



**Carver
County
Parks**

11360 Highway 212 West, Suite 2
Cologne, MN 55322

Park & Recreation Commission Meeting

Wednesday, March 9th, 2022

Public Works – Conference Room 1

11360 Highway 212

Cologne, MN 55322

6:30 p.m.

Agenda

- 1) Call to Order (6:30 p.m.)
- 2) Roll Call (6:30 p.m.)
- 3) Approval of Agenda (6:35 p.m.)
- 4) Approval of the February 9th, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes (6:40 p.m.)
- 5) Commissioner Liaison Report (6:43 p.m.)
- 6) Open to the Public (6:45 p.m.)
- 7) Informational Items (6:50 p.m.)
 - a. Southwest Regional Trail Master Plan
 - b. 2022 Marketing/Public Communications Initiatives & Work Program
- 8) Staff Reports (7:55 p.m.)
 - a. Waconia Service Center Update
 - b. Hoffman Monument
 - c. Park General Operations & Recreation Services Update
 - d. Park Maintenance and Natural Resources Operations Update
- 9) Commission Member Reports (8:05 p.m.)
- 10) Set Next Meeting Date (8:10 p.m.)
 - a. April 13th, 2022
- 11) Adjourn (8:11 p.m.)

Please note if a Commission Member cannot attend the meeting, please call the Park Office at 952-466-5250.

CARVER COUNTY



**Park & Recreation Commission (Virtual) Meeting
Wednesday, February 9, 2022
6:30 p.m.**

Minutes

- 1) Call to Order (6:30 p.m.)
 - a. Chair Bruner called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.
- 2) Roll Call (6:31 p.m.)
 - a. Present: Mark Lagergren, Jim Boettcher, Curt Kobilarcsik, Gary Van Eyll, Makiza Johnson (out at 7:50pm), Jerry Bruner, and Scott Knight.
 - b. Absent: N/A
 - c. Staff Present: Tim Lynch, Marty Walsh, Sam Pertz, Jake Sandvig, Hope Mack
- 3) Election of Officers (6:31 p.m.)
 - a. According to County ordinance, an election must be held during the second month of the year for the offices of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. The office of the Secretary does not need to be held by a Commission member.
 - b. J. Boettcher nominates J. Bruner for Chair, seconded by M. Lagergren
 - i. Roll Call Vote: J. Boettcher – Aye, J. Bruner – Aye, M. Johnson – Aye, C. Kobilarcsik – Aye, M. Lagergren – Aye, and G. Van Eyll – Aye; Passed 6-0
 - c. M. Lagergren nominates C. Kobilarcsik for Vice Chair, Seconded by G. Van Eyll
 - i. Roll Call Vote: M. Lagergren – Aye, J. Boettcher – Aye, C. Kobilarcsik – Aye, G. Van Eyll – Aye, M. Johnson – Aye; Passed 5-0
 - d. G. Van Eyll nominates to have park staff serve as Secretary, Seconded by J. Boettcher
 - i. Roll Call Vote: M. Lagergren – Aye, J. Boettcher – Aye, C. Kobilarcsik – Aye, G. Van Eyll – Aye, M. Johnson – Aye; Passed 5-0
- 4) Approval of Agenda (6:37 p.m.)
 - a. Motion to approve the agenda made by C. Kobilarcsik, Seconded by G. Van Eyll.
 - b. Roll Call Vote: M. Lagergren – Aye, J. Boettcher – Aye, C. Kobilarcsik – Aye, G. Van Eyll – Aye, M. Johnson – Aye; Passed 5-0
- 5) Approval of the January 12, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes (6:40 p.m.)
 - a. Motion to approve the minutes made by M. Lagergren, Seconded by G. Van Eyll.
 - b. Roll Call Vote: M. Lagergren – Aye, J. Boettcher – Aye, C. Kobilarcsik – Aye, G. Van Eyll – Aye, M. Johnson – Aye; Passed 5-0
- 6) Commissioner Liaison Report (6:38 p.m.)
 - a. Commissioner Lynch attending a meeting regarding 4th of July Fireworks at Lake Waconia. It has been decided to set them off from the mainland instead of Coney Island. The vault latrines on Coney Island are priced more expensive than anticipated. The Polar Plunge will be at Lake Waconia this Saturday.
- 7) Open to the Public (6:35 p.m.)

- a. None
- 8) New Business (6:42 p.m.)
 - a. Special Use Permit Request: Lola's ½ Marathon and Endurance Events
 - i. Sam Pertz introduced the Event Coordinators Mike Cofrin & Liz Danley. They described the 8th annual event which will take place on June 4th, 2022 from approximately 8am – 10am. They are anticipating 2,000 participants and the event should not have a negative impact on parking for park patrons.
 - 1. Motion to recommend the County Board to approve a special use permit made by M. Lagergren, Seconded by S. Knight.
 - 2. Roll Call Vote: M. Lagergren – Aye, J. Boettcher – Aye, C. Kobilarcsik – Aye, S. Knight – Aye, G. Van Eyll – Aye, M. Johnson – Aye, J. Bruner - Aye; Passed 7-0
 - b. 2022 Donation Items for Promotional, Marketing, & Outreach Initiatives
 - i. Donations have been a part of department operations for many years and the items are scheduled for annual County Board approval on 2/15/22. The marketing plan for the \$500 in recreation programs is to attach vouchers to direct mailers to gauge patron response and participation. This is being shared with the Park Commission for transparency and feedback. It was then discussed how to reach people via different avenues including mailers, email, social media, newspapers, and the website.
- 9) Informational Items (7:20 p.m.)
 - a. 1/25/22 County Board Workshop Presentation
 - i. M. Walsh reviewed the items he presented to the County Board including an update on the Waconia Service Center, snow removal on destination regional trails, and planning activities/master plans.
 - b. Southwest Regional Trail Master Plan
 - i. M. Walsh identified the MNRBL, SWRT, and LMRT. He showed what exists now and what is planned for future development. There may be a recommendation ready for the next Park Commission meeting.
- 10) Staff Reports (7:55 p.m.)
 - a. Legislative Update
 - i. M. Walsh noted that the county requested \$2.25 million from the governor's office in June of 2021, and it was included in the governor's recommendation. In August 2021 the County Board asked to increase the funding amount to 3 million, mainly for LWRP improvements. The MET Council amount that was included in the recommendation was \$5 million and Carver County's portion would be \$147,000. If an increase in funding is approved, the county's allotment could be raised to \$1.2 million. The next legislative meetings will be held in early March.
 - b. Park General Operations & Recreation Services Update
 - i. The final Candlelit Ski event is on February 26th and we have a goal of 300 participants. Permitting items coming up are for the 4th of July fireworks at Lake Waconia and a City of Carver ice lantern event which would use part of the MNRBRT. Carver County may partner with them on this event in the future. The Polar Plunge is this Saturday at Lake Waconia. The possibility of selling VIP tickets on the sledding hill for the 4th of July fireworks was discussed.
 - c. Park Maintenance and Natural Resources Operations Update
 - i. J. Sandvig stated that staff are working to support the Candlelit Ski, Polar Plunge, and Maple Syrup events. He is researching equipment to improve park and water maintenance, docks for Lake Waconia & Coney Island, and restoring native prairie grass at Lake Waconia.
- 11) Commission Member Reports (8:02 p.m.)
 - a. M. Lagergren: Phenomenal job to Sam, Micah, and staff on the CLS event.
 - b. J. Bruner: He is on the MET Council Planning Committee which is focusing on transportation and low-income housing. He is advocating for increased funding for non-metro parks and trails.

12) Set Next Meeting Date (8:11 p.m.)

- a. March 9, 2022

13) Adjourn (8:11 p.m.)

- a. Motion to adjourn made by J. Boettcher, Seconded S. Knight
- b. Roll Call Vote: M. Lagergren – Aye, J. Boettcher – Aye, C. Kobilarcsik – Aye, S. Knight – Aye, G. Van Eyll – Aye, J. Bruner - Aye; Passed 6-0



CARVER COUNTY



**Carver
County
Parks**

11360 Highway 212 West, Suite 2
Cologne, MN 55322

MEMO

TO: Members of the Park Commission
FROM: Martin Walsh, Parks Director
SUBJECT: Southwest Regional Trail Master Plan
DATE: March 4, 2022

The master plan for the Southwest Regional Trail continues in a draft form. WSB Consulting has responded to several requested edits to the plan and is addressing some other minor edits after a second staff review. Attached is the current draft of the master plan.

Below are some brief statements about the draft plan:

- The Southwest Regional Trail has a history dating back to 2006
- The primary objectives are connecting the Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail to the Minnesota Regional Trail, the communities of Chaska and Victoria, along with a connection from the MN River Valley to Carver Park Reserve remain
- Since 2006
 - Development has eliminated some options for the trail alignment
 - The Union Pacific Railroad corridor in Chaska and Carver was acquired
 - Additional master planning and development of the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail has occurred
- The plan reflects needed changes to better distinguish the Southwest Regional Trail from the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail in Chanhassen and Chaska
- Several engagement events occurred to obtain public input
- The plan reflects additional land acquisition of the former Union Pacific Railroad corridor, in areas of future development and in areas to widen the trail corridor along Creek Road from willing property owners consistent with the City of Chaska's Preferred Growth and Development Plan for a modified regional trail boundary
- Next Steps
 - Complete plan edits
 - Conduct preliminary plan review with Metropolitan Council staff
 - Share plan for review with the cities of Chanhassen, Chaska, and Victoria
 - County approval process

Recommendation: A recommendation is not requested at this time.

CARVER COUNTY



CARVER
COUNTY

CARVER COUNTY SOUTHWEST REGIONAL TRAIL

VICTORIA TO CHASKA

NOVEMBER 2021

Original 2006 Prepared By:
Brauer & Associates, Ltd.
2021 Amendment Prepared By: WSB

Prepared for:
Carver County Parks

WSB PROJECT NO. 12391-00





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section I: Planning Context /Background5
Project Scope..... 6
Project History..... 7
Connection to Parks and Natural Areas 9
Land Use Or Other Conflicts12

Section II: Vision And Public Values Statement 13
Overview13
Project Vision14
Carver County 2040 Plan15
Community Trail Values & Demands16
Public Engagement Process 22
Public Influence 25

Section III : Trail Master Plan.....27
Overview27
Trail Design Characteristics 28
Overview of Master Plan Trail Segment 1 of 4 32
Overview of Master Plan Trail Segment 2 of 4..... 34
Overview of Master Plan Trail Segment 3 of 4..... 36
Overview of Master Plan Trail Segment 4 of 4 42

Section IV: Natural Resources Stewardship Plan..... 45
Overview 45
Consistency With Other Natural Resource Stewardship Plans..... 46
Trail Ecological Protection Strategy 47

Section V: Implementation and Management Plan 51
Overview51
Acquisition Plan 52
Development Cost Considerations 54
Implementation Strategy And Priorities..... 56
Management and Operations 57
Public Involvement in Implementing the Master Plan60

Appendix
Master Plan Trail Segments 1 through 4

This page intentionally left blank.



Section I: Planning Context / Background

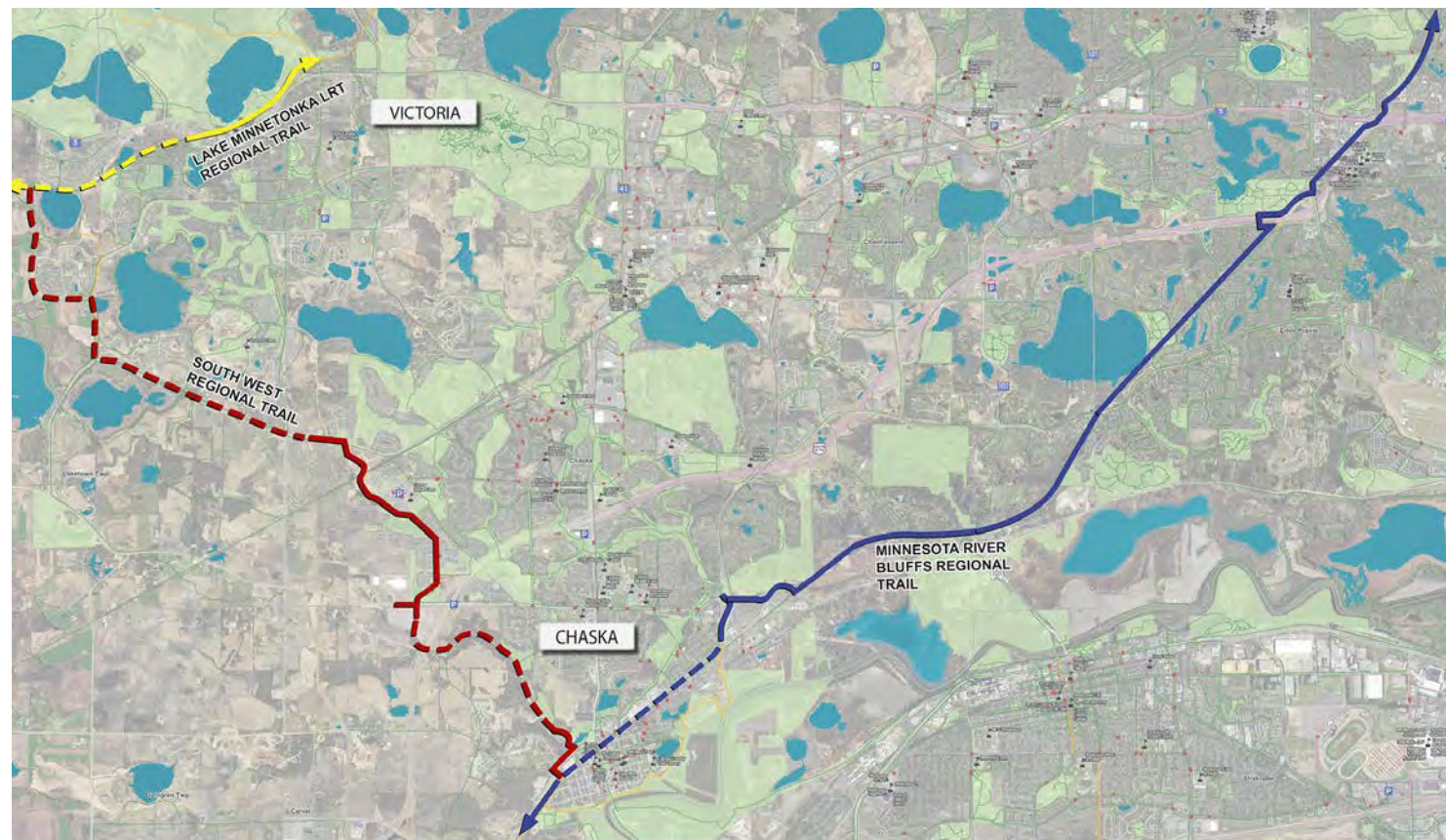
Project Scope

The Southwest Regional Trail (SWRT) master plan provides a crucial trail connection between the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail and the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail between the cities of Victoria and Chaska.

