figure 7: Description of Proposed Text Clarification Changes

Line Numbers	Description of Proposed Text Clarification Change
3-4	The section deals with reimbursement policies for land acquisition as well as development. The current language only reflects land acquisition, so a reference to development projects is being added.
6-7	The strategy is being broken into two sections—one for land acquisition and one for development. A heading for the land acquisition section is being added.
8	Insertion of missing text—the strategy is for acquisition of land that is not designated as part of the regional parks system.
10-12	The following paragraphs identify the conditions, so the deleted language is redundant and unnecessary.
16	Corrected the reference to the Council’s policy document—the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan.
22-23	The format for strategy headings was changed with the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan adopted in 2010. This is updating the reference to the correct strategy.
60-61	A heading for the development reimbursement section is being added.
63-66	Added the missing Reimbursement policy language.
66-70	Added clarifying language regarding the use of State and Council funds for reimbursement projects.
79-83	Removal of outdated language. Projects in the CIP used to be ranked. Council policy changed—the implementing agencies now determine how their CIP funds will be spent, therefore the reference to the ranking of projects needs to be removed.
90	Correction of typographical error.
95-97	Clarification of Council policy.
98-100	Removal of outdated language regarding ranking of projects.

Minor Corrections to Policy Plan

Council staff identified some minor corrections that should be made to the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. These minor changes are described in **Figure 8**, and consist of stylistic and typographical changes, inserting correct maps and information, and updating the text to reflect the changes to the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund rules that were adopted by the Council on December 14, 2011. **Appendix D** illustrates how the proposed minor corrections will appear in the amended 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

FIGURE 8: Proposed Minor Revisions to 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan

Revision Number	Page	Section	Proposed Change
1	1-5	Planning for 2030	Add punctuation at end of first paragraph
2	2-31	Master Plan Content and Funding Process	Remove bullet from text at bottom of the page and create new paragraph
3	2-32	Master plans for regional linking trails	Remove reference to "approximate capacity of the trail"
4	2-32	Master plans for regional linking trails	Under "Public Awareness", change the reference from "regional park" to "regional trail"
5	2-33	Master plans for regional destination trails or greenways	Remove bullet from text at bottom of the page and create new paragraph, similar to Revision #2
6	3-58	Special Recreation Features	Correct the punctuation on the list of special recreation features
7	3-61	Table 3-1	Correct spacing errors in "Size" section
8	3-67	Figure 3-1	Add symbols to legend for regional trails
9	3-74	Figure 3-2	Replace with correct map
10	3-76	Regional Parks System Changes	Revise language to acknowledge trails proposed by Three Rivers Park District
11	3-77	Figure 3-10	Add map designation for Anoka County
12	3-77	Figure 3-10	Add "19" as trail mileage for Carver County T-11
13	3-77	Figure 3-10	Remove hyphen from "Gre-enway" under Notes section for T-8
14	3-78	Figure 3-10	Add proposed Three Rivers Park District regional trails
15	3-81	Figure 3-3	Add Three Rivers Park District regional trails
16	4-83	Land Acquisition	Acknowledge amendment of Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund rules approved by the Council on 12/14/11
17	4-84	Land Acquisition	Update Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund rules based on 12/14/11 amendment

Amending the Policy Plan

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* states that the Metropolitan Council will amend the policy plan only if a substantial revision is proposed. A substantial revision is defined as (1) a proposed revision that is intended to or could have the effect of changing the direction or intent of adopted Council policy; (2) addition or deletion of a policy; or (3) addition or deletion of a system element. A Council decision to amend the plan will be preceded by a finding that a substantial revision is proposed.

The request from Three Rivers Park District to consider the addition of the Minnetrista Regional Trail Search Corridor and the Intercity Regional Trail to the regional parks system should be considered a substantial revision to the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* since it consists of the addition of two system elements. The clarification of Finance Strategy 6 and minor housekeeping changes proposed by Council staff do not constitute a substantial revision, but are being included as part of the process to amend the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS/SCHEDULE:

State Statute requires the Council to hold a public hearing to amend its *Regional Parks Policy Plan*. The Council's procedures regarding public hearings require the Council to establish a public hearing date 45 days prior to holding the public hearing. The public input period remains open for 10 calendar days following the hearing. Based on this process and the schedule of Community Development Committee and Metropolitan Council meetings, a public hearing could be scheduled for Monday, June 18, 2012, as part of the Community Development Committee meeting. The hearing record would remain open 10 calendar days (until 4:30 pm June 28, 2012). A hearing report, which summarizes the testimony and recommends action, would be considered by the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission on July 3; by the Community Development Committee on July 16; and by the Metropolitan Council on July 25, 2012.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The request from Three Rivers Park District to consider adding the proposed Minnetrista Regional Trail Search Corridor and the Intercity Regional Trail to the regional parks system constitutes a substantial revision and requires an amendment to the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. The Council must hold a public hearing for an amendment to the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. The public hearing date can be scheduled for Monday, June 18, 2012.
2. The proposed clarification of Finance Strategy 6 shown in Figure 6 and the minor changes shown in Figure 8 are not considered substantial revisions and do not require an amendment to the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, but are being included in this proposal for the sake of transparency in the public process.
3. The proposed Minnetrista Regional Trail Search Corridor and the Intercity Regional Trail meet the criteria outlined in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* for regional trails and thus should be considered for addition to the regional parks system.
4. Approval of this amendment to the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* would acknowledge these trails as part of the regional parks system. Council approval of

regional trail master plans would be necessary in order for regional parks funding to be used for acquisition and development of the trail corridors.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Conduct a public hearing on June 18, 2012 as part of its Community Development Committee meeting regarding amending the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* to:
 - Recognize the Minnetrista Regional Trail Search Corridor and Intercity Regional Trail as components of the regional parks system;
 - Clarify Finance Strategy 6 as shown in Figure 6;
 - Make minor corrections as shown in Figure 8.

The hearing record shall remain open until 4:30 p.m., Thursday, June 28, 2012.

2. Direct staff to publish public hearing notices and distribute copies of the proposed amendments to the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* under the Council's administrative procedure for public hearings.

APPENDIX A—Request Letter from Kelly Grissman, Three Rivers Park District



Three Rivers
Park District
Board of
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February 17, 2012

Ms. Jan Youngquist, AICP
Planning Analyst--Parks
Metropolitan Council
390 N Robert Street
St Paul, MN 55101

RE: 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan Amendment Request

Dear Ms. Youngquist,

Three Rivers Park District (Park District) is requesting an amendment to the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan to include two new regional trails. The two proposed regional trails improve access the Regional Parks and Trail System and establish key critical connections between several regional and state park and trail facilities. Both multi-use regional trails will provide safe opportunities for walking, running, dog-walking, in-line skating and biking and connections to parks and natural areas offering fishing, bird watching, hiking, mountain biking, and other active and passive recreation as well as potential connections to restaurants, retail, and other local businesses.

A brief summary of each proposal is included below. A more detailed summary and map of each proposal is attached.

Minnetrista Regional Trail

The nine-mile Minnetrista Regional Trail is proposed to connect Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail, Carver Park Reserve, Lake Minnetonka Regional Park, Dakota Rail Regional Trail, Gale Woods Farm, and Luce Line State Trail. The primary purpose of the regional trail is to link the previously mentioned regional and state park and trail facilities through the cities of Victoria, Minnetrista, and Independence; however, due to the undeveloped nature of the local communities, this regional trail is positioned to provide destination qualities and improve trail user experiences through the incorporation of vistas over the rural countryside, natural areas composed of wetlands, woodlots, and creek corridors, and rolling topography.

The City of Minnetrista, with the support and direction of its Council, is working closely with community members and affected to stakeholders to identify a preferred regional trail route which meets the goals identified in the previous paragraph and is feasible from a social, economic, and environmental perspective. Upon identification of a regional trail route, the Park District will prepare a master plan consistent with Metropolitan Council regional trail requirements.

Administrative Center, 3000 Xenium Lane North, Plymouth, MN 55441-1299
Information 763.559.9000 • TTY 763.559.6719 • Fax 763.559.3287 • www.ThreeRiversParks.org

The Park District is requesting the identification of a regional trail search area in the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan in light of these planning efforts and subsequent opportunities.

Intercity Regional Trail

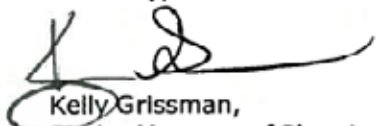
The seven-mile Intercity Regional Trail is proposed to connect the Minneapolis Grand Rounds via the Lake Nokomis trail system south through the City of Richfield to the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and the future Minnesota Valley State Trail in the City of Bloomington. A future crossing of Long Meadow Pond will also provide a key connection to the planned Dakota County Minnesota Valley Greenway. The proposed linking regional trail route also incorporates local and regional destinations including several parks and natural areas, high density residential areas, and retail and employment nodes including the Mall of America and Cedar Point Commons area.

This trail, when complete, will remove three significant barriers (TH 62, I-494, and Minnesota River) to biking, walking and other non-motorized recreation, span three cities, connect two counties, and receive a projected 130,000 annual visits.

The Park District is collaborating with the cities of Bloomington, Richfield, and Minneapolis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Airport Commission, and Hennepin County to complete an extensive public and political engagement process and master plan. The Park District is requesting that the regional trail route be added to the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

Thank you for your assistance in considering and processing this request. I am available to discuss the amendment process and schedule as well as any additional questions or concerns you may have. My contact information is kgrissman@threeriversparkdistrict.org and 763-694-7635.

Sincerely,



Kelly Grissman,
Senior Manager of Planning

Enclosures

C: Boe Carlson, Associate Superintendent – Division of Administration

Appendix B—Proposed Minnetrista Regional Trail Search Corridor

Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail >> Luce Line State Trail Proposed Search Corridor

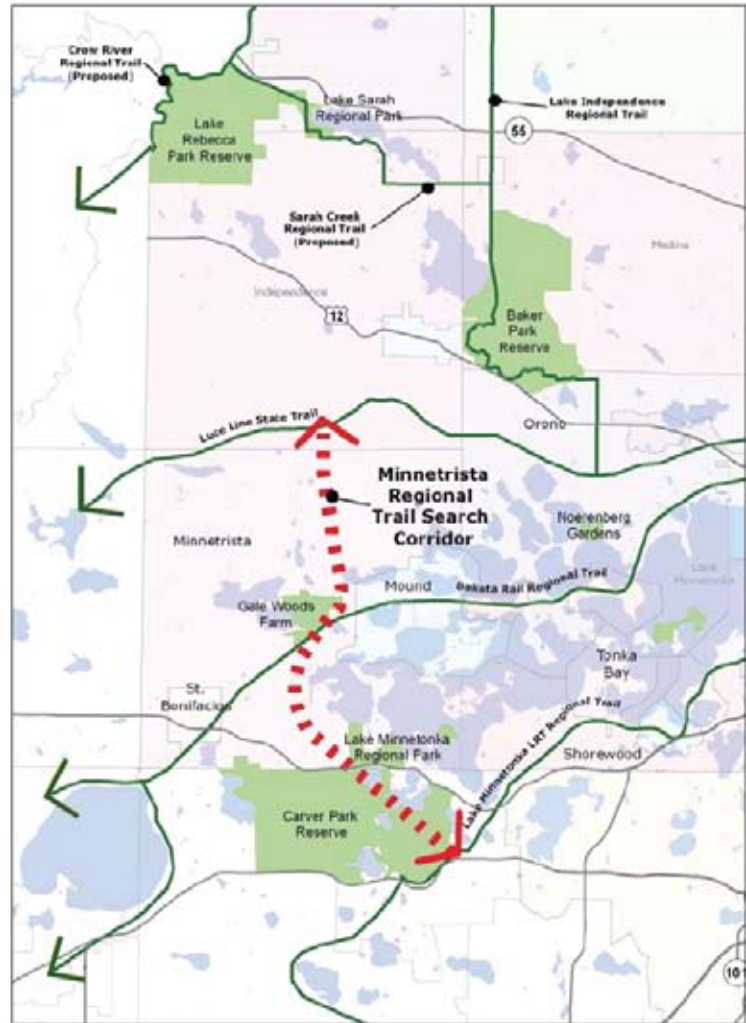
Purpose, Planning, and Status

Three Rivers Park District (Park District) is proposing a new linking regional trail which was partially identified as a potential regional trail opportunity in the Park District's 2008 Regional Trail System Inventory. While the proposed regional trail may include trail sections with destination qualities, the primary purpose of the trail is to serve a linking function.

The proposed new regional trail will provide connections to Carver Park Reserve, Lake Minnetonka Regional Park, Gale Woods Farm, Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail, Dakota Regional Trail, and Luce Line State Trail. The proposed regional trail will benefit local community members living within three miles of the corridor and also regional trail users utilizing the proposed regional trail to create loops and connect to the existing state and regional trails.

Consideration of the proposed regional trail is timely as the majority of the area in which the regional trail is proposed is generally not developed or currently undergoing planning for development. Previous project experience demonstrates that planning and implementing regional trails prior to or simultaneously with development typically is more acceptable to the public than planning and implementing a regional trail after development has occurred.

Woodland Cove, a proposed planned unit development immediately west of Lake Minnetonka Regional Park, is serving as a catalyst for consideration of the proposed regional trail. The City of Minnetrista is working with the developer to obtain a trailway easement through the development. With the inclusion of this proposed regional trail in the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan and completion and approval of the regional trail master plan, the Park District will be well positioned to take advantage of the Woodland Cove trail easement and future acquisition opportunities. Upon completion of the regional trail master plan, a trailway agreement will be developed between the local cities and the Park District to guide and define the responsibilities of each agency regarding the land acquisition, financing, planning, design, construction, and operational responsibilities between both agencies.



Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridor

Appendix C—Proposed Intercity Regional Trail

Intercity Regional Trail *Purpose, Planning, and Status*

Project Summary

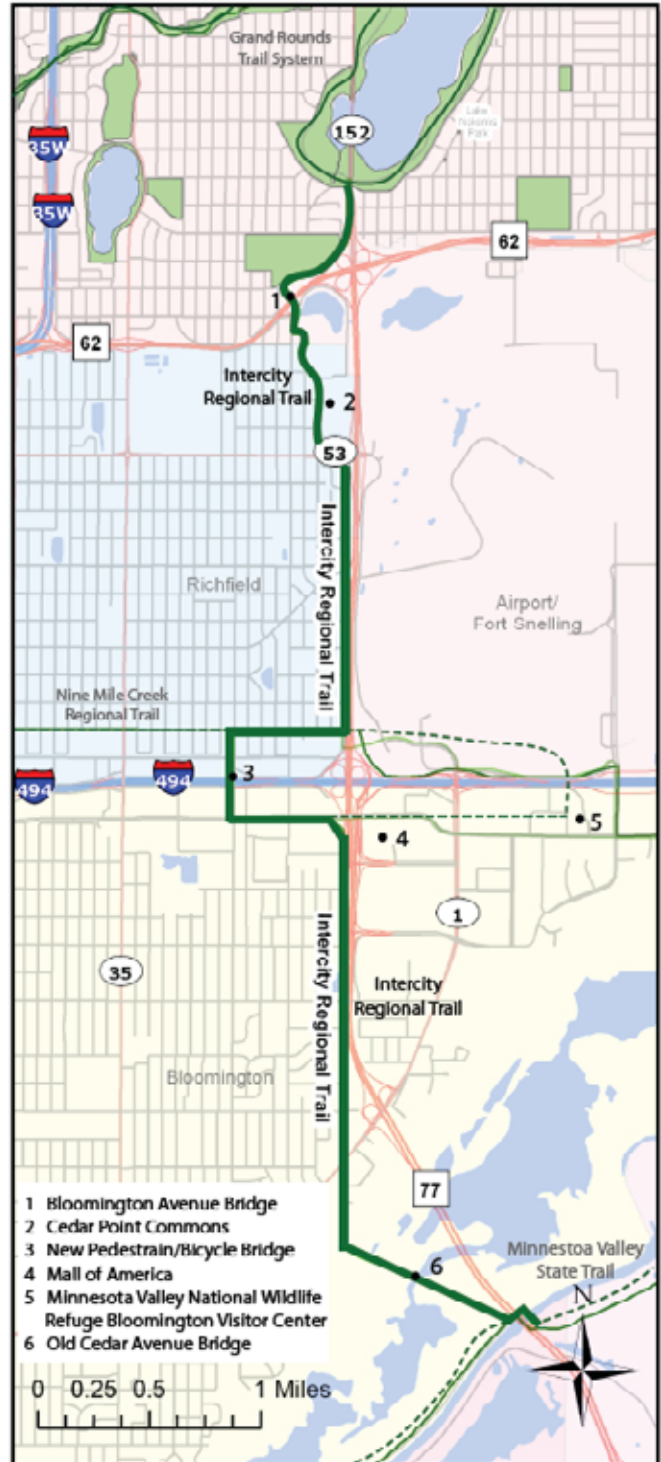
The 7-mile Intercity Regional Trail will form a critical north-south trail connection through the cities of Minneapolis, Richfield and Bloomington. The multi-use regional trail will provide a safe amenity for walking, running, dog walking, hiking, biking, in-line skating, and roller skiing in the spring, summer and fall seasons to an area of Hennepin County with limited off-road pedestrian and biking opportunities. In the winter the trail may be maintained for these same uses or for winter based recreation uses such as winter walking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing depending on the desire of the local community.

Route

The Intercity Regional Trail is proposed to commence at the Minneapolis Grand Rounds Trail System at Lake Nokomis and head south along the Cedar Avenue corridor to the Trunk Highway 62 (TH 62) frontage road. The regional trail is proposed to cross TH 62 at the Bloomington Avenue Bridge and connect to Taft Park. From Taft Park, the regional trail is proposed along the west side of Richfield Parkway to 66th Street; east along north side of 66th Street to Cedar Avenue; south along the east side of Cedar Avenue to 76th Street; west along the north side of 76th Street to 12th Avenue; and south over Interstate 494 along 12th Avenue. The proposed route utilizes a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge to cross Interstate 494. At American Boulevard the trail extends east to Old Cedar Avenue and then south to the Minnesota River. The trail is proposed to cross the Minnesota River; however, the exact location and crossing solution is not yet determined.

Recreation Value and Connectivity

The regional trail will connect to parks and natural areas offering fishing, bird watching, hiking, mountain biking, team sports, play grounds, and other active and passive recreational activities. The Intercity Regional Trail will connect to the future 80-mile Minnesota Valley State Trail, 50 plus miles of Minneapolis Grand Rounds and trail system, and the planned 12-mile Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail. The trail will also provide access to another 100 miles of regional trails within the Park District Regional Trail System and the 63-mile Luce Line State Trail. If a feasible and acceptable solution the Long Meadow Pond crossing at the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge site in Bloomington is determined, this regional trail will extend to the Dakota County regional trail system.



Housing, Commercial, and Employment Connectivity

This regional trail will serve 300,000 people living within three miles of the regional trail corridor. Local and regional land use and redevelopment plans include several new areas of mixed use comprised of high density housing, commercial, and office uses.

The City of Richfield is planning for redevelopment along Richfield Parkway (Cedar Point commons and future senior housing) and the Interstate 494 corridor between Interstate 35W and Highway 77 (urban village consisting of shops, services, entertainment, and a range of housing types). The City of Bloomington is actively developing the Airport South District as a mixed use district consisting of residential, office, retail/entertainment, hospitality, and flex tech land. This redevelopment is located adjacent to the Intercity Regional Trail and is anticipated to include 4,100 residential units and an additional 8,000 jobs. The Intercity Regional Trail will pass through or adjacent to these areas (see adjacent map) providing safe and convenient access to existing and future housing, retail, and employment destinations.