The following map illustrates the general locations of the existing and proposed trail systems.



STUDY AREA MAP AND OVERVIEW



AS THE MAP ILLUSTRATES, THE PROPOSED TRAIL ROUTE DEFINED UNDER THIS MASTER PLAN WOULD MAKE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TWO REGIONAL TRAIL ROUTES.

Project History

In 2006 Carver County prepared the Southwest Regional Trail Master Plan identifying a trail that would link the north and south branches of the Southwest LRT trail segments together between Victoria and Chaska. The Southwest Regional Trail would connect to the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail (LMRT) to the north and the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail (MRBRT) to the south.

In 2016, Carver County submitted an amended Master Plan document of the original 2006 Carver County Southwest Regional Trail Master Plan to illustrate the extension of the southern trail parameters of the Southwest Regional Trail (SWRT) by Chaska to end at Bluff Creek Drive where it meets with the MRBRT. This added section of trail is aligned on an abandoned railroad corridor previously owned by the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRRRA) for light rail transportation, with a permit granted to Carver County for this one mile section of trail, and is currently paved with bituminous surfacing. The remainder of the trail extending northeast to Pioneer Trail along the

abandoned railroad corridor remained the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail, with a permit granted to Three Rivers Park District from the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRRRA) for this approximate two mile section of trail.

The segment of the MRBRT from County Road 61 to Pioneer trail consists of one mile paved surface and two miles of aggregate. The MRBRT extends along the Minnesota River Valley bluff adjacent to the Minnesota DNR Scientific and Natural Area of the Seminary Fen (NSA) through natural settings, including woodlands and scenic vistas located along the trail corridor.

The MRBRT extends through Chanhassen, Eden Prairie and Hopkins. A portion of this trail was destroyed by landslides in 2014 which remained closed between Eden Prairie and Hwy 101 with detours provided until the trail reconstruction project was completed in 2021.

PROJECT HISTORY AT-A-GLANCE

2006	2016	2018	2021
Southwest Regional Trail Master Plan is prepared	Carver County amended 2006 Mater Plan, former HCRRRA land is acquired	Carver County submitted an Acquisition Amendment Plan	New Trail Master Plan replaces all previous planning documents



In 2018, Carver County submitted an Acquisition Amendment Plan to identify the lands owned by the HCRRA to be acquired by Carver County, as the HCRRA abandoned this section of trail for any future transportation purposes. The HCRRA and Carver County entered into an agreement to work together to secure funding and fix the slope failure. Upon completing the slope failure repair, the property was deeded to Carver County for the purpose of trail and natural resource preservation and stewardship.

The properties purchased by Carver County start from approximately County Road 61 in Chaska and extend to the eastern county line near Pioneer Trail in Eden Prairie. This acquisition resulted in approximately 90 acres of land and 3 miles of trail located within the corridor. The segment of the SWRT between Bluff Creek Drive and County Road 61 was further reclassified to be an extension of the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail and designated as a recreational destination trail.

The 2021 Southwest Regional Trail Master Plan replaces all of the previous Southwest Regional Trail master plans and amendments.

RATIONALE FOR THE REGIONAL TRAIL CORRIDOR

The primary rationale for developing the Southwest Regional Trail corridor remains consistent with previous goals to:

- 1) link the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail with the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail, and
- 2) tie together numerous federal, state, regional, and local parks, natural areas, and trails into a cohesive, interlinked system.

In recent years, increasing development pressures in Carver County also heightened the importance of establishing this trail corridor while there is still an opportunity to consider alternative alignments ahead of ongoing development. Some of the previous proposed SWRT alignments have had to be reconsidered due to lost opportunities as developments took place inconsistent with previous goals and identified trail routes.

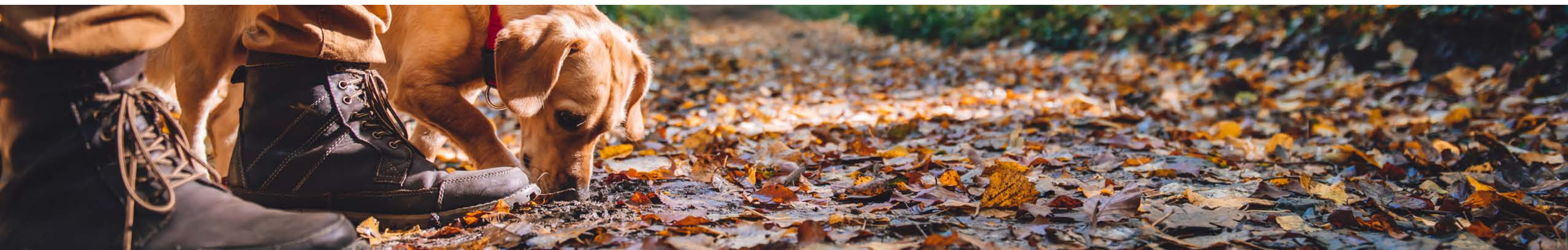
It is imperative that the SWRT link be developed appropriately to create a large loop trail system of a high quality meeting regional design standards.

Connection to Parks and Natural Areas

Connecting people to parks, natural areas and other primary destinations within the study area is one of the fundamental reasons of regional trail systems, with loop systems highly valued by trail users.

The Southwest Regional Trail (SWRT) will link together the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail (MRBRT) and the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail (LMRT), thereby creating a large loop trail system providing access to numerous types of natural settings, recreation and destination areas.

The MRBRT also has a trail connection to the Highway 101 pedestrian trail that extends into Shakopee for access to the Minnesota Valley State Trail trail located on the south side of the Minnesota River, creating a loop that links back into downtown Chaska along CSAH 41.



The following considers some of the key parks that the SWRT will link together through its connection between the MRBRT and the LMRT, thereby creating a large loop trail system providing access to numerous types of natural settings, recreation and destination areas.



CARVER PARK RESERVE

Located on the western edge of the Twin Cities, Carver Park Reserve supports a large wildlife population of trumpeter swans, osprey, mink, white-tailed deer, barred owls and numerous waterfowl and songbirds. The park offers rolling wooded terrain and interconnected lakes and marshes and features miles of trails that wind around the nature center, historic Grimm Farm and the King Waterbird Sanctuary. The park trails provide a valuable link to the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail.

The park reserve is also home to the Lowry Nature Center, the first public environmental education center of its kind in the state that provides nature-oriented programming for school children, adults and families. A 1,700-foot boardwalk winds through marsh and tamarack swamps, while wood-chipped trails through woods allow visitors to observe wildlife. The park also offers boating, angling, archery, and camping opportunities.



BRYANT LAKE REGIONAL PARK

Located on Bryant Lake in Eden Prairie, this 170 acre park is nestled among rolling hills, woodlands, wetlands and grasslands offering habitat for deer, waterfowl and a variety of songbirds.

The sand-bottomed Bryant Lake is ideal for swimming, boating and fishing. An enclosed pavilion, available for group reservations from early May through the end of September, is in close proximity to the creative play area, fishing pier and other park amenities.



LAKE MINNEWASHTA REGIONAL PARK

Lake Minnewashta Regional Park is a 340 acre park located on the eastern shores of Lake Minnewashta. Facilities completed to date include a swimming beach, bathhouse, reservable picnic shelters, volleyball courts, creative playground, concessions, fishing piers, off-leash dog park, and year-round trails. A boat access within the park accommodates 48 vehicles with boat trailers.

Approximately five miles of trails meander along the edge of Lake Minnewashta and through forested and prairie areas. In the winter, separate trails are groomed for skiing and walking. Although the park is not directly connected to the Southwest Regional Trail, it is accessible from the regional trail via local trail systems.



LOCAL PARKS

Local parks either located directly along these regional trail systems, or linked by local trails, are also primary destinations for a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities. Some examples include:

- Fireman's Park in Chaska
- Riley Lake Park in Eden Prairie
- Miller Park in Eden Prairie

Natural Areas

The trail systems will link people to significant natural resource areas, such as the Seminary Fen Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) located along the MRBRT. The Seminary Fen is a rare natural feature that is home to a number of unique and protected plant species. Including this area in the regional trail alignment increases opportunities for users to connect to the unique natural features.

The trails also provide access to various locations of the Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area and Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The comprehensive plan for the NWR includes provisions for refuge uses, natural vegetation and habitat protection and environmental education.

As noted previously, the regional trails will also connect with the local Chaska levee trail that traverses along the southern edge of downtown Chaska along the Minnesota River levee where it connects to the MRBRT at both ends allowing pedestrian access to the natural ecological systems along the Minnesota River in several locations.



Land Use Or Other Conflicts

No major land use or other conflicts are anticipated with the regional trail alignment as defined under this master plan. Carver County, the City of Chaska and the City of Victoria have each approved the master plan with the trail alignments to be incorporated into their local comprehensive parks and trails plans.

The majority of the proposed trail is either existing trail corridors and/or located within public rights-of-way, so land acquisition is not a significant issue of concern for the majority of the trail. Where the trail is shown to traverse across private property, it is anticipated that land and easements will be obtained under a willing seller basis as part of future developed proposals that would be overseen and approved by the local LGUs.

As shown on the trail segment maps, the master plan provides alternative routes in select areas to provide Carver County, Chaska and Victoria with some flexibility to work with land owners and developers on determining the best location for the trail at the time of implementation.

As development occurs, the local LGU, in concert with Carver County, will determine which route in these instances best serves the public's best interests while minimizing any conflicts that may arise. At this point it is recommended that the local LGU share any proposed planning documents with Carver County for input on proposed trail routes to ensure suitable routes are secured for trail development.

Aside from the trail alignment issues as defined above, no other conflicts with other land uses or proposed projects are envisioned.



WITH THE MAJORITY OF THE PROPOSED TRAIL ALIGNMENTS LOCATED IN PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY, CONFLICTS AND ACQUISITIONS ARE EXPECTED TO BE MINIMAL.



EXISTING TRAILS INDICATE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS FOR IMPROVED CONDITIONS AND 10-FOOT WIDE TRAILS.

BITUMINOUS TRAILS ARE PROPOSED BUT THERE MAY INSTANCES WHERE EXISTING CONCRETE WALK SECTIONS IN MORE URBAN ENVIRONMENTS, AS INDICATED BELOW, WOULD REMAIN.



Section II:

Vision And Public Values Statement

Overview

The undertaking of this planning process is based on the presumption that the completion of the Southwest Regional Trail (SWRT) as a primary connection between the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail (MRBRT) and the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail (LMRT) is of high regional and local value. To ensure that the perspectives of all interested individuals and stakeholders were considered, Carver County, in partnership with Chaska and Victoria undertook an inclusive public process.

This section defines the findings of that process.



Project Vision

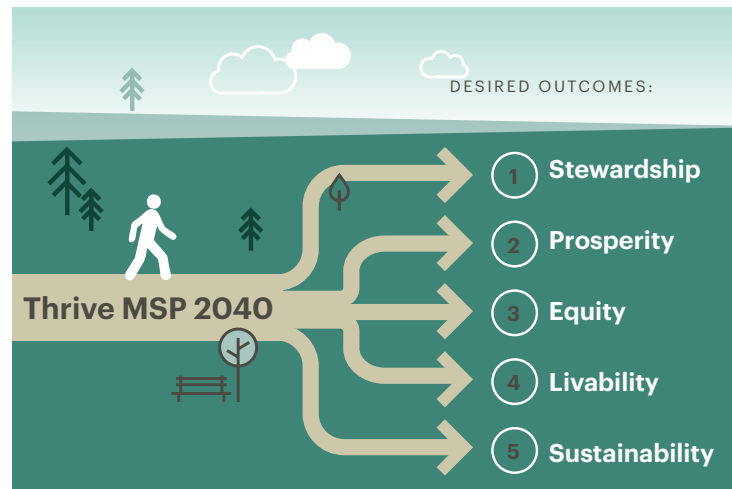
The Metropolitan Council's comprehensive plan, Thrive MSP 2040, adopted in 2014, establishes a shared regional vision for the park and trail systems that outlines the five desired outcomes.



The vision for the SWRT master plan is to establish a regional trail that offers high recreational value, which is defined as being:

- Visually appealing (i.e., provide scenic values) by taking advantage of scenic areas where encountered
- Contiguous, with limited interruptions and impediments to travel
- Of an acceptable grade suitable for all levels of ability
- Safe to use for a family or those with limited skills

By creating this connection between the two trails, the overall recreational value of the SWRT will be considerably enhanced to better serve residents of the area by creating a loop system and would support the desired outcomes of the Thrive MSP 2040 vision.