The regional trail will provide access to the Mall of America, a regionally significant retail and employment destination. Over 11,000 people are employed at the Mall of America and over 40 million people visit it each year. In addition, the Mall of America will undergo an addition, Phase Two, which will increase employment to over 18,000 people and annual visitation to over 60 million. The regional trail will also connect to the Minnesota Valley Wildlife Refuge which attracts 78,000 annual visitors.

Annual Visitation

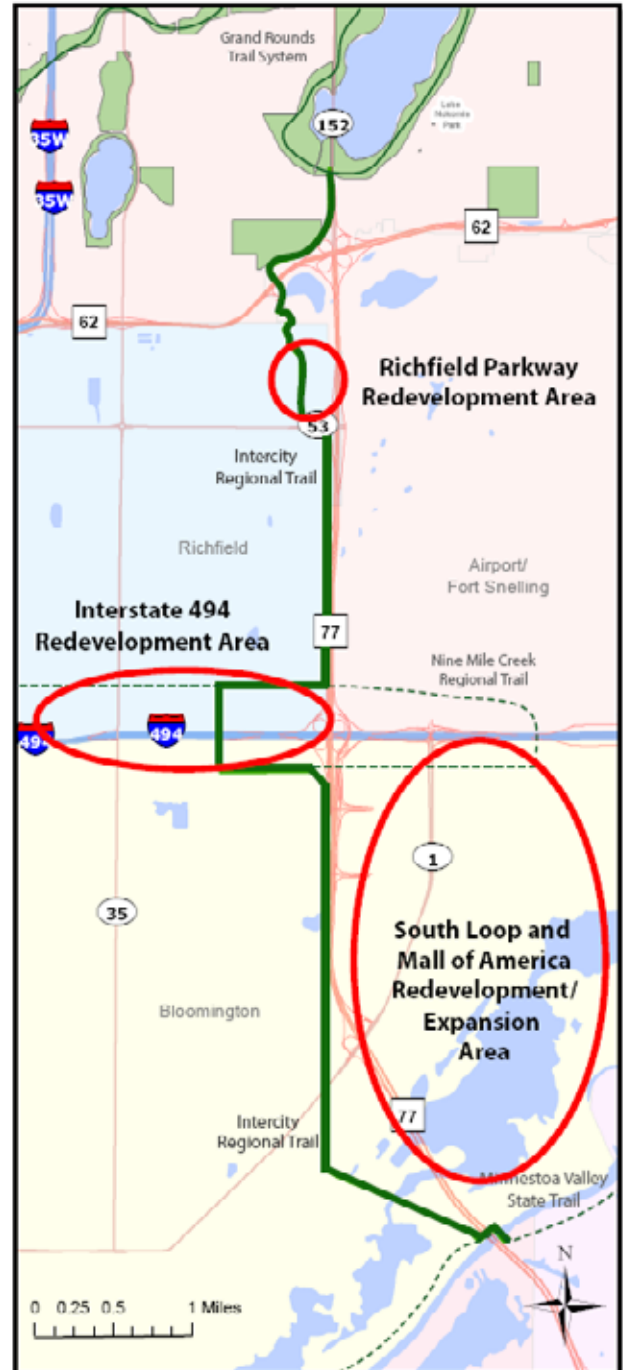
Annual visitation is projected at 130,000 and anticipated to increase as significant areas adjacent to the regional trail corridor are redeveloped with residential, entertainment, office, and retail uses.

Gap Removal

Portions of the Intercity Regional Trail are ranked 19 and 23 out of the top 25 bicycle gaps in Hennepin County. Implementing the Intercity Regional Trail will remove physical barriers (TH 62, Interstate 494, and Highway 77) and provide safe pedestrian and bicycle accommodations in fully developed communities.

Multi-modal Transportation

The Intercity Regional Trail in combination with on-street bike routes, existing and planned regional trails, sidewalks, Hiawatha Light Rail Transit (LRT) line and bus routes will improve safe multi-modal transportation options between several high density residential areas and regionally significant employment and retail nodes including Downtown Minneapolis, the Southdale shopping area (Edina), Best Buy World Headquarters (Richfield), Mall of America, Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport, and American Boulevard (Bloomington).



Areas of Redevelopment and Mixed Use Opportunity

Master Plan

The Intercity Regional Trail Master Plan will include information pertaining to the route, demand, key local and regional connections, challenges and opportunities, capital and operation costs and funding solutions, as well as, opportunities for public involvement and local coordination.

The Park District is working closely with the cities of Bloomington, Richfield, and Minneapolis, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Hennepin County, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Metropolitan Airport Commission to complete a master plan for the Intercity Regional Trail. Representatives from each of these cities/agencies are participating on a master plan task force and are responsible for the following project contributions.

- Coordinate with respective governing bodies (City Councils, Planning Commissions, Park Commissions and other staff/departments within the respective city/agency).
- Guide public participation opportunities.
- Provide and evaluate critical project information.
- Review the master plan to ensure consistency between Park District, city and other applicable agency goals.
- Lead the Park District in local municipality/agency approval processes.

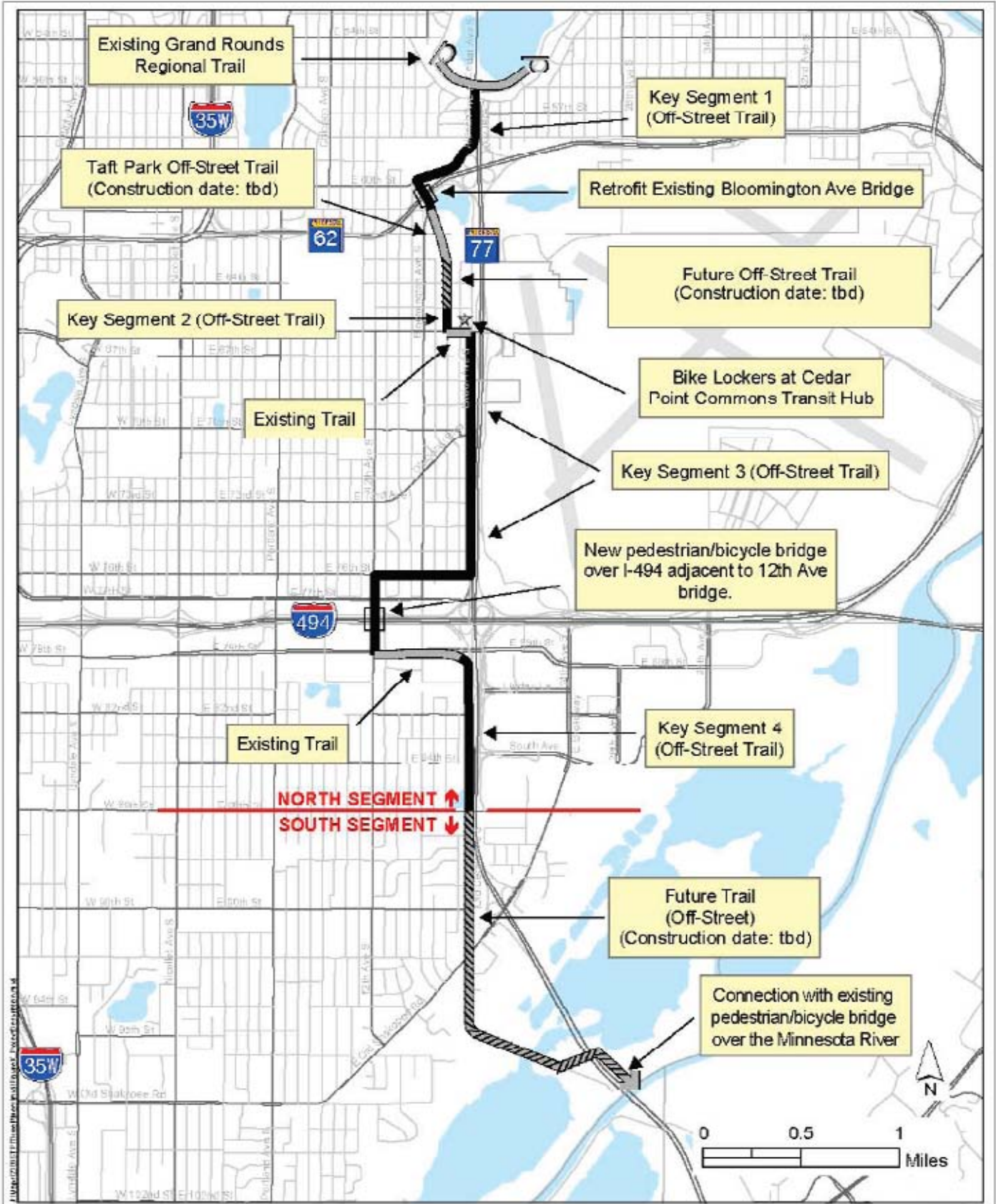
Implementation and Funding Status

Most of the Intercity Regional Trail is not yet constructed. However, 3.8 miles between Lake Nokomis and the Mall of America, including a new pedestrian and bicyclist bridge over Interstate 494, received a Federal Surface Transportation Program grant in the amount of \$5.5 million. The map on the following page illustrates the trail segments included in the STP grant. Construction may commence as early as 2014.

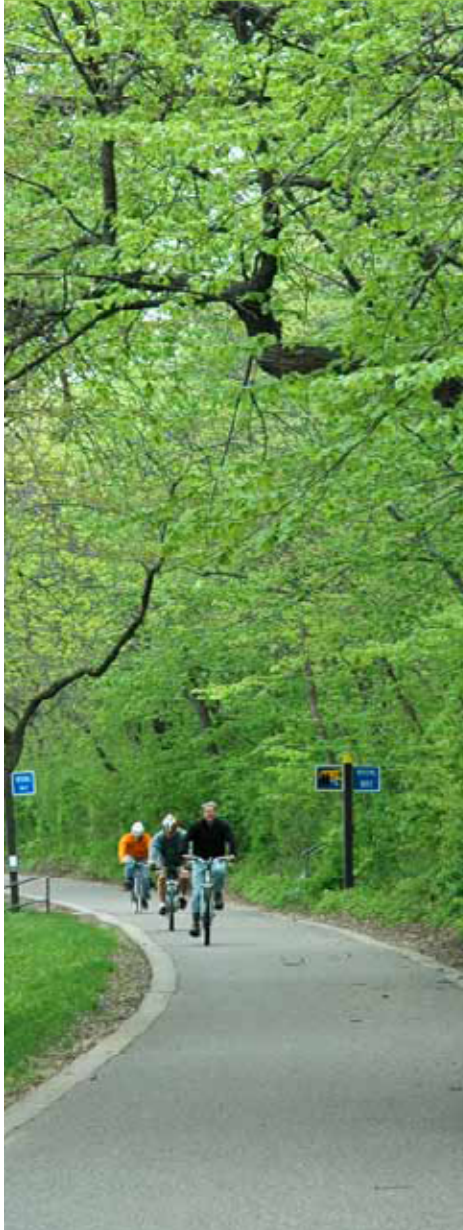
Remaining unfunded gaps between Lake Nokomis and the Mall of America will be constructed as additional funding, right-of-way, and redevelopment opportunities occur.

The trail segment between the Mall of America and the Minnesota River will be constructed as resources are available and when the Minnesota Valley State Trail, or a feasible and acceptable crossing of Long Meadow Pond is complete.





Intercity Regional Trail - Surface Transportation Program Funded Segments




The Metropolitan Council and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources have charted highly important natural resources in the seven-county area as part of a region-wide Natural Resource Inventory and Assessment. This inventory and assessment—a geographic database and series of maps—records valuable information about land and water resources that perform significant ecological functions, contain important habitat for animals that are sensitive to habitat fragmentation and destruction, and provides opportunities for people to experience nature and the region’s historical landscapes ← **Revision #1 Add period to end of sentence**

The inventory and assessment builds on existing information, such as Minnesota County Biological Survey data, to provide a comprehensive look at natural resources. It’s an information tool that the Metropolitan Council and local governments can use to accommodate growth while protecting the environment by implementing effective land protection and restoration tools.

The inventory and assessment shows that roughly 100,000 (between 75,000 and 120,000) acres of regionally significant natural lands remain unprotected in the metro area, compared to 280,000 acres of total natural lands and 1.9 million acres of land overall. Identifying these remaining natural lands provides a great opportunity to prioritize and coordinate conservation action.

By law (MN Statute 473.147), the Regional Parks System can only include areas that are acquired and managed by counties, cities and special park districts. The regional parks complements what the state provides for outdoor recreation needs in the Metropolitan area. This means that not all regionally important natural resource lands can be part of the regional parks system.

Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

Metropolitan Council 2030 Regional Parks *Policy Plan* 



*Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park,
Washington County*

- **Accessibility:** A plan that identifies special populations to be served by the facility and addresses accessibility, affordability and other measures designed to ensure that the facility can be used by members of special population groups.
- **Natural resources:** As part of the master plan, there should be a natural-resource management component that includes:
 - Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) as a part of the master plan process. An NRI should include a land cover inventory that is consistent with the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System developed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the MetroGIS – a consortium of government entities in the region that create, manage and share digital geographic data in a GIS (Geographic Information System). The natural resource inventory should include native plant communities mapped in the Minnesota County Biological Survey and listed (rare, endangered, and threatened) species documented in the Natural Heritage Information System. The natural resource inventory may include other land-based information. The Metropolitan Council has created the [Natural Resources Digital Atlas \(NRDA\)](#)--an easy to use mapping application designed to assist communities and other organizations and users in the Twin Cities metropolitan area to identify and protect locally or regionally significant natural resources. Using consistent, region-wide information based on the above data or tool will assure compatibility with other natural resource inventories that have been completed or will be done in the metropolitan region.
 - The Natural Resource Inventory should be a basis for projects/proposals to restore degraded resources and maintain high-quality natural resource features, including the estimated capital costs of natural resource restoration projects. Implementing agencies should consult with natural resource professionals in the design and final construction of park facilities, especially trails, that are adjacent to or cross over natural resource areas. The final design and construction should allow the public to view and enjoy these natural habitats with minimal adverse impact on that habitat.
 - Information on how surface water and groundwater resources in the unit, including wetlands, will be protected. This should include standards and requirements that are consistent with the Council's model ordinance for stormwater management. The master plan should include provisions to, first, avoid wetland impacts; second, minimize impacts; and, finally, mitigate impacts when no other options are available.
 - Information on how vegetation will be managed.
 - Each regional park implementing agency is responsible for preparing a master plan for each regional system park that it owns or operates. The regional park implementing agency shall present the master plan and planned amendments to affected local units of government, as well as local, state and federal recreation providers with facilities within the primary service area of the park or trail, and address their concerns prior to submitting the plan to the Metropolitan Council. (The primary service area of a park or trail is the area in which 75 percent of the unit's visitors come from.) The master plan submitted to the Council shall include a summary of comments received that identifies issues raised.

Revision #2
Remove bullet and shift paragraph to the left (similar to paragraph on page 2-32)

Master plans for regional linking trails:

Each master plan for a regional linking trail must include information for each of these items:

- **Boundaries and acquisition costs:** A list of parcels to be acquired and the estimated total cost and schedule for their acquisition, and information on natural resources, site suitability, special assessments and other conditions that affect acquisition of the site or location of the boundaries.
- **Demand forecast:** The recreational demand to be met by the trail as identified by the Council, the regional park implementing agency or other sources.
- **Development concept:** A plan for development, including schedule and cost estimates for the project and the approximate capacity of the trail.
- **Conflicts:** Identification of conflicts with other existing or proposed projects or land uses affecting the park/trail unit, including steps necessary for their resolution.
- **Public services:** A description of any non-recreational public services and facilities, such as roads or sewers, needed to accommodate the proposed trail, including the timing of these services and the arrangements necessary to provide them.
- **Operations:** Rules, regulations or ordinances affecting the trail, including estimated operations and maintenance costs and sources of revenue to operate and maintain the trail.
- **Citizen participation:** A process to involve affected municipalities and the general public in the master planning of the trail. The process must include, but not be limited to, timely notice to the affected municipality with an opportunity for the public to be heard. The master plan should include a summary of comment received, with emphasis on issues raised.
- **Public awareness:** Plans for making the public aware of services available when the regional park is open.
- **Accessibility:** A plan that recognizes the wide range of populations to be served by the facility and addresses: accessible design as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, affordability, and other measures designed to ensure that the facility is inclusively accessible to all members of the public.

Revision #3
Delete this reference.

Revision #4
Change to
"regional trail"

Revision #2 on page 2-31
and Revision #5 on page
2-33 will look like this

Each regional park implementing agency is responsible for preparing a master plan for each regional system park or trail assigned to it by this policy plan. The regional park implementing agency shall present the master plan and planned amendments to affected local units of government, as well as local, state and federal recreation providers with facilities within the primary service area of the park or trail, and address their concerns prior to submitting the plan to the Metropolitan Council. (The primary service area of a park or trail is the area in which 75 percent of the unit's annual visitors come from.) The master plan submitted to the Metropolitan Council shall include a summary of comments received that identifies issues raised.





*Dakota Rail Regional Trail,
Three Rivers Park District*

Master plans for regional destination trails or greenways:

Master plans for regional destination trails or greenways shall include all of the elements outlined above for regional linking trails as well as a stewardship plan, and natural resource inventory:

- **Stewardship plan:** A program for managing the surrounding greenway areas and natural resource features.
- **Natural resources.** As part of the master plan, the natural resource management component should include:
 - Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) as a part of the master plan process. An NRI should include a land cover inventory that is consistent with the Minnesota Land Cover Classification system developed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Metro GIS – a consortium of government entities in the region that create, manage and share digital geographic data. Using the same NRI format will assure compatibility with other natural resource inventories that have been completed or will be done in the metropolitan region. The natural resource inventory should include native plant communities mapped in the Minnesota County Biological Survey and listed (rare, endangered, and threatened) species documented in the Natural Heritage Information System
 - The Natural Resource Inventory should be a basis for projects/proposals to restore degraded resources and maintain high-quality natural resource features, including the estimated capital costs of natural resource restoration projects. Implementing agencies should consult with natural resource professionals in the design and final construction of the trail/ greenway, that are adjacent to or cross over natural resource areas. The final design and construction should allow the public to view and enjoy these natural habitats with minimal adverse impact on that habitat.
 - Information on how surface water and groundwater resources in the unit, including wetlands, will be protected. If appropriate, this should include standards and requirements that are consistent with the Metropolitan Council's model ordinance for stormwater management. The master plan should include provisions to, first, avoid wetland impacts; second, minimize impacts; and, finally, mitigate impacts when no other options are available.
 - Information on how vegetation will be managed.
 - Each regional park implementing agency is responsible for preparing a master plan for each regional system park or trail that it owns or operates. The regional park implementing agency shall present the master plan and planned amendments to affected local units of government, as well as local, state and federal recreation providers with facilities within the primary service area of the park or trail, and address their concerns prior to submitting the plan to the Metropolitan Council. (The primary service area of a park or trail is the area in which 75 percent of the unit's annual visitors come from.) The master plan submitted to the Council shall include a summary of comments received that identifies issues raised.

Revision #5

Remove bullet and shift paragraph to the left (similar to paragraph on page 2-32)

Special Recreation Features

The special recreation features, which are called for in state legislation, are defined as regional parks system opportunities not generally found in the parks, the park reserves or the trail corridors. Special recreational features often require a unique managing or programming effort on the part of the regional park implementing agency.