SOURCE: METROPOLITAN COUNCIL THRIVE MSP 2040

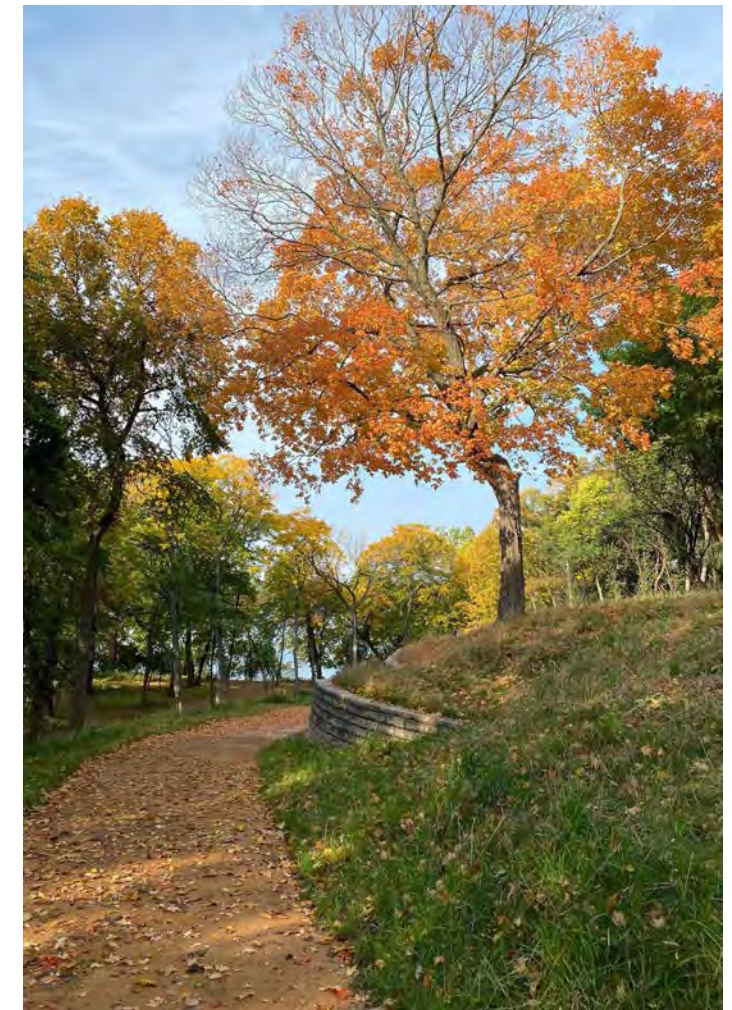
Carver County 2040 Plan

The SWRT meets the vision, values and goals as identified in the Carver County 2040 Parks, Open Space & Trails Plan, as follows:

- Fostering the health and well-being of Carver County, its residents and businesses by providing a balanced network of parks, recreational lands, and conserved open space sufficient to meet present and future needs
- Preserving the geographical characteristics and environmental/high value natural resource areas for historic, cultural, and educational purposes
- Providing areas of diverse natural resources as settings for outdoor recreational activities consistent with regional standards
- Preserving cultural resources for their intrinsic and historical values
- Providing residents with facilities to support a variety of enjoyable recreational activities located in a physically attractive setting
- Ensuring that recreational opportunities are affordable and accessible (by various modes of transportation) to all citizens.
- Fostering a fully integrated and seamless system of regional, local, state, and federal parks, trails, and conservation lands

VISION STATEMENT

"Where the future embraces the past in keeping Carver County a great place to live, work, and play for a lifetime."



Community Trail Values & Demands

The community value statement defines the benefits that the regional trail would bring to a regional constituency relative to any potential impacts – ranging from safety and crime to property values and loss of privacy. In this context, regional constituency refers to those residing in or traveling to the area for recreational pursuits.

Taken as a whole, the community value statement defines whether or not the perceived benefits of the trail outweigh perceived impacts to justify its development. The following summarizes these findings.

COMMUNITY VALUES FROM TRAILS

VARIABLE	DISCUSSION
DEMAND AND USE OF TRAILS	<p>From a regional perspective, trails are the highest ranked recreational activity. Survey results conclude:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiking and walking rank the #1 activity for regional park and trail users followed by bicycling, then jogging and running, indicating trails as the highest demand for recreation. A high percentage of regional park and trail users have used the park and trail previously with Carver County noted as having more frequent usage. Carver County users surveyed indicated little to no concerns regarding safety on trails. Summer 2019 visitors to the Regional Park & Trail System included an estimated 12,000 scooter-riders and 387,000 cyclists. The regional system includes almost 400 miles of trails, with annual trail use reaching over 15 million visits. Annual use estimates for Carver County between 2015 and 2019 went from approximately 690,000 to 790,000 <p>SOURCE: METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REGIONAL PARKS SYSTEM VISITOR STUDY, NOVEMBER 2016 AND METROPOLITAN COUNCIL – RESEARCH ON THE TWIN CITIES REGIONAL PARKS & TRAILS 2020.</p>
LONGER-TERM TRENDS	<p>A ten-year forecast of Minnesota adult outdoor recreation participation was completed by the MNDNR in 2004. With respect to trails, annually participation in walking and hiking outdoors is projected to remain very stable and highest among all outdoor recreational activities. Based on the study, the current 54% rate of actual participation is expected to remain at about that same level out to 2014, the end of the forecast. This is substantially higher than any other outdoor recreational pursuit listed in the study.</p>

CARVER COUNTY 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - GOAL POST 3

To provide residents with a high quality and interconnected trail and bikeway system for recreation, fitness, and transportation and as a means to tie parks and open spaces together with local communities.

VARIABLE	DISCUSSION
IMPACT OF TRAILS ON ADJACENT PROPERTIES	<p>The following summarizes the results of a survey related to a new trail retrofitted into an area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage – 75% of adjacent property owners use the trail (many of which were against the trail being developed). Problems – over 95% of the adjacent property owners reported no problems with the trail (such as loitering, litter, and trespassing). Economic impacts – vast majority reported that they believed that the trail would have no negative impact on their property values, with many believing that it could even increase values. Values – 75% say living near the trail offers distinct advantages, such as ease of access, convenience, exercise, and so forth. <p>SOURCE: LAKE WOBEGON REGIONAL TRAIL, STEARNS COUNTY.</p>
POLICING AND CRIME	<p>Review of policing issues associated with trails within Washington and Ramsey County yields the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incidents of crime associated with trails is so low that local police do not keep track of it separately. The contention that trail users routinely commit crimes to adjacent properties is not supported by crime statistics and evidence. Biggest area of concern with crime is at parking lots, where occasionally theft from the cars of trail users occurs (Note: Theft from cars in parking lots is not unique to trails, but occurs at parks, shopping centers, and other areas where the opportunity for a quick getaway exists). <p>SOURCE: WASHINGTON AND RAMSEY COUNTY SHERIFFS DEPARTMENT.</p>
SAFETY OF DEVELOPED TRAILS	<p>Discussions with local cities that have retrofitted trails into similar settings yields the following with respect to safety for the trail user:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual and perceived pedestrian safety is improved when off-street trails are added along busy roads simply because people are no longer walking along the shoulder of the road where traffic speeds can be up to 55 MPH and shoulder widths are often very narrow. The incidence of conflict between pedestrians and vehicles at driveway crossings has not been found to be a major issue, with few reported occurrences of accidents (Note, however, that both the driver and the trail user have a responsibility to watch out for each other similar to any crosswalk or sidewalk system common in many cities). Adhering to accepted design standards and practices for trails, including driveway crossings, is important to maintaining a safe pedestrian environment.



Regional Population Trends

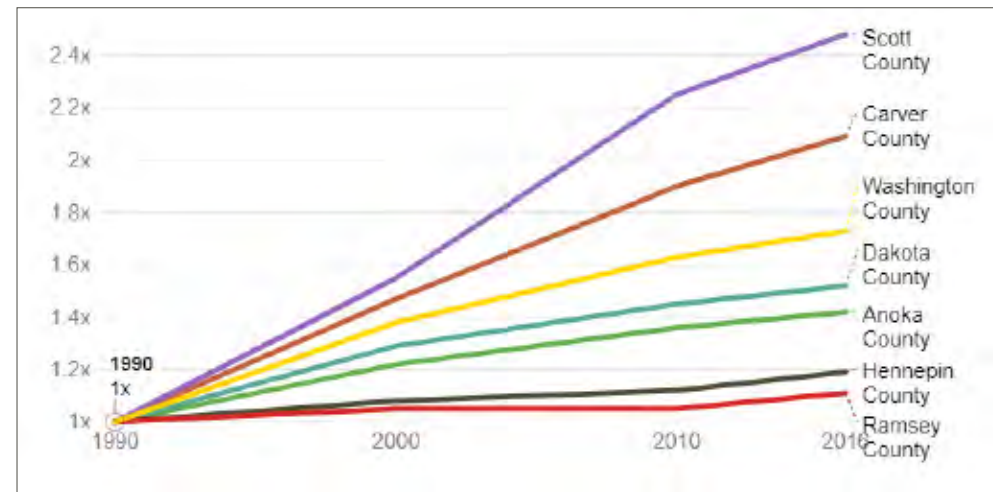
One of the more important trends affecting the region is that the population in the metropolitan area is expected to continue to grow substantially over the next 20 years.

The Carver County 2010 Census showed a population of 91,042 which was an approximate 29.7% increase in population since 2000.

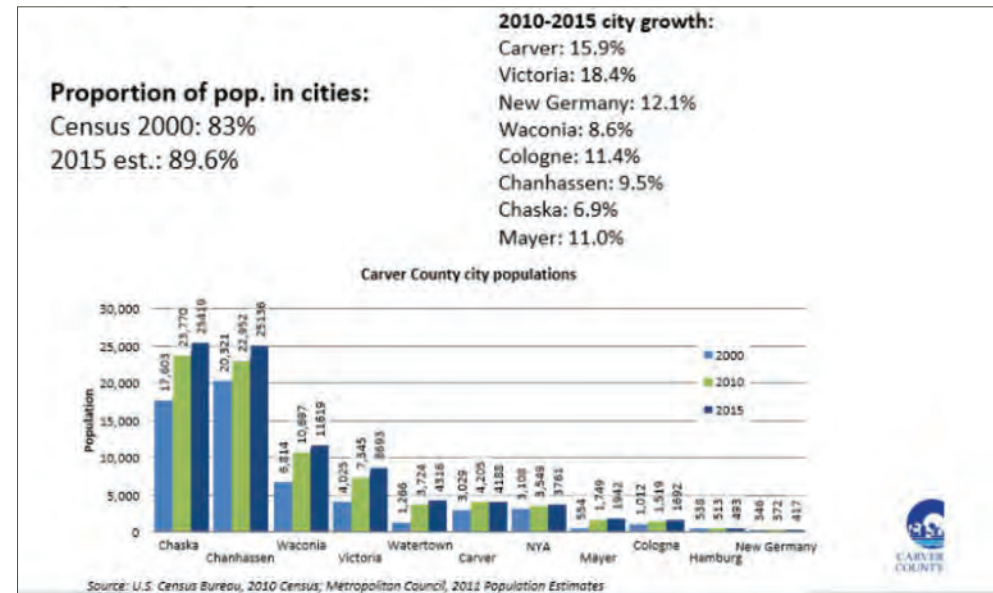
Carver County reached over 100,000 in 2016 and, while noted as one of the smallest in the seven-county metro region, ranked as the second greatest for growth since 1990.

SOUTHWESTERN COUNTY GROWTH RATES

(SOURCE: METROPOLITAN COUNCIL, U.S. CENSUS)



POPULATION BREAKDOWN BY CITIES IN CARVER COUNTY



Carver County Demographics /Forecasts

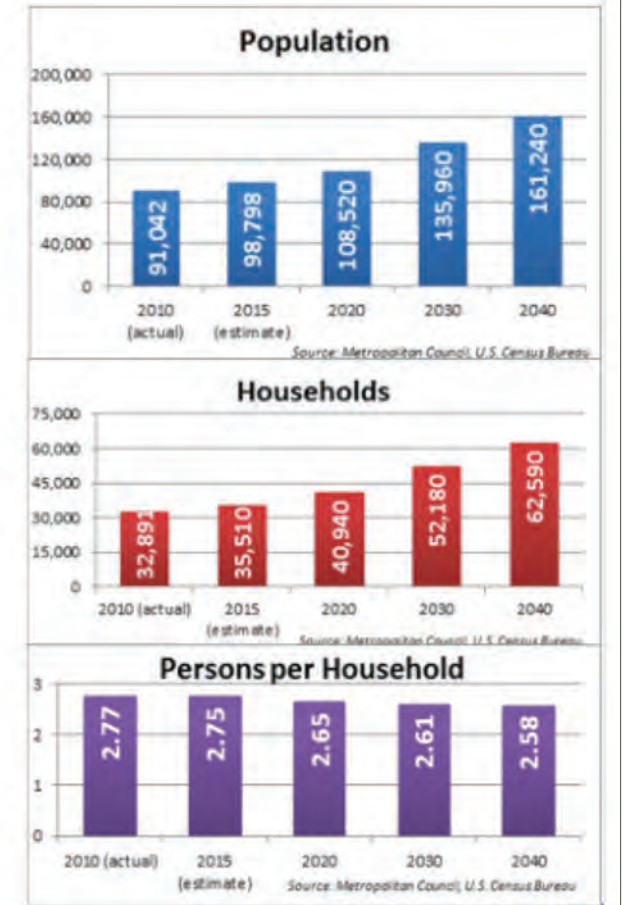
Population forecasts produced by the Metropolitan Council anticipate over 160,000 individuals living in the county by 2040, and the following table indicates.

CARVER COUNTY 2040 FORECASTS: POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD

	2040	% Change 2010 - 2040
Population	161,240	71.1%
Households	62,590	90.3%
Persons per Household	2.58	-6.9%

Carver County will experience the highest population and household growth rate in the Metro Region into 2040.