As of 2010, there are seven special recreation features in the system:

- [Como Park Zoo](#), and
- [Marjorie McNeely Conservatory at Como Park](#), both managed as a part of Como Regional Park;
- [Square Lake](#) in Washington County;
- [Noerenberg Gardens](#) on the northwest side of Lake Minnetonka;
- [Gale Woods Farm](#) on the shore of Whaletail Lake in Minnetrista;
- [Silverwood](#), on the shore of Silver Lake in the City of St. Anthony.
- [The Landing](#), along the Minnesota River in Shakopee

Revision #6

Replace period with semicolon,
add period at end of next bulleted
line after "Shakopee"

New special recreation features need to be complementary to the rest of the regional parks system and not be a financial burden to the system.



Gale Woods Farm, Three Rivers Park District

Table 3-1 Classification System for Local and Regional Facilities

Component	Use	Service Area	Size	Site Attributes	Site Location
Regional park reserve	Area of natural quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation such as viewing and studying nature, wildlife habitat, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, boating, camping and trail uses.	County, multi-county area	1000 + acres; sufficient area to encompass the resource envisioned for preservation.	Diversity of unique resources, such as topography, lakes, streams, marshes, flora, fauna.	Where natural resource occurs.
Regional destination trail	Area developed for one or more varying modes of nonmotorized recreational travel such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and canoeing.	The entire metropolitan region	Sufficient corridor width to protect natural resources and can safely accommodate trail use. Sufficient length to be a destination itself, or to serve as a link between regional parks system units.	When feasible, off-road trails that utilize human made and/or natural linear resources such as utility corridors, railroad and highway rights of way, stream / river valleys, or at the edges of forest or prairie. On-road trails are acceptable when off-road trails are not feasible.	Preferably adjacent to high quality natural areas. The trail treadway should be placed where it has no adverse impact on the natural resource base.
Regional linking trail	Area developed for one or more varying modes of nonmotorized recreational travel such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and canoeing.	The entire metropolitan region	Sufficient corridor width to protect natural resources and can safely accommodate trail use. Sufficient length to link regional parks system units.	When feasible, off-road trails that utilize human made and/or natural linear resources such as utility corridors, railroad and highway rights of way, stream / river valleys, or at the edges of forest or prairie. On-road trails are acceptable when off-road trails are not feasible.	Linkages between components of the regional parks system. When feasible, linking trails should attempt to connect to population, economic and social centers along its route. The trail treadway should be placed where it has no adverse impact on the natural resource base.
Special recreation feature	Area that preserves, maintains and provides specialized or single-purpose recreational activities such as golf course, nature center, marina, zoo, conservatory, arboretum, display gardens, arena, gun club, downhill ski area, and sites of historic or archeological significance.	Local- (municipalities, townships) Regional- (metropolitan area)	Specific standard applicable to desired feature.	Appropriate to particular special recreation feature.	Where most advantageous for the special recreation feature and the overall park system.

Revision #7
Correct spacing errors highlighted above



Figure 3-1
Metropolitan Regional Parks System - 2010

Regional Parks

- Existing, Open to the Public
- Planned

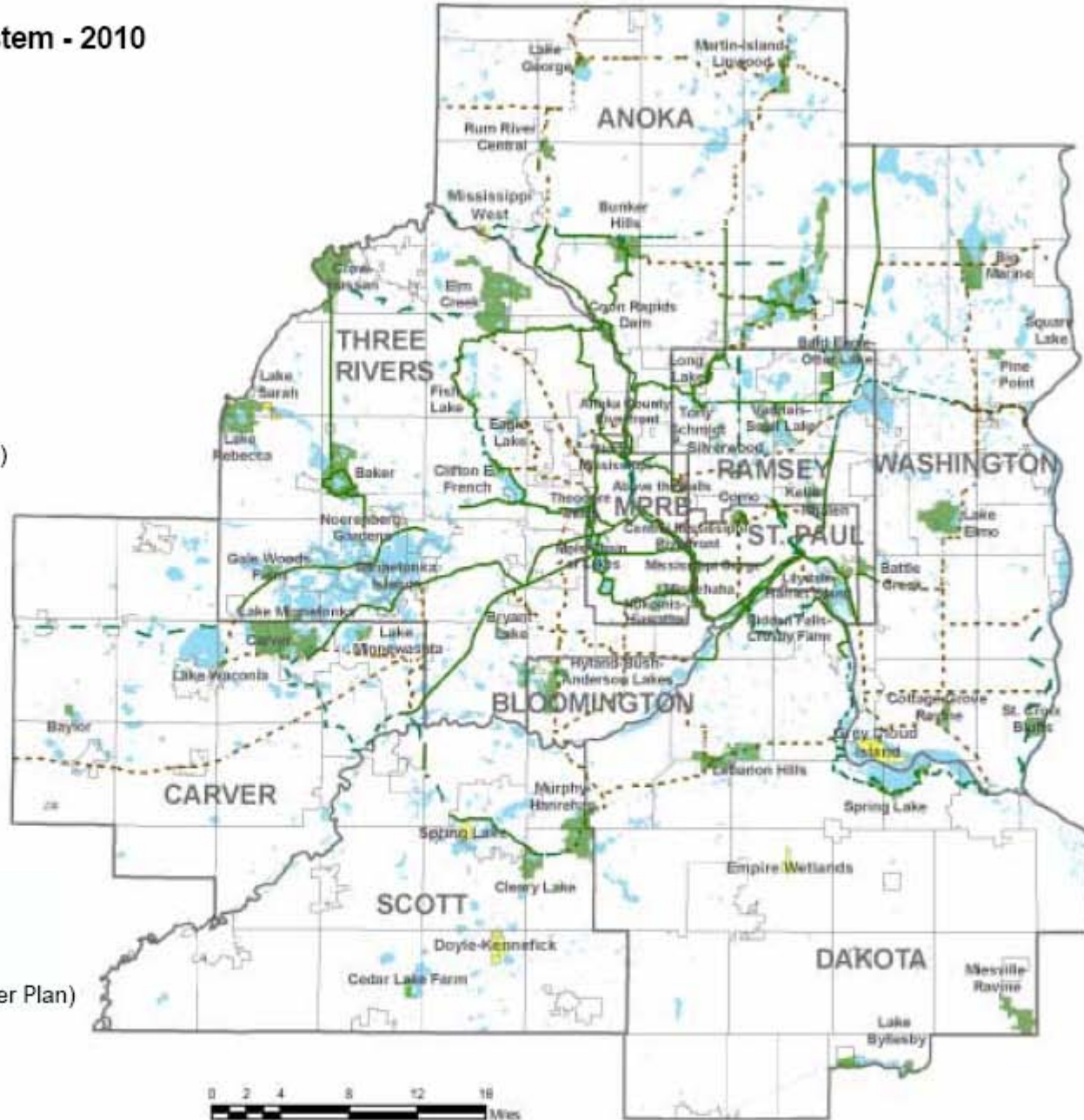
Regional Trails

- Existing
- Planned
- Proposed (No council-Approved Master Plan)

Revision #8
 Add symbols to legend for regional trail types, as shown below

Regional Trails

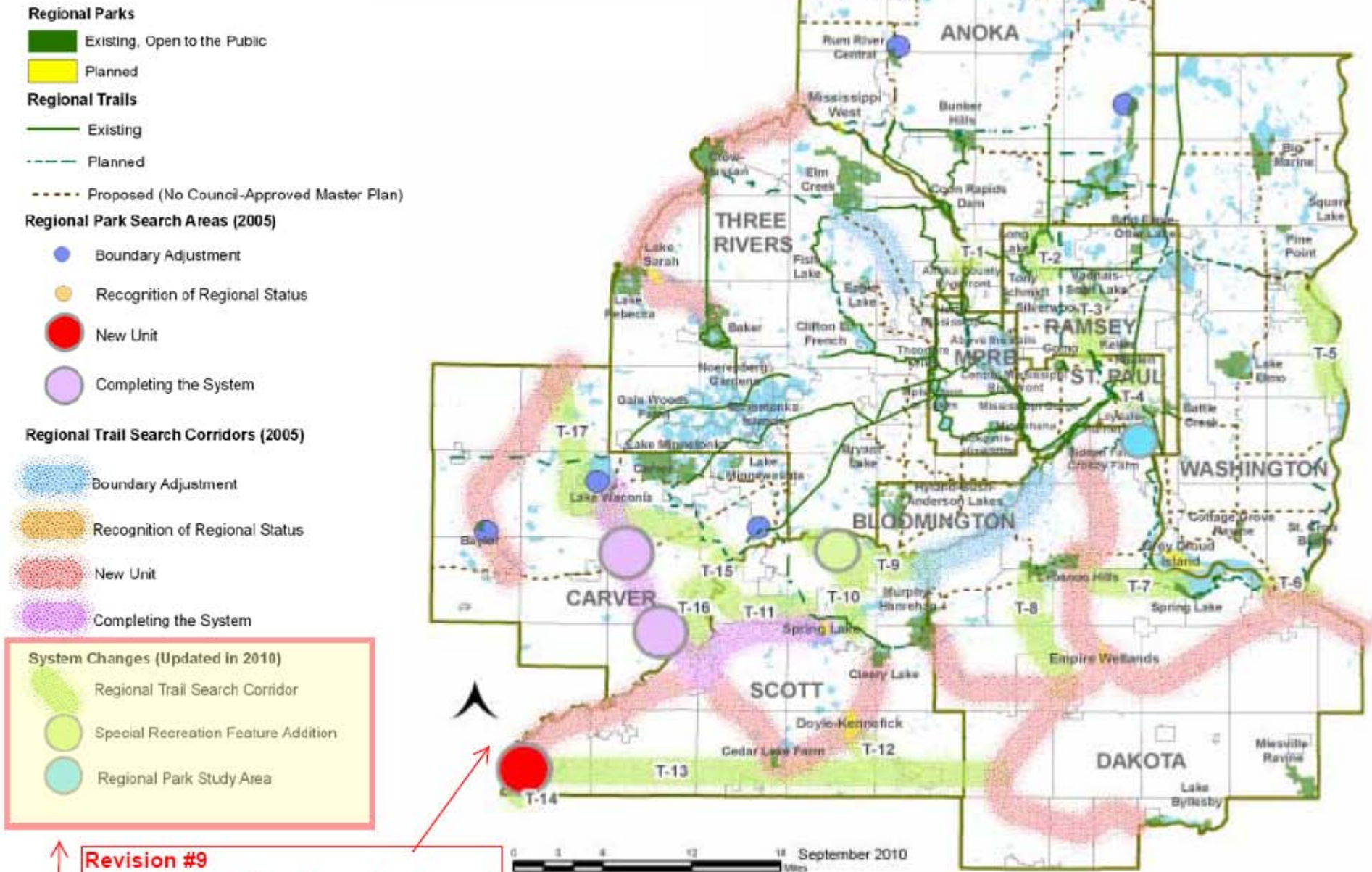
- Existing
- Planned
- Proposed (No Council-Approved Master Plan)