Forecasts anticipate household growth will outpace population growth, resulting in fewer people living together. This trend is influenced by the Baby Boomer population becoming empty nesters and Millennials choosing to delay family creation.



Public Services Division

Source: Metropolitan Council, U.S. Census Bureau



Demographic changes from the 2000 to 2010 census indicate that minority percentages have increased during the 10-year span for some populations. African American races went from 0.59% of the population to 1.23%; Hispanic/Latino races went from 2.55% to 3.86% and Asian went from 1.56% to 2.72% showing a general increase in diversity. 2014 was the first year that the White population fell below 90%.

Undoubtedly, this population growth trend will increase pressure for developing regional trails to service an expanding population with a wide range of outdoor recreation pursuits, transportation needs and service expectations.

Trails for walking, biking and hiking remain primary sought-out recreational activities that attract users to the regional system and contribute to overall health. Their popularity is also related to their scenic quality, overall condition and availability/accessibility. The SWRT will "connect people to the outdoors" by providing vital connections between the LMRT and MRBRT through numerous communities and populations.

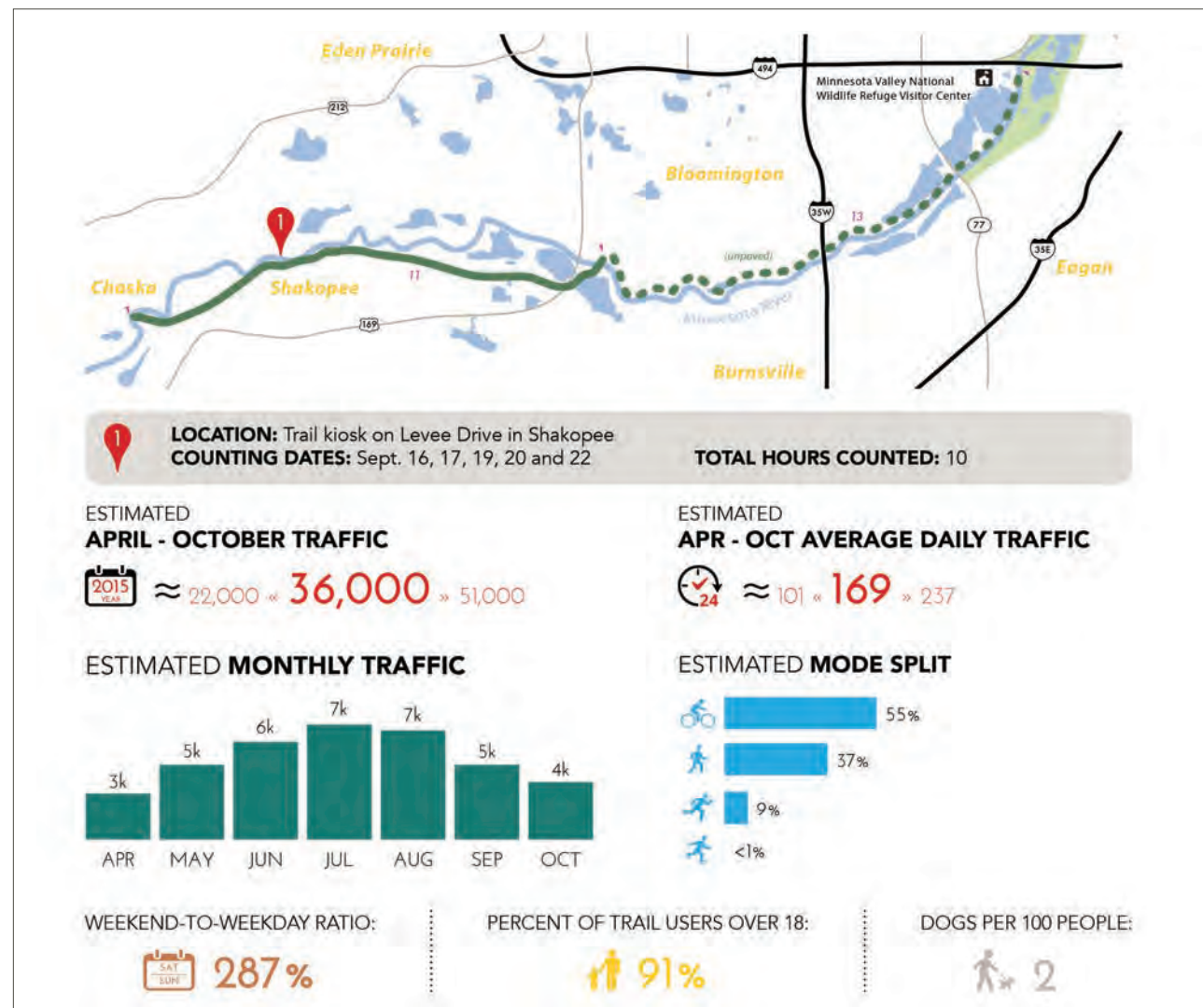
Trail Use Demands

The SWRT currently connects with the MRBRT that runs between Hopkins and Carver, connecting several communities in the southwestern portion of the metro region. The temporary closure of a primary section of the MRBRT between Eden Prairie and Chaska likely affected the trails use over the past six years with many finding alternative routes to avoid the trail detours though the Three Rivers Park District estimates it receives about 250,000 annual visits. The community input gathered during the engagement process indicated a strong demand for correcting the damaged trail segment in order to fully reopen the MRBRT, as this was a highly desirable route, which has just recently been reopened.

The Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail (LMRT) is a popular 27-mile trail that connects numerous communities from Hopkins to Victoria with scenic settings and numerous destinations. Three Rivers Park District estimated 471,000 annual visits to the LMRT.

The following information shows a survey related to trail use on the Minnesota Valley State Trail, taken from the levee trail in Chaska that connects to the MRBRT. The Minnesota Valley State Trail has both paved and unpaved sections with seasonal flooding issues, yet still had considerable user counts showing the draw of trails in this region which will likely increase with the completion of the SWRT that will allow for expanded trail route options.

MAP OF COUNTING LOCATIONS



SOURCE: 2015 STATE TRAIL USER COUNT BY THE PARKS & TRAILS COUNCIL OF MINNESOTA

Trail Accessibility

Beyond numerous local neighborhood connections by way of local trails and walks, the SWRT could be accessed from varying points in Victoria and Chaska. This includes downtown Victoria locations where parking can be found allowing for direct access to the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail (LMRT) and at Kirke-Lachen Park, which has a few parking stalls and is connected directly to the LMRT just to the east of Carl Krey Lake. Lakeside Estates Park is anticipated to be connected directly to the SWRT and has an off-street parking lot.

The Chaska Clover Ridge neighborhood has some on-street parking available with off-street parking at the Chaska Community Park and Clover Ridge Elementary School that are connected to the SWRT along existing walks and trails. Veterans Park and Firemen's Park in Chaska provide more convenient access to the SWRT with the availability of parking, restrooms and water.

Downtown Chaska has numerous locations with parking available to access the MRBRT, with a separate trailhead parking lot with kiosk and trail access at Engler Blvd and Old Audubon Road. A proposed public library would provide direct connection the MRBRT and would include parking, bike fix-it station, kiosk, and public restrooms.

A gravel parking area with kiosk is currently located adjacent to the MRBRT at Bluff Creek Drive. Additional access points to the MRBRT include the Richard T. Anderson Conservation area which has an improved parking facility, and both

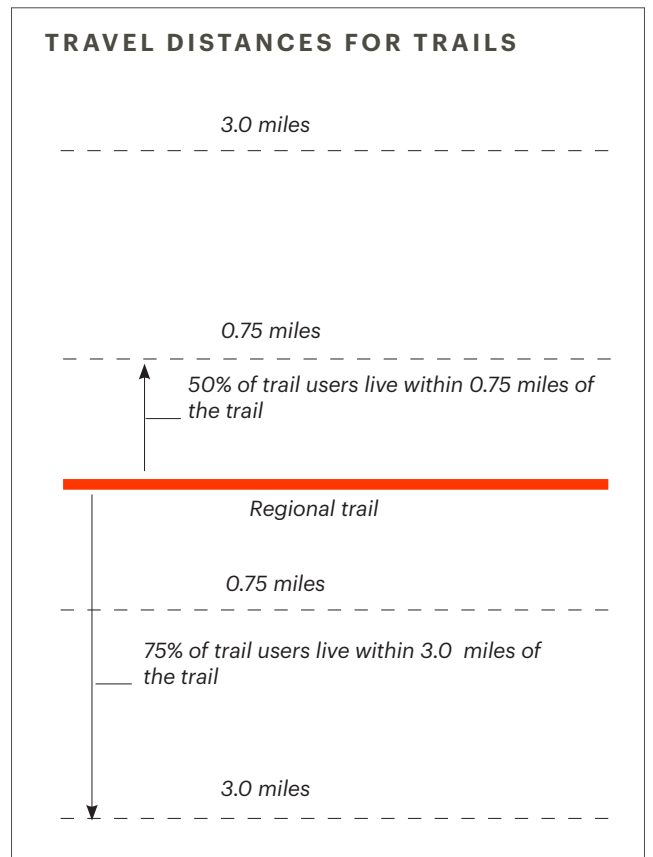
Riley Lake Park and Miller Park in Eden Prairie have parking with access to portable restrooms and water. There may be additional opportunities to develop new SWRT trailheads on the north side of Chaska along Creek Drive within the conservation corridor through land acquisitions with willing sellers.

The broad distribution of access points that connect to the LMRT, SWRT and MRBRT provide many alternatives for trail access if users were driving from their homes to access the trail, while many local residents would have more immediate connections by means of local trails and walks.

Research by the Metropolitan Council indicates that the majority of trail users live within three miles of the trail, as the graphic illustrates.

As defined by the master plan, the regional trail is aligned to accommodate a wide-range of user groups with varying abilities and offers access to many diverse populations. With reasonable grades throughout, there is ample opportunity for trail visitors of all abilities to find a place to recreate.

Under current policy, Carver County Parks will not charge a fee for use of the trail, making it affordable to all populations.



Public Engagement Process

INITIAL PLANNING PROCESS

Making the connection between the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail (MRBRT) and the Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail (LMRT) has been considered to be desirable by the cities of Chaska and Victoria for many years. To ensure public access to the planning process, a number of opportunities for public input were provided in various locations as part of the varying phases of this project.

Engagement efforts conducted during previous planning studies for the SWRT included the following:

- Victoria Park Commission Meeting May 5, 2005
- Chaska Planning Commission May 11, 2005
- Victoria Planning Commission May 17, 2005
- Chaska City Council May 16th, 2005 – resolution adopted
- Carver County Park Commission June 8th, 2005
- Victoria City Council August 11, 2005
- Victoria City Council October 13th, 2005 – resolution adopted

Public comments and findings from these meetings were consistent with the regional trends and the community value statement previously defined in this section. With the approval of the resolutions in support of the trail connection, the cities of Chaska and Victoria formally adopted the proposed regional trail master plan.

The master plan was publicly reviewed approved and adopted by the Carver County Park Commission and Carver County Board of Commissioners in January and February of 2006.

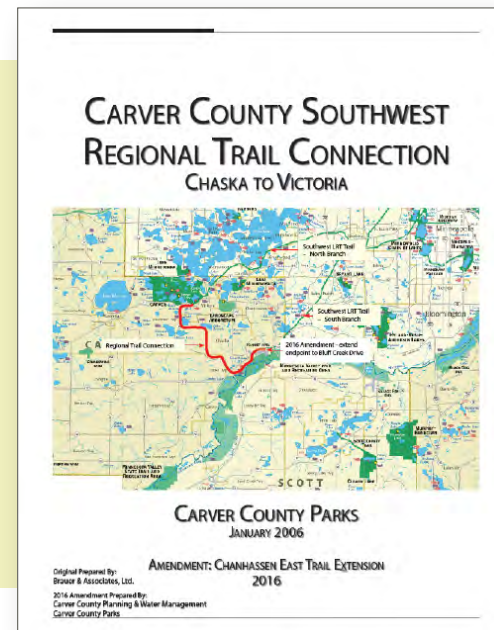
2016 AMENDMENT PLANNING PROCESS

The 2016 amendment was considered a minor adjustment and followed an administrative process because it added a trail segment located within a decommissioned railbed in Chanhassen that already operated as a trail at the time of the amendment.

A number of amendment reviews were completed prior to adoption by the County Board with a resolution of support obtained from the City of Chanhassen. Upon successful review by the Metropolitan Council, the Carver County Board adopted the amendment to the Southwest Regional Trail Master Plan.

The following details the public meeting process for the 2016 Amendment:

- Carver County Park Commission May 11, 2016
- Chanhassen Park Commission May 24, 2016
- Chanhassen City Council June 13, 2016 - resolution adopted
- Carver County Board June 21, 2016 - final approval



2018 - 2021 PLANNING PROCESS

The 2018-2021 planning project included a public awareness process for both the SWRT and the MRBRT.

The public awareness project was meant to inform the public about the upcoming land acquisitions in the rail corridor necessary for the MRBRT, reconstruction efforts of the MRBRT, an overview of the local and regional trail systems and access points, and illustration of the regional trail system to show trail connectivity for both recreational and transportation purpose to promote trail use.

The following are awareness and engagement efforts used as part of the 2018-2021 public awareness project, along with press releases of the events:

- **Engagement #1:** Advertised park engagement at Lake Susan Park in Chanhassen for two hours on Sunday, August 19th to catch weekend park users, such as those utilizing the lake, trails, playground, tennis courts, basketball court, and ballfield including the Liga Latina Baseball League scheduled for games during the visit. A language interpreter was included and boards had both English and Spanish languages. Additional initiatives were included at the event to attract more use (slackline).
- **Engagement #2:** Advertised park engagement at Fireman's Park in Chaska scheduled for two hours on Sunday, August 19th to catch weekend park users, which included a broad range of demographics related to the beach, playground, splash pad, curling club, restaurant and pub, lawn area, trails/boardwalk, and those just taking in the scenic setting. A language interpreter was included and boards had both English and Spanish languages. Additional initiatives were included to attract more use (log rolling).



Engagement #3: Attendance at the 2018 Downtown Chaska Block Party scheduled for several hours on Saturday, September 29th. A booth with games was set up to attract visitors to provide input while partaking in a fun activity with small prize items. The primary demographic was families with younger kids. The games and giveaways attracted visitors though overall attendance was lower due to cooler weather conditions.

Engagement #4: July 29, 2021 event at the Riverview Terrace Manufactured Home Community in Chaska. Carver County, in conjunction with Carver County Health and Human Services, held a targeted event on-site with food, activities and interaction to discuss the Southwest Regional Trail and Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail. Erika Rivera Kennedy, who works for Carver County Health and Human Services and strongly advocates for ongoing programming that contributes to the overall health of the community, helped to organize, promote and also attended this event.

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL TRAIL
 (place a dot on all that apply) / (colocar un punto en todas las que apliquen)

I have used this trail, or parts of this trail for: (He usado el sendero o parte de el por las siguientes razones)

Recreation / enjoyment Recreación / disfrute	Access to work or school Acceso al trabajo o escuela	Access to work/school (Bike) / shopping Acceso al trabajo-escuela
---	---	--

What are your reasons for not using the trail? (Cuales son las razones por no usar el sendero?)

Trail condition / trail not built La condición de del sendero /o no hay un sendero construido	NOT aware of trail route No sabia del sendero	Lack of access to trail Limitaciones de acceso del sendero
Physical limitation Limitaciones físicas	Lack of equipment Falta de equipo	Safety concerns / don't feel welcome Razones de seguridad o no sentirse bienvenido

Other:
Otras razones:

**What suggestions do you have to improve use on the trails and access to destinations?
Que sugerencias tiene para mejorar el acceso a los senderos y la llegada a los destinos?**

- CxL Code to map
- Way finding signs



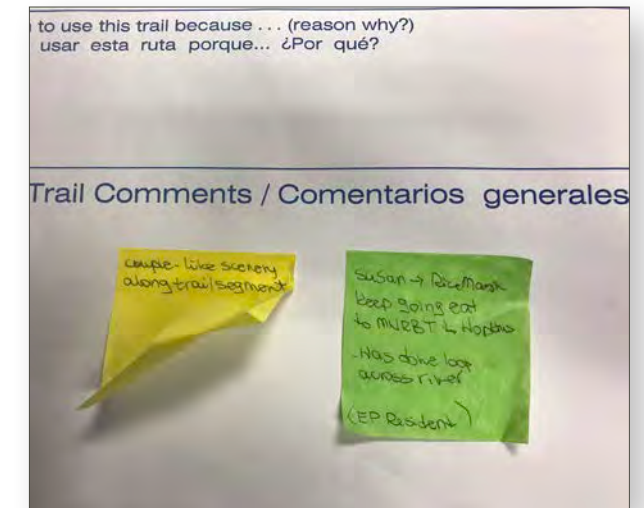
GENERAL FEEDBACK FROM THE 2018-2021

ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS INCLUDED:

- Many of those who provided feedback prior to 2020 indicated they had been anxious for the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail section that was damaged to be repaired so this will be open again. A Chaska council member indicated he received calls almost weekly with requests and updated information on the MRBRT reconstruction. He used the trail for both recreational use as well as transportation to work when it was open.
- Some desired a connection from Chaska to Victoria with all the new businesses and redevelopment in Victoria and some users specifically seek out the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail.
- Some youth noted they use the trail from Chaska to Carver quite often.
- The Jonathon trails were brought up numerous times as popular local routes, with noted concerns with safety and conditions.
- Some families desired better maps so they felt safer exploring trails without getting lost.
- Many familiar with the Chaska area tend to use the levee trail and asked about the previous bridge crossing by the Courthouse that has since been removed.
- The Minnesota River Valley Trail is used by scouting groups as well as regular trail users but the prior couple of years were virtually unusable due to high water conditions.
- It was noted that a safe North-South connection over the railroad tracks is needed on MN Hwy 41 / Chestnut Drive. Trails around McKnight Lake and Lake Jonathan are separated by the tracks with an informal railroad track crossing. McKnight Road had a bridge over the tracks.
- The Riverview Terrace event resulted in comments that many were not aware of the trail systems within the community. Other comments were made that the natural environment made the trails feel unsafe to them so they tended to use trails in more developed areas.

Public Influence

At a community values level, research indicates that a regional trail through the study area to connect the LMRT and MRBRT is justified and would be successful. Local adoption of the trail plan confirms that the local communities also see considerable value in the trail. By staying within public rights-of-way to the highest degree possible, the proposed trail alignment also poses the least disruption to private property interests while still fulfilling the goals of the project.



EXPECTED USE

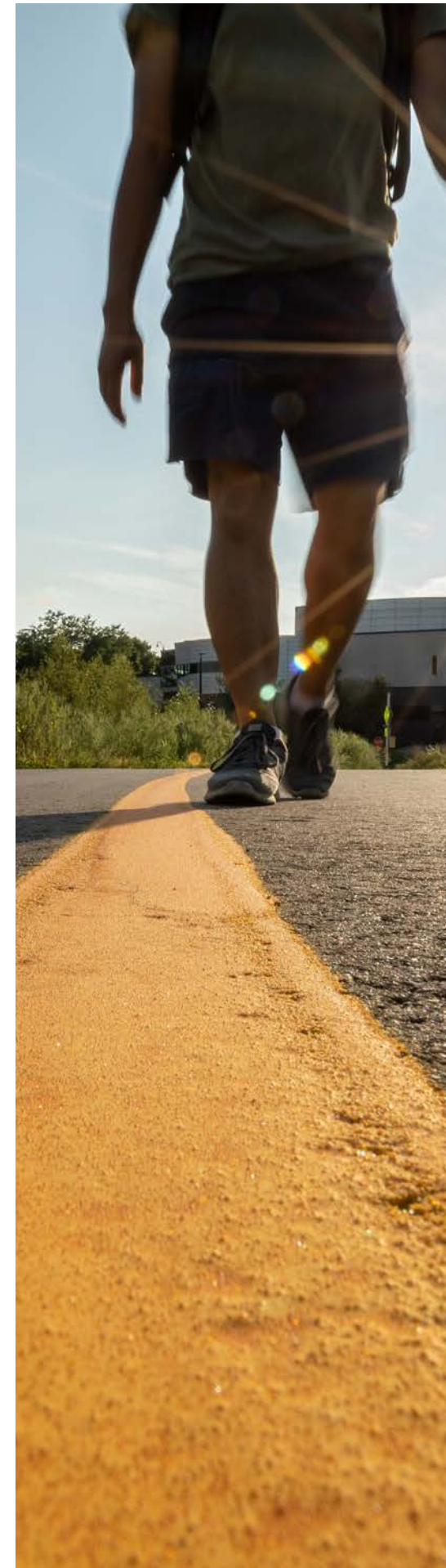
The completion of the SWRT would likely be heavily used as it connects two popular regional trails and other local trail routes. The first Southwest Regional Trail user count completed in 2014 estimated 64,200 users on the completed sections of the trail.

Annual trail counts published by the Metropolitan Council showed use on the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail consistently increased from 109,000 users in 2012 to 146,500 users in 2014 with the Three Rivers Park District estimating it currently receives about 250,000 annual visits.



Completion of the amended SWRT segments will likely result in increased use of the trails with the improved access and connectivity to other local and regional trail routes, along with expanded destination areas.

Recent completion of the trail segments of the MRBRT that were previously closed due to the washouts have been highly anticipated by existing trail users. The improved trail MRBRT segments and trail expansion in this area that includes a new pedestrian bridge over Highway 101 and connections to the Hwy 101 and County Road 61 trails have also increased awareness in the trail system that will attract new trail users. Upon completion of these projects in the fall of 2021 trail users started to return, but this will likely see great increases starting in the spring of 2022.



Section III : Trail Master Plan

Overview

The master plan for this regional trail connection consists of a combination of existing local trails and new trail alignments to be designated as the Southwest Regional Trail (SWRT) that will link the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail (MRBRT) and the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail (LMRT).

Under the master plan, the local existing trails will be reclassified as regional trails to ensure consistency in development standards, operations, and maintenance. The overall length of the interconnecting trail is approximately 8.35 miles, of which approximately 5.6 miles will be new trail and the remaining will follow existing trail alignments.

Trail Design Characteristics

Consistent with regional trail design standards, the trail will be a minimum 10-foot wide and asphalt surfaced to accommodate walkers, bicyclists, inline skaters, and wheelchairs. It will not accommodate any unauthorized motorized uses with the exception of the use of E-bikes (electric assisted bicycles) and scooters. The existing local trails that are currently 8-foot wide will be upgraded over time to be consistent with the 10-foot regional design standard. For trail segments that experience significant use (100 uses per hour or a volume greater than 2,000 individuals per day), a 12 to 14 feet width is encouraged with marked center lanes. In some cases, such as in the Clover Ridge development, there are wide existing concrete walks along the proposed SWRT route that may likely remain concrete in keeping with the more urban design standards. While this is not considered to be a preferable material for a regional trail, it may help slow trail users down in a location where there may be more pedestrians present, and thereby increasing safety.

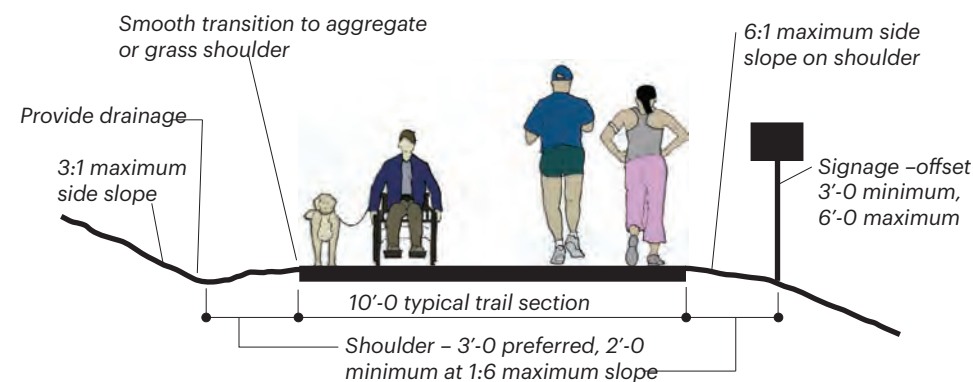
Additional considerations include:

- Utilize cautionary signage as necessary
- Maintain trails in good condition to avoid potential safety hazards
- Provide a 2-foot width graded shoulder at a max 6:1 slope as a reaction zone for users
- Signage, poles, trees, mailboxes or other obstructions should be a minimum 3- feet from the edge of the trail, however trail signage should not be further than 6 feet from the edge of the trail
- Consider pedestrian scale lighting for user safety and security, especially at road intersections

The following graphics highlight the typical trail characteristics and design standards.

TYPICAL TRAIL CROSS-SECTION

Anticipated trail grades: Given the character of the landscape in this part of Carver County, trail grades are expected to average 5% or less, with an occasional segment being slightly steeper at 6% to 7%. Overall, the trail is expected to be a very "accessible" trail.



Note: Existing local trails that are used as part of the regional trail will be upgraded over time from 8'-0" to 10'-0" wide minimum.



Minimizing Disruption to Natural Ecological Systems

Aligning the trail to minimize disruption to natural systems is also a major objective of the regional trail master plan. Along the trail corridor, two primary developmental situations are encountered, each of which require slightly different approaches to trail development. In either case, the objectives regarding natural systems include:

- 1) Minimize disruption to the ecological and scenic qualities of natural vegetation within the corridor.
- 2) Manage stormwater using natural infiltration techniques. The most advantageous way to accomplish this is being flexible on the location of the trail within the right-of-way to respond to existing conditions.



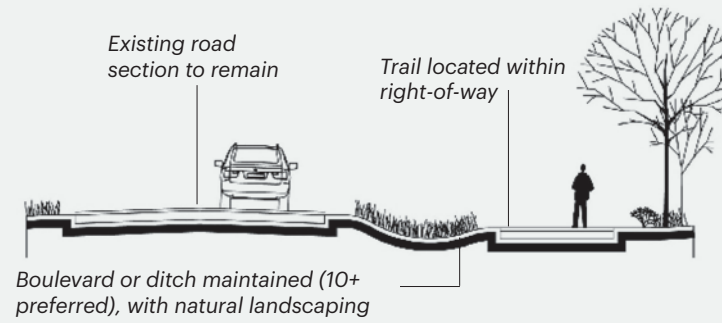
Relative Trail Locations

The varying width and character of the public rights-of-ways and trail easements encountered along the trail corridor requires some flexibility in the trail locations and design. The following cross-sections highlight varying trail designs based on right-of-way and trail easement conditions.

TRAIL LOCATION IN RIGHTS-OF-WAYS AND TRAIL EASEMENTS

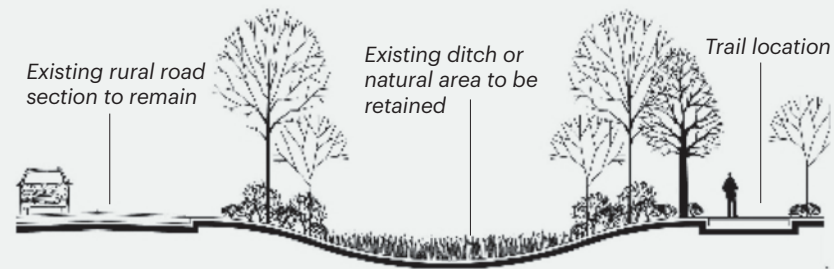
TRAIL LOCATION IN ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY WITH LIMITED WIDTH

Where right-of way width is limited, the boulevard between the trail and road will also be limited, with 10'-0" being the preferred minimum. Natural landscaping would be used in ditches and likely maintained turf in boulevards.