September 2010

Figure 3-2 2030 Metropolitan Regional Parks System Plan

Based on Plan Adopted in 2005



Revision #9
 Remove this portion of legend and correct map--see following page for example

Figure 3-2 2030 Metropolitan Regional Parks System Plan

Based on Plan Adopted in 2005

Regional Parks

- Existing, Open to the Public
- Planned

Regional Trails

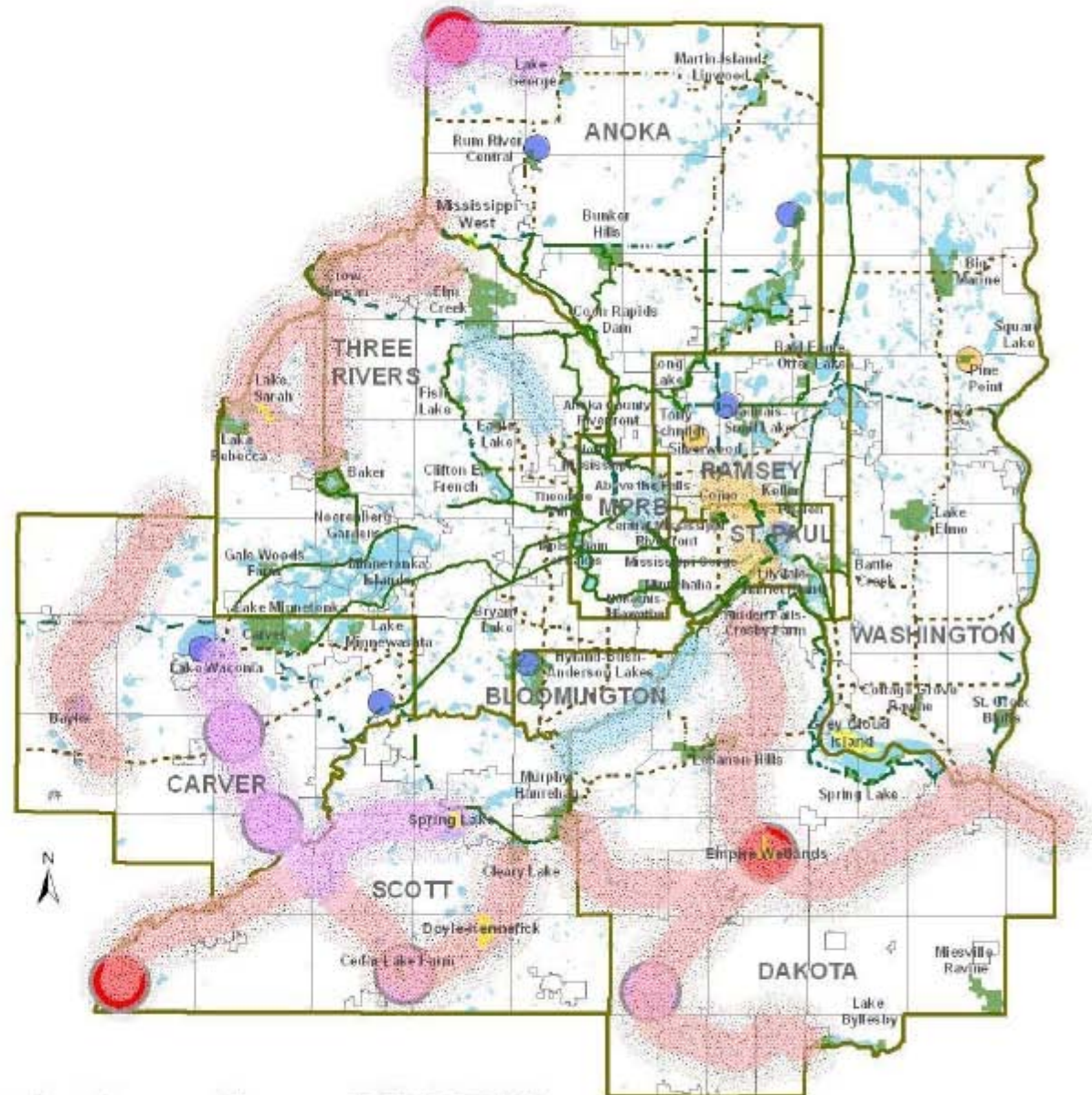
- Existing
- Planned
- Proposed (No Council-Approved Master Plan)

Regional Park Search Areas (2005)

- Boundary Adjustment
- Recognition of Regional Status
- New Unit
- Completing the System

Regional Trail Search Corridors (2005)

- Boundary Adjustment
- Recognition of Regional Status
- New Unit
- Completing the System



Sample of the map with Revision #9 made

0 5 10 15 20 Miles September 2010



*The Landing,
Three Rivers Park District*

Process for Determining System Changes

State law requires that every ten years, each city, county and township in the metropolitan region review and update its comprehensive plan to ensure that the local plan conforms to the Metropolitan Council's system plans, including the *Regional Parks Policy Plan*. ([MN Statute 473.864](#)) The latest round of local comprehensive plans was due to the Metropolitan Council in 2008 for review. These comprehensive plans were required to acknowledge and plan for the regional parks system facilities identified in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

Regional park implementing agencies underwent extensive planning processes to prepare their parks system plans, which were incorporated into their jurisdiction's comprehensive plan. As part of their planning processes, some implementing agencies identified potential changes to the regional parks system. Council staff advised the agencies that the proposed additions could not be considered regional facilities unless they were identified in the Council's *Regional Parks Policy Plan* and recommended that the agencies seek regional status for their proposals when the Council updates its policy plan. The proposed system changes from Carver, Dakota, Scott and Washington counties as well as St. Paul came from their local comprehensive plans. The proposed additions from Three River Park District and Anoka and Ramsey counties were initiated as part of this policy plan update.

Regional Parks System Changes

The regional parks system changes primarily focus on new regional trail search corridors and boundary adjustments to existing regional trails. **A total of 17 regional trails have been proposed by Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties as well as St. Paul.** These trails will provide connections between local and regional recreational facilities and meet the criteria for regional trails outlined in this policy plan. The regional trail system changes are shown in Table 3-10.

There are two system changes for regional parks—the addition of a special recreation feature and the deletion of a regional park search area identified in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. A new category of Regional Park Study Area is also being presented.

Special Recreation Feature Addition

As part of this update to the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan, [The Landing](#), which is a park that provides a historical perspective of life in a river town in the 1800s, has been added to the regional parks system as a special recreation feature. [The Landing](#) focuses on environmental education concepts in a historical setting. Several key buildings on the site are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Visitor origin information provided by Three Rivers Park District shows that about 68% of visits are non-local. The Park District owns and operates [The Landing](#), so there would be no acquisition costs to the region. Acknowledgement as a special recreation feature would entitle the Park District to regional operations and maintenance funding, and upon Council approval of a master plan, [The Landing](#) would be eligible for regional capital improvement funding for development.

Revision #10

Replace with:

"A total of 17 regional trails search corridors proposed by Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties, as well as the City of St. Paul, were added to the regional parks system in 2010. The amendment to the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan, adopted by the Council in 2012, added two regional trails proposed by Three Rivers Park District.

Table 3-10 Regional Trail Additions

Regional Park Implementing Agency	Map Designation	Site Name	Type	Conversion Acres	Trail Length (miles)	Notes
Anoka County	T-	Rice Creek West RT	Regional Trail Boundary Adjustment	15		Amends the boundary of the Rice Creek West RT to include Manomin County Park into the trail corridor. The park serves as a trailhead and recreation node for the regional trail.
Carver County	T-15	Union Pacific Corridor	Regional Trail Search Corridor	3		Trail will follow the Union Pacific rail line, connect to the MN River Bluffs RT extension and provide a river crossing to proposed regional trails in Scott County.
Carver County	T-16	Minnesota River Bluffs LRT RT extension	Regional Trail Search Corridor		17.5	Trail will extend the MN River Bluffs RT from Chaska to Carver along the Minnesota River and potentially to Belle Plain (after 2030).
Carver County	T-1	County Road 10 RT	Regional Trail Search Corridor			Trail will connect the SW Regional Trail Connection in Chaska to the proposed Twin Cities and Western RT, the Carver County North-South RT Search Corridor, Dakota Rail RT and the Luce Line State Trail in Watertown.
Dakota County	T-7	Rosemount River Access Trail	Regional Trail Search Corridor		5	Trail will connect Vermillion Highlands Greenway RT in Rosemount to the Mississippi River RT.
Dakota County	T-8	North Creek Greenway Trail	Regional Trail Search Corridor		9	Trail will connect the MN Zoo to the Vermillion River Gre-enway RT.
Ramsey County	T-2	Rice Creek South Trail	Regional Trail Search Corridor		2	Trail will connect Rice Creek North RT to Highway 96 RT and provide access to the Arden Hills Army Training Site for winter cross country ski use.
Ramsey County	T-3	Trout Brook RT extension	Regional Trail Boundary Adjustment		3.5	Trail extension will connect Lake McCarrons County Park to Vadnais Snail Lakes Regional Park. It will involve bridge crossings at Highway 36 and I-694. NPS is providing technical support in evaluating alignment alternatives.
Scott County	T-10	Prior Lake Outlet RT Search Area	Regional Trail Search Corridor		6	Trail will connect the Minnesota River to Lower Prior Lake, following the general alignment of the Prior Lake channel.
Scott County	T-11	Louisville RT Corridor Search Area	Regional Trail Search Corridor		8	Trail will connect the Scott Co. West RT to the Union Pacific rail line river crossing to Carver Co.

Revision #11
Replace with "T-1"

Revision #12
Add "19"

Revision #13
Replace with "Greenway"

Table 3-10 Regional Trail Additions

Regional Park Implementing Agency	Map Designation	Site Name	Type	Conversion Acres	Trail Length (miles)	Notes
Scott County	T-12	Elko New Market-Blakeley --Doyle Kennefick Connection Trail	Regional Trail Search Corridor		4	This proposed trail will provide a connection between Doyle-Kennefick RP and the Elko-New Market-Blakeley RT
Scott County	T-13	Elko New Market-Blakeley RT Search Corridor	Regional Trail Search Corridor		32	Trail will connect Blakeley Bluffs RP Search Area to Cedar Lake Farm RP and the Chub Creek Greenway RT in Dakota Co. will require short RT search area for connection in Dakota Co.
Scott County	T-14	Blakeley Bluffs RT Extension	Regional Trail Search Corridor		2	Trail extension will connect Blakeley Bluffs RP Search area to the border of Scott Co where it will connect with Ney Nature Center in Le Sueur County.
Scott County	T-9	Big Rivers RT extension	Regional Trail Boundary Adjustment		5	Trail will be an extension of the Big Rivers RT along the Minnesota River to the boundary with Scott County.
St. Paul	T-4	Johnson Parkway	Regional Trail Search Corridor		2.15	Trail is part of St Paul's Grand Rounds system, and is the only component of the Grand Rounds that is not within the regional parks system.
Washington County	T-5	Middle St. Croix Valley Trail	Regional Trail Search Corridor		8	Trail will connect the proposed Brown's Creek State Trail along the Zephyr Line in Stillwater to Lakeland, with potential local trail access to the St. Croix Valley RT.
Washington County	T-6	Point Douglas Trail	Proposed Regional Trail		2	Washington County owns the corridor. It will be a destination trail along the Mississippi River that will link the Mississippi River RT and the St. Croix Valley RT to trails in Wisconsin.

Revision #14

Add Three Rivers proposed regional trails as shown in highlighted in yellow on the following page

Table 3-10 Regional Trail Additions

Regional Park Implementing Agency	Map Designation	Site Name	Type	Conversion Acres	Trail Length (miles)	Notes
Scott County	T-11	Louisville RT Corridor Search Area	Regional Trail Search Corridor		8	Trail will connect the Scott Co. West RT to the Union Pacific rail line river crossing to Carver Co.
Scott County	T-12	Elko New Market--Blakeley --Doyle Kennefick Connection Trail	Regional Trail Search Corridor		4	This proposed trail will provide a connection between Doyle-Kennefick RP and the Elko-New Market-Blakeley RT
Scott County	T-13	Elko New Market-Blakeley RT Search Corridor	Regional Trail Search Corridor		32	Trail will connect Blakeley Bluffs RP Search Area to Cedar Lake Farm RP and the Chub Creek Greenway RT in Dakota Co. will require short RT search area for connection in Dakota Co.
Scott County	T-14	Blakeley Bluffs RT Extension	Regional Trail Search Corridor		2	Trail extension will connect Blakeley Bluffs RP Search area to the border of Scott Co where it will connect with Ney Nature Center in Le Sueur County.
Scott County	T-9	Big Rivers RT extension	Regional Trail Boundary Adjustment		5	Trail will be an extension of the Big Rivers RT along the Minnesota River to the boundary with Scott County.
St. Paul	T-4	Johnson Parkway	Regional Trail Search Corridor		2.15	Trail is part of St Paul's Grand Rounds system, and is the only component of the Grand Rounds that is not within the regional parks system.
Three Rivers Park District	T-18	Minnetrista Regional Trail	Regional Trail Search Corridor		9	Trail will connect Lake Minnetonka LRT RT, Carver Park Reserve, Lake Minnetonka RP, Dakota Rail RT, Gale Woods Farm and Luce Line State Trail.
Three Rivers Park District	T-19	Intercity Regional Trail	Proposed Regional Trail		7	Trail will connect Nokomis-Hiawatha RP, Nine Mile Creek RT, and Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. May present opportunities to connect to Minnesota River Greenway RT in Dakota County.
Washington County	T-5	Middle St. Croix Valley Trail	Regional Trail Search Corridor		8	Trail will connect the proposed Brown's Creek State Trail along the Zephyr Line in Stillwater to Lakeland, with potential local trail access to the St. Croix Valley RT.
Washington County	T-6	Point Douglas Trail	Proposed Regional Trail		2	Washington County owns the corridor. It will be a destination trail along the Mississippi River that will link the Mississippi River RT and the St. Croix Valley RT to trails in Wisconsin.

Sample of table with Revision #14 made

Figure 3-3 2030 Metropolitan Regional Parks System Plan Update

Regional Parks System Additions 2010

Regional Parks

- Existing, Open to the Public
- Planned

Regional Trails

- Existing
- Planned
- Proposed (No Council-Approved Master Plan)

Regional Park Search Areas (2005)

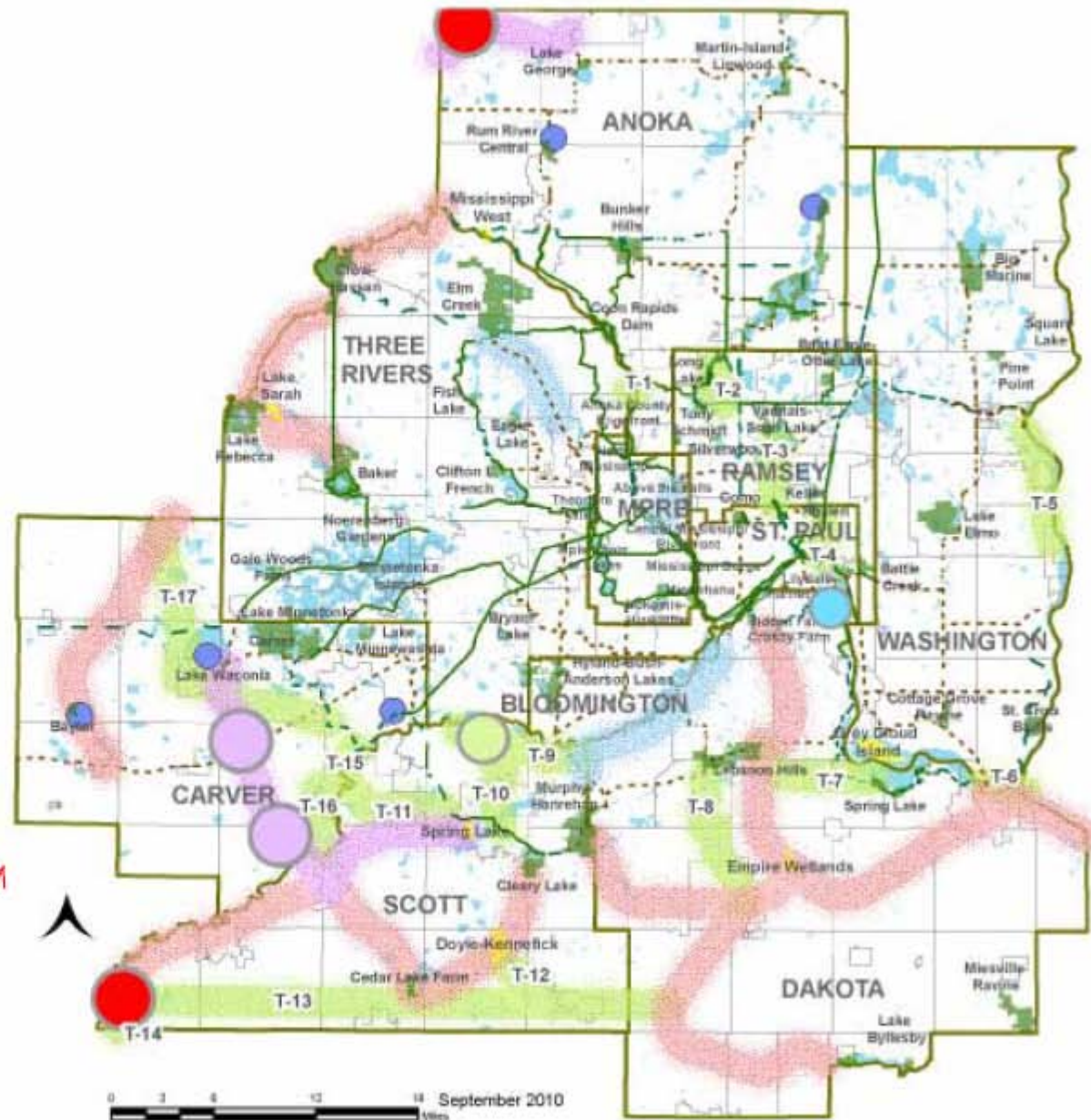
- Boundary Adjustment
- Recognition of Regional Status
- New Unit
- Completing the System

Regional Trail Search Corridors (2005)