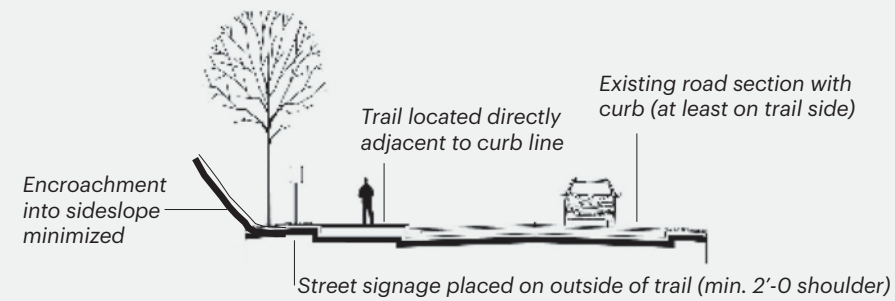
TRAIL LOCATION IN ROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY WITH GREATER WIDTH

Where right-of way width is ample, the distance between the trail and road will be maximized to create a sense of separation from vehicular traffic. Natural landscaping would be common in these areas.



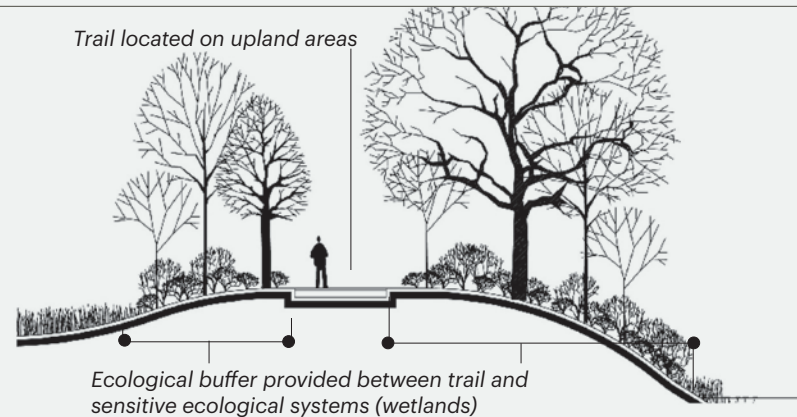
TRAIL LOCATION DIRECTLY ADJACENT TO ROADWAY

Where space is very limited due to right-of-way width, topography, or vegetation, the trail may be placed along a curb line to provide a vertical separation between it and the roadway.



TRAIL LOCATED IN TRAIL EASEMENT THROUGH NATURAL AREA

In areas where the trail is within an easement through a natural area, ecological buffers will be provided on each side of the trail to minimize impacts to sensitive ecological systems. The use of boardwalks would be used in wet areas.



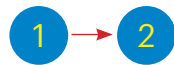
Overview of Master Plan Trail Segment 1 of 4

The accompanying photos and the *Southwest Regional Trail Master Plan Segment Maps 1 - 4* provide additional information on the anticipated location of the trail in rights-of-way or trail easements. Refer to the Master Plan for specified trail segments.

Victoria LMRT to Marsh Lake Road

The western end of the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail (LMRT) is a 10 foot wide bituminous trail that follows an old railroad corridor and currently terminates in Kirke-Lachen Park, a small Victoria neighborhood park with parallel parking provided along 81st St.

Currently there is a section of gravel trail from Heron Lane along the old railbed that connects to the Kelzer Pond trails. The SWRT master plan illustrates an option for the LMRT to continue along the railbed to the west side of Carl Krey Lake, though ultimately it could continue even further west to connect to Waconia and Lake Waconia Regional Park. Additional land acquisitions or easements would likely be needed in order to extend the LMRT further west.



The SWRT begins west of Carl Krey Lake where it connects to the proposed extension of the LMRT. The previous master plan identified the SWRT connecting to the LMRT on the east side of Carl Krey Lake through a proposed trail corridor within the newer housing development and along Carl Krey Lake on an old field road. This planned trail route was not entirely secured through the planned development. The trail gap necessary to make this connection likely requires significant lengths of boardwalk and areas with steep grades, resulting in high construction costs. However, this would still be an optional route if the LMRT does not extend to the west side of Carl Krey Lake. There may also be opportunities for some partial shared funding by the watershed district for portions of the trail through the wetland within an existing utility corridor.

The proposed SWRT includes an approximate 600 foot segment of trail that may include boardwalk as

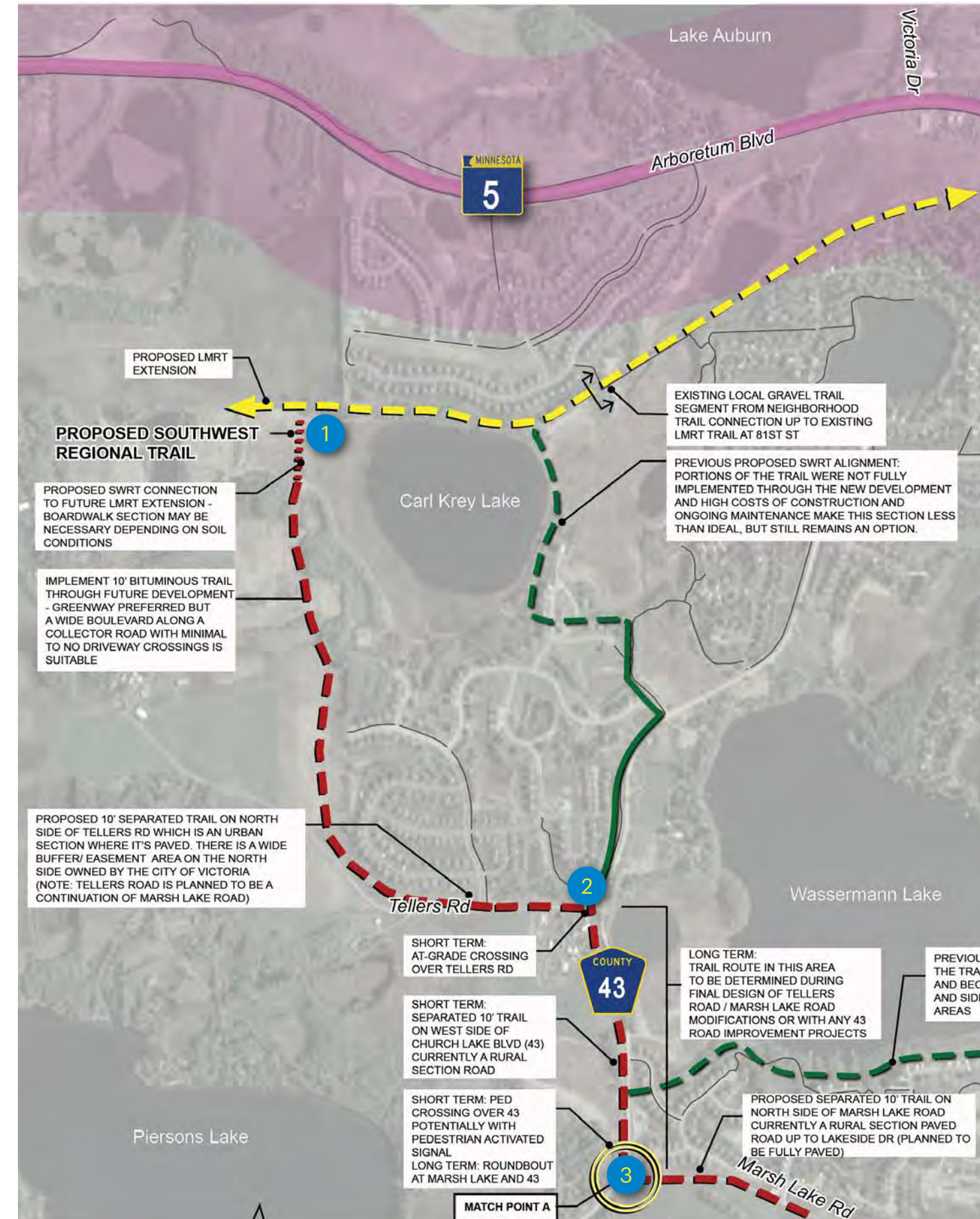
necessary. Ten foot wide bituminous trails would be constructed in uplands and a 12 foot wide boardwalk in wet areas. A suitable trail corridor is proposed to be secured through a future development plan between the LMRT and Tellers Road, preferably within a greenway corridor, though a 10 foot trail with a 5 foot minimum boulevard would be a suitable option.

The trail would run parallel to Tellers Road on the north side within the existing right of way (ROW) up to the Church Lake Blvd / County Road 43 intersection. There is additional land north of the existing Tellers Road ROW currently owned by the City of Victoria which provides a significant buffer between the residential homes and Tellers Road.

An at-grade pedestrian crossing is proposed across Tellers Road in the short term with a 10 foot wide separated trail continuing south along the west side of County Road 43. There is limited right of way in this segment with constraints on either side of County Road 43 that include lake, wetlands and steep embankments. The trail corridor in this location may be best developed as part of a future road improvement project that may include Tellers Road becoming an extension of Marsh Lake Road.

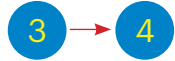


Previous plans indicated a potential grade-separated crossing beneath County Road 43 with the trail continuing along the southern edge of Wasserman Lake, which was not implemented. Current plans show an at-grade crossing at the intersection of County Road 43 and Marsh Lake Road as an acceptable approach if it includes measures for a safe pedestrian crossing due to the high speed traffic posted at 50 mph and the location of the intersection on a curve. This intersection may include a future roundabout for a safer crossing.



Overview of Master Plan Trail Segment 2 of 4

Marsh Lake Road to Engler Blvd



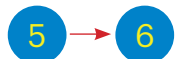
A separated trail is proposed on the north side of Marsh Lake Road from County Road 43 to Victoria Drive due to the loss of the trail option on the south side of Wasserman Lake.

Currently Marsh Lake Road is paved from County Road 43 to just beyond the Lakeside Drive intersection, which is part of a newer residential development. It then transitions back to a rural aggregate surfaced road up to Victoria Drive. It is recommended that the trail segment be implemented at the time that Marsh Lake Road is improved to a paved roadway with a trail connection to the existing Lakeside Estates Park.

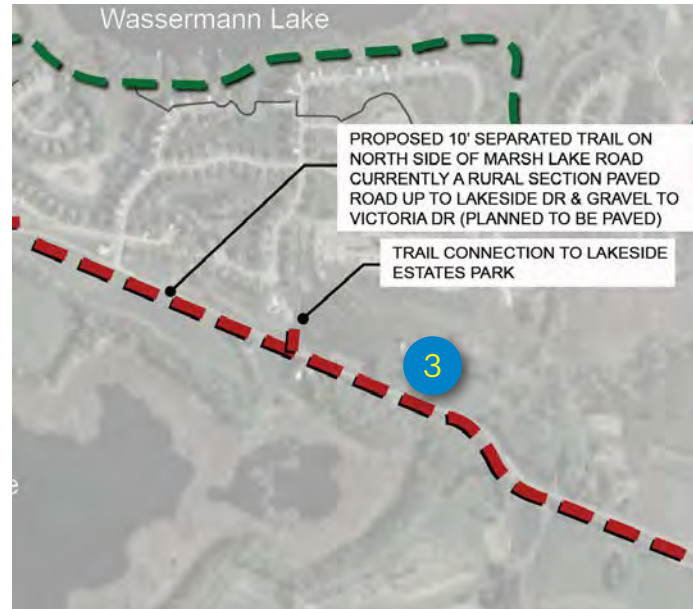
There is a planned future roundabout to be installed at the intersection of Victoria Drive and Marsh Lake Road/ Pioneer Trail that may include an option for a grade separated pedestrian underpass.



The trail would continue along the north side of Pioneer Trail to connect to the existing trail at Shady Oak Drive. There is an existing crosswalk at the intersection of Pioneer Trail and Holstein Road to access Clover Ridge Drive to the south.



There is an existing 10 foot wide bituminous trail on the western side of Clover Ridge Drive adjacent to the back of the curb. The SWRT continues south to an existing at-grade railroad track crossing. From this point a proposed trail connection of approximately 750 feet is needed to close an existing trail gap through existing natural open space.