- Boundary Adjustment
- Recognition of Regional Status
- New Unit
- Completing the System

System Changes (Updated in 2010)

- Regional Trail Search Corridor
- Special Recreation Feature Addition
- Regional Park Study Area



Revision #15
Add Three Rivers Park District proposed trails to map

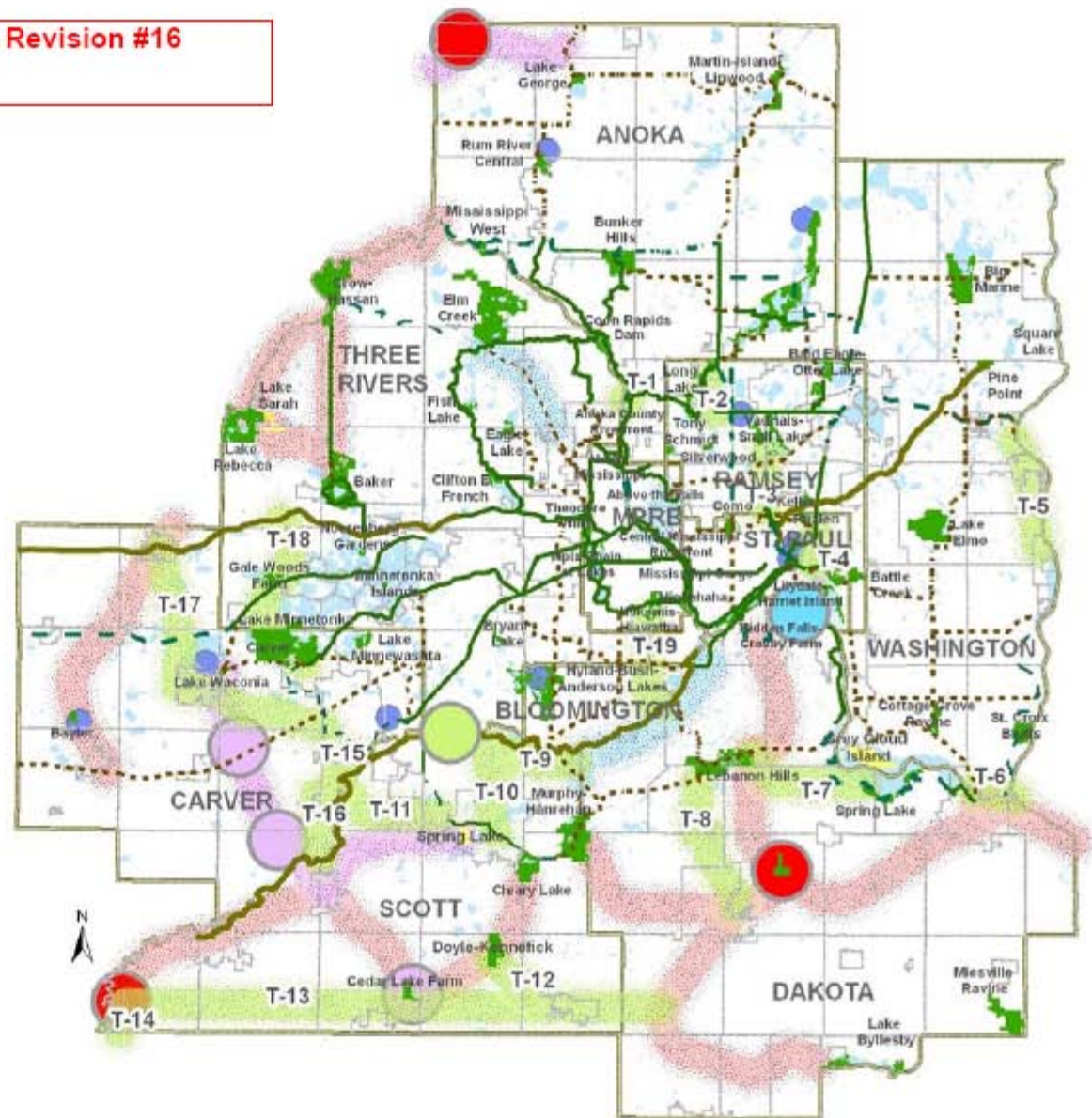


Figure 3-3 2030 Metropolitan Regional Parks System Plan Update

Regional Parks System Additions

Sample of map with Revision #16 made.

- Regional Parks**
- Existing, Open to the Public
- Planned
- Regional Trails**
- Existing
- Planned
- Proposed (No Council-Approved Master Plan)
- Regional Park Search Areas (2005)**
- Boundary Adjustment
- Recognition of Regional Status
- New Unit
- Completing the System
- Regional Trail Search Corridors (2005)**
- Boundary Adjustment
- Recognition of Regional Status
- New Unit
- Completing the System
- System Changes (Amended in 2012)**
- Regional Trail Search Corridor/Boundary Adjustment
- Special Recreation Feature Addition
- Regional Park Study Area





Revision #16

Replace with:

"Grants from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund are awarded under a set of rules that were approved by the Council on June 24, 2009 and amended on December 14, 2011.

The amendment allows a park agency to receive up to \$1.7 million in grants from each of the two accounts that finance the Fund. The rules are:

[MN Statute 473.315](#) authorizes the Metropolitan Council with the advice of the MPOSC to make grants from any funds available to it to the regional park implementing agencies to cover the cost, or any portion of the cost, of acquiring and developing the regional park system in accordance with the parks policy plan.

Following are summaries of how these grants are funded and managed:

Land Acquisition

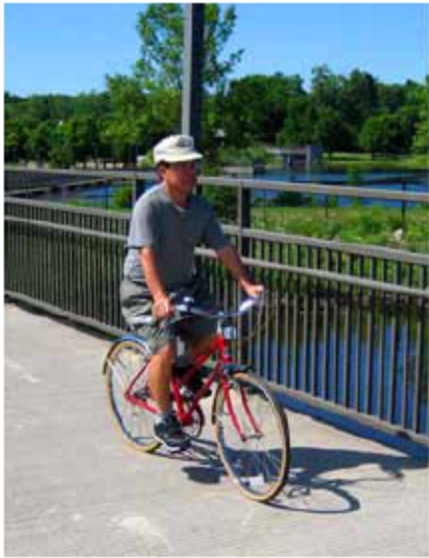
In 2001, the Metropolitan Council established a Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund grant program to assist regional park agencies in acquiring land for the Metropolitan Regional Park System. Land that is acquired must be within Metropolitan Council approved master plan boundaries for that particular park or trail unit.

The Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund is comprised of two accounts:

- The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Acquisition Account is used to purchase land with high quality natural resource characteristics. No residential structures or other buildings associated with the parcel can be acquired with this account. Sixty percent of this account is financed with State appropriations from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the [Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources](#). The remaining 40% of the account is financed with bonds issued by the Metropolitan Council.
- The Parks and Trails Fund Acquisition Account is used to purchase land and any related structures – typically a parcel with a house or other buildings. Sixty percent of this account is financed with Parks and Trails Fund appropriations from the Land and Legacy Amendment, and 40% is financed with Metropolitan Council bonds.

Grants from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund are awarded under a set of rules that were approved by the Council on June 24, 2009 as follows:

- Grants from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund may only be awarded to finance a portion of the cost to acquire land within Metropolitan Council-approved master plan boundaries, and only after the requesting regional park implementing agency has used available acquisition grant funds previously provided by the Metropolitan Council.
- Any interest cost on a contract for deed or other timed payment plan is not eligible for grant funding. The value of a discounted sale (i.e. the difference between the appraised value and a reduced sale price) is not counted as part of the cost to acquire land and is not included as part of a local match to the grant.
- Grants from the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund may finance a portion of the actual cost to acquire land after deducting any Metropolitan Council grants and other grants used to finance a portion of the cost as follows:
 - The Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Grant finances 75% of the net cost of acquiring the land which is defined as the purchase price—not the appraised value; legal fees, appraisal costs and other closing costs incurred by the park agency; the property tax equivalency payment due to the city or township; and stewardship costs.



*Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park,
Anoka County & Three Rivers
Park District*

- A contribution of 25% of the net cost of acquiring the land up to \$567,000 that is financed by regional park implementing agency funds or other sources is not eligible for reimbursement consideration by the Metropolitan Council. Seventy-five percent (75%) of a contribution above \$567,000 that is financed with regional park implementing agency funds only is eligible for reimbursement consideration by the Metropolitan Council.

The maximum grant(s) available to a park agency is \$1.7 million during the July 1 to June 30 time period.

Capital Improvements financed with State bonds and Metropolitan Council bonds

The Parks CIP must, in accordance with [MN Statute 473.147](#), include "criteria and priorities for the allocation of funds". Capital projects proposed for funding must be consistent with Metropolitan Council approved regional park or trail master plans. Projects proposed by each regional park implementing agency are prioritized by that agency. Each park agency has unique capital needs, which that park agency can best determine.

Since 2008, the Metropolitan Council has used a formula to determine how much of the CIP would be allocated to each regional park implementing agency. The formula balances two factors:

- The population of each park implementing agency compared to the region's population. This factor is weighted 70%.
- The amount of visits a park agency hosted from persons who live outside the park agency's jurisdiction (non-local visits). This factor is weighted 30%.

The population factor recognizes the need to provide funds for park capital improvements to serve every person in the region relatively equally. The non-local visits factor recognizes that these regional parks serve a regional and state-wide population. Therefore a combination of both factors is accounted for in the CIP formula.

The results of this formula determine the amount each regional park implementing agency could request/receive from the CIP. For example if Anoka County's share of the CIP is 10%, then 10% of appropriations for the CIP would be granted to Anoka County for its projects in the CIP.

Revision #17

Replace this sentence with: "The maximum grant(s) available to a park agency is \$1.7 million from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Acquisition Account and \$1.7 million from the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Acquisition Account during the July 1 to June 30 time period."