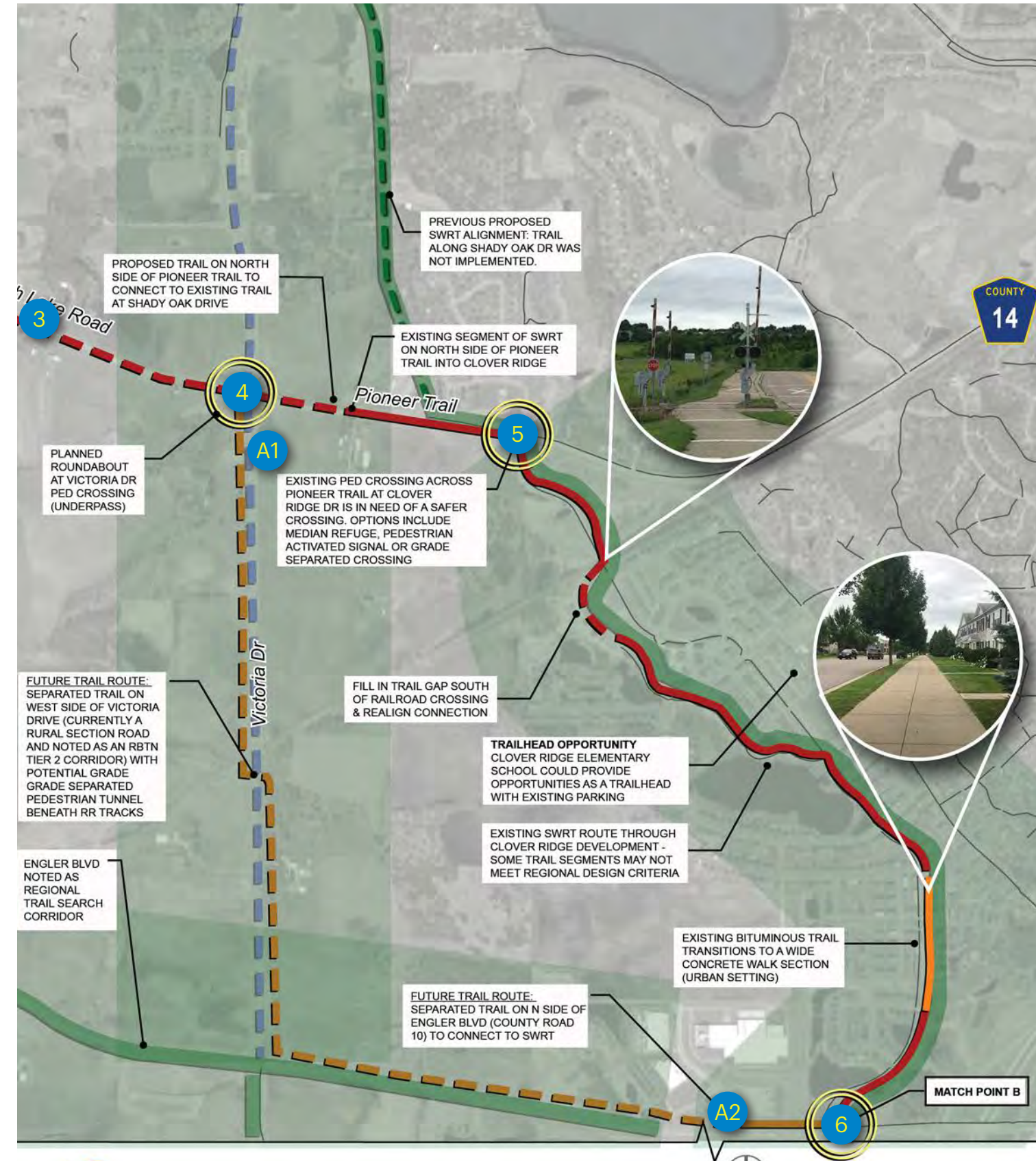


The existing 8 foot bituminous trail would be improved to 10 feet wide, which currently winds along natural open spaces, wetlands and public park spaces, including stopping points and overlooks. Crosswalks are necessary at street crossings with wayfinding signage to be installed to guide trail users. There is opportunity to use the Clover Ridge Elementary as a trailhead with existing parking and connection to the SWRT.

At the intersection of Clover Ridge Drive and Schoolmaster Drive the bituminous trail transitions into a 10 foot wide concrete path in a more urban type of setting for approximately 1,000 feet before going back to a bituminous trail that connects to Engler Drive with an existing crossing. It is recommended that this be reconstructed as bituminous trail but may remain as concrete.

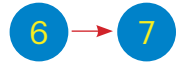


As a local trail consideration, a trail alignment is shown from Marsh Lake Road south along Victoria Drive with a grade separated pedestrian crossing beneath Victoria Drive and the railroad tracks as feasible. The trail would then follow Engler Blvd to connect to existing trail to create a loop.

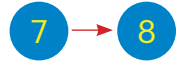


Overview of Master Plan Trail Segment 3 of 4

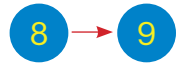
Engler Blvd to County Road 61



There is an existing pedestrian crossing at Engler Blvd and Chaska Creek Way. Improvements for safer pedestrian crossings at this intersection, such as a median refuge, are recommended. There are 10 foot wide bituminous trails with 8 foot boulevards on both sides of Chaska Creek Way until it terminates, with future trail development to occur as construction continues in this area. The SWRT would cross Chaska Creek Way at a crosswalk to access Creek Road.



Creek Road extends east to Savanna Way which will be developed as a primary collector road from Engler Blvd south to Big Woods Boulevard and eventually further south to Carver. A roundabout will be developed at Savanna Way and Creek Road.



East of Savanna Way, Creek Road would be turned back to the City of Chaska from the County. The City would dedicate or permit trail development within the ROW at no cost to the County.

This section of Creek Road is surrounded by dense wooded areas and hilly terrain, offering a very scenic setting on both sides of the road and access to the creek. Creek Road may either become a one-way vehicular road with the SWRT running parallel to the road or it may be completely abandoned, except for local residential access, to become a trail corridor within a conservation area.

There may be potential opportunities for land acquisitions within this corridor if the lands are of benefit for natural resource improvement or protection, such as bank stabilization. These lands would also optimally serve as trailheads with parking, access to



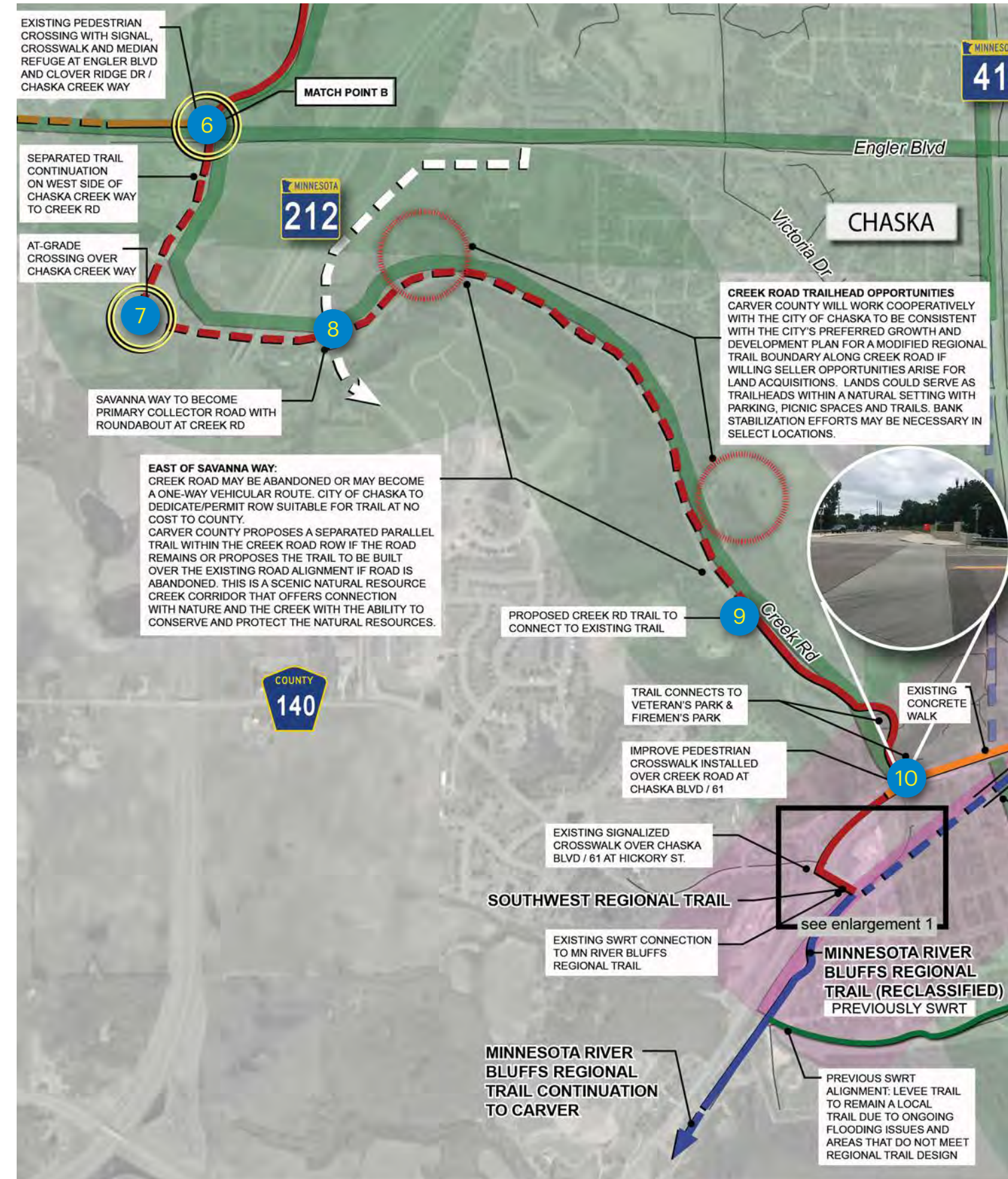
PHOTO: FIREMENS PARK

the SWRT, picnic spaces and related amenities. Land acquisitions would only proceed with willing sellers, which may necessitate a boundary change in the future.



The existing trail along Creek Road connects into the Veterans Park and Firemen's Park trail systems where parking lots and an array of recreational amenities are located. Firemen's Park is a prime destination containing a swimming beach, splash pad, community building, playground, boardwalks and trails, and the Chaska Event Center / Curling Center with a pub restaurant.

There are existing pedestrian ramps and a concrete walk over Creek Road at County Road 61, however a striped crosswalk would be more noticeable and improve the safety of pedestrians at this crossing since this intersection is not currently signalized.



Overview of Master Plan Trail Segment 3 of 4 (cont.)

Portions of this segment of trail were previously designated as the *Southwest Regional Trail Master Plan* and are now designated as part of the *Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail*. Refer to the Master Plan for specified trail segments.

County Road 61 to N Hickory St



An existing trail continues west along the north side of County Road 61 to an existing crosswalk with signal at the intersection with Big Woods Drive / North Hickory Street, which is signalized. An existing trail extends down to the location where the SWRT would connect to the MRBRT by the Chaska Creek, previously identified as the SWRT.

N Hickory St to N Pine St



As shown on the enlargement map, the Southwest Regional Trail terminates at N Hickory St just beyond the Chaska Creek where it intersects an existing trail at a crosswalk location. The remaining trails previously designated as the SWRT are now designated as the MRBRT with segment numbers shown in an alternate color.

Existing trails extend southwest to connect to the City of Carver and the west end of the levee trail. The levee trail would remain a local trail as it does not meet regional trail design standards in some locations and has areas with ongoing flooding issues that would take the trail out of use during times of high water elevations.

Starting at the crosswalk at N Hickory St and going northeast, a new 10 foot wide bituminous trail would be constructed within an existing trail corridor, once the railroad corridor, and is proposed as a long-term preferred route for the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail through downtown Chaska. This segment of trail will require right of way acquisition of the former railroad corridor currently owned by the Carver County Regional Rail Authority. This new segment of trail would be designated as a Tier 1 RBTN Alignment on the Metropolitan Council's Regional Bicycle Transportation Network.

An existing abandoned section of a railroad bridge that remains over a low drainage area would be reconstructed as a pedestrian bridge or replaced with a large culvert beneath the trail to allow for continued drainage in this area. The bituminous trail will continue to an existing concrete sidewalk adjacent to public parking stalls at W 5th St. This would include connection to new walks to be built as part of the new public library on N Pine St. The new library is noted to serve as a trailhead with both on-street and underground parking, public restrooms, and an exterior bike fix-it station. There are existing pedestrian crossings at the W 5th St and N Pine St intersection.

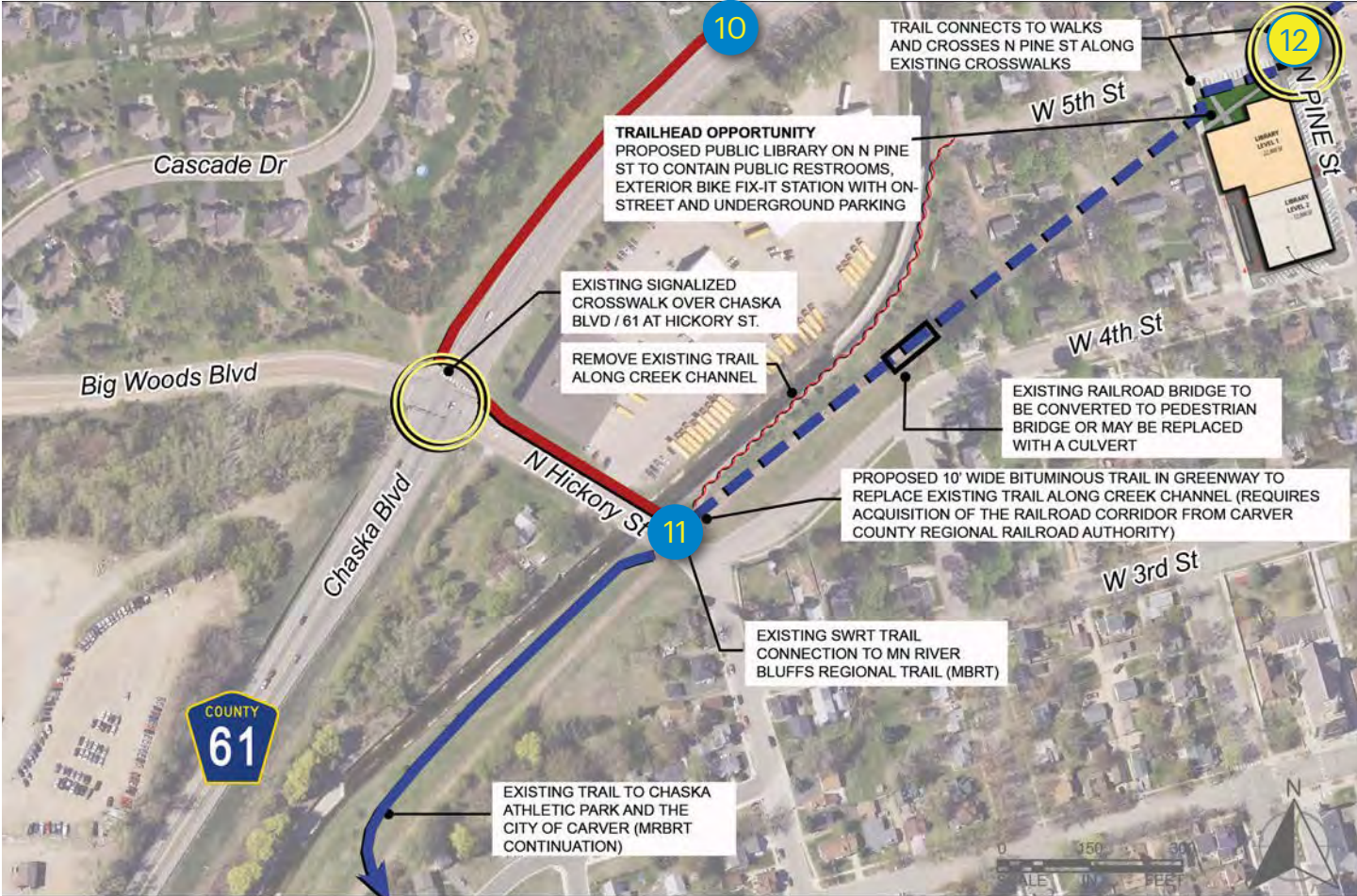
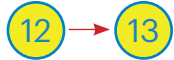


PHOTO: ABANDONED RAILROAD BRIDGE

Overview of Master Plan Trail Segment 3 of 4 (cont.)

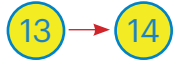
These segments of trail were previously designated as the *Southwest Regional Trail Master Plan* and are now designated as part of the *Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail*. Refer to the Master Plan for specified trail segments.

N Pine St to Engler Blvd



Once across N Pine St, a bituminous trail would continue within the greenway corridor adjacent to The Granary Event Center - Chaska Mill, a historic building. The trail through this section of downtown Chaska provides access to numerous government buildings, restaurants and shopping opportunities.

The greenway trail would enter into a grade separated crossing beneath CSAH 41 / N Chestnut St for continuous pedestrian movement and improved pedestrian safety at this major vehicular route.



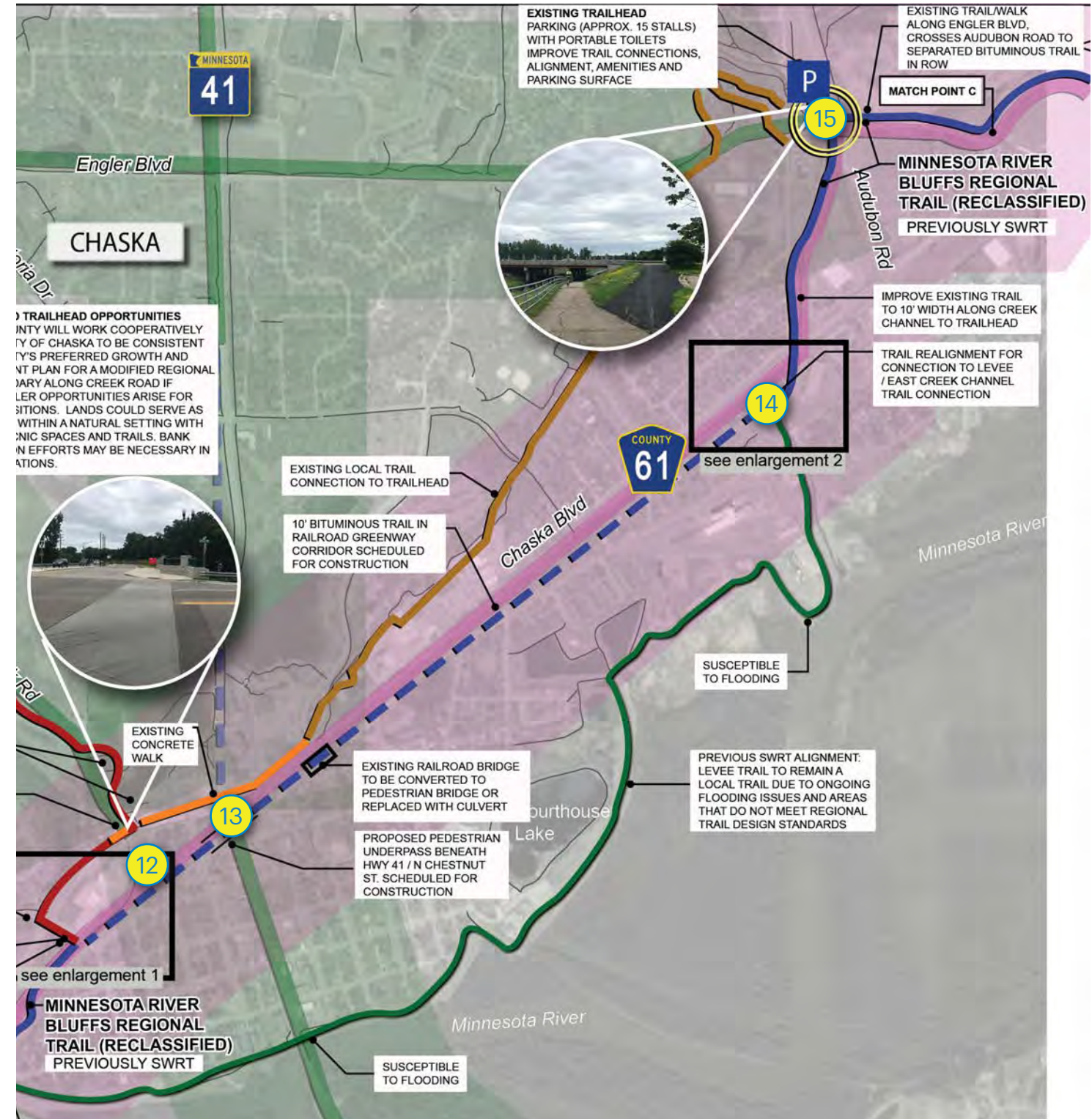
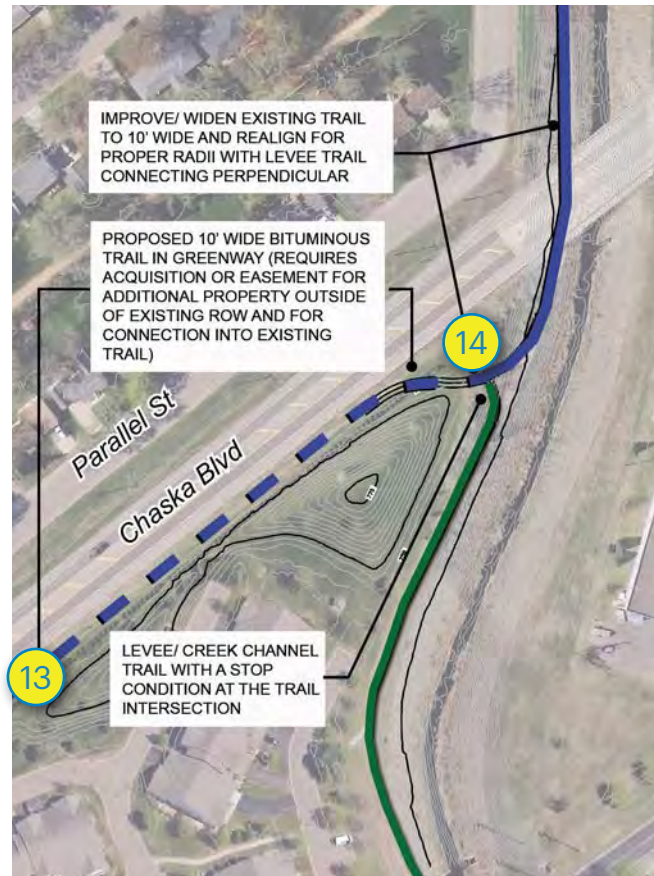
Beyond CSAH 41 the grade separated crossing would meet back up at-grade and the bituminous trail would continue in the trail corridor. An existing abandoned section of a railroad bridge may be reconstructed as a pedestrian bridge or replaced with a trail over a culvert to continue drainage in this area.

The corridor is generally open with few conflicts. There are areas with heavier vegetation near or within the corridor that may be impacted with the trail construction along this segment.

As the trail nears the northeast end of the existing levee trail near the Crystal Place higher density housing area, some acquisition of property outside of the existing ROW will be necessary. The trail would connect into the existing trail as the primary route with an appropriate radii and improved to a 10 foot width. The levee trail will be modified to connect into the MRBRT as a stop condition at the trail intersection. The enlargement plan shows an example of the proposed trail conditions.



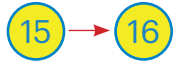
The widened bituminous trail going north along the channel and Old Audubon Road ultimately leads to an existing trailhead with parking facilities at Old Audubon Road and Engler Blvd. which are recommended to be improved and widened to a ten foot width.



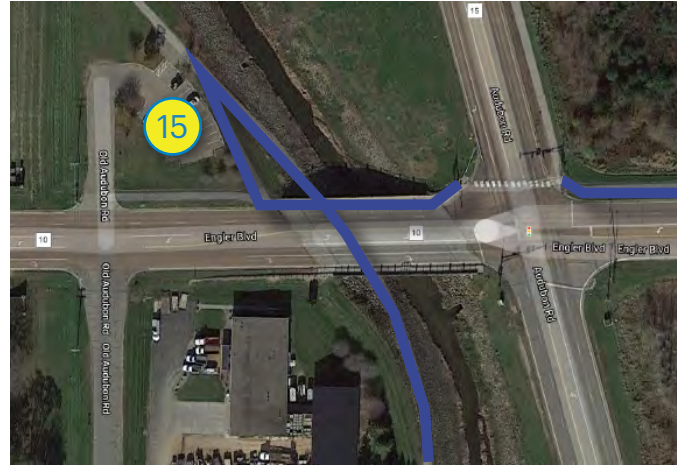
Overview of Master Plan Trail Segment 4 of 4

Portions of this segment of trail were previously identified as the *Southwest Regional Trail Master Plan* and are now designated as part of the *Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail*. Refer to the Master Plan for specified trail segments.

Old Audubon Rd to Bluff Creek Dr



As shown on the enlargement map to the right, the existing trail from the trailhead parking lot extends to Engler Blvd and crosses over the creek along an existing bridge walkway, then crosses Audubon Road along at an existing crosswalk at a controlled intersection. The trail continues east along Engler Blvd.



The existing trail along Engler Blvd has scenic views of the natural open space and wetland complex on the north side of the trail. This is the transition space out of Chaska to the natural settings along the Minnesota River Bluffs.

At the intersection of Engler Blvd and County Road 61/ Flying Cloud Dr, the MRBRT makes a wide curve to parallel County Road 61 but with greater separation from the road. The trail then takes a corner away from the road and into a natural trail corridor where the trail is immersed in significant natural resource settings adjacent to the Seminary Fen Scientific and Natural Area (SNA), a rare natural feature that is home to a number of unique and protected plant species. The trail intersects with Bluff Creek Drive at-grade where a parking lot for a trailhead is located for easy access to the trail with significant natural resources and views.

Bluff Creek Dr to Pioneer Trail



At this point, the remainder of the trail is part of the previous MRBRT alignment which continues to Eden Prairie. This section of trail has had recent improvements which includes reconstruction of the trail segment that was previously washed out during slope failures, a grade separated crossing over the new Highway 101 section north of the roundabout, and grade separated connections to the existing trails at Highway 101 that connect to Shakopee over the Minnesota River. Trails have also been constructed along County Road 61, part of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, and connect to the Richard T. Anderson Conservation Area.

The significant improvements and additions made to the trail system have been long desired and are already seeing significant usage since the opening of the recent improvements with improved trail access and scenic views across the Minnesota River valley.



Trailheads and Support Facilities

The SWRT traverses through or near a variety of park areas, downtown districts, schools, and other public facilities that have parking available and are currently sufficient to accommodate trail users driving to access the trail. One example is the Clover Ridge Elementary School which currently has sidewalk connections to existing segments of the SWRT.

Future trailhead options for the SWRT include potential sites along Creek Road through a willing seller basis for lands that would be directly connected to the SWRT within a conservation and natural resource area. These sites could provide parking, amenities, and picnic areas within a highly scenic setting that would attract users as a destination.

A small trailhead serving the MRBRT is located where the MRBRT intersects with Bluff Creek Drive and includes gravel parking with a wayfinding kiosk structure operated and maintained by Three Rivers Park District. A more developed trailhead is located north of Engler Blvd off of Old Audubon Road and includes a paved parking lot with approximately 18 stalls, kiosk and trail connection to the levee / east channel trail. This trailhead is in need of improvements and the parking area could be expanded if future demands warrant. Other locations noted for potential trailhead locations for the MRBRT include downtown Chaska where a proposed library will be built along the MRBRT providing parking, restrooms and support amenities.

Appropriate wayfinding signage with a clear branding style is important for maintaining safety but is also key to the user experience as users unfamiliar with an area rely on signs and landmarks to find their destination and trail routes, particularly loop opportunities. Informational or interpretive signage will be installed in locations with unique aspects, such as the Seminary Fen, or even historical locations.

Additional support facilities will include bike repair stations, benches, access to restroom facilities (portable or permanent) and access to drinking water. It is also important to have safe and convenient places to securely lock bikes at primary destination points, such as downtown businesses and parks.



PHOTO EXAMPLES OF WAYFINDING MAPS AND INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE



Section IV:

Natural Resources Stewardship Plan

Overview

Natural resources stewardship refers to the thoughtful care of ecological systems to preserve or enhance their natural qualities, which are intrinsic to the trail's value as a place of scenery and respite from the built form. Although much of the trail follows existing rights-of-way, there are still numerous natural resources and ecological issues that need to be addressed.

This section provides a framework for stewardship consistent with those of other parks and open spaces managed by Carver County.

Consistency With Natural Resource Stewardship Plans

Where appropriate and applicable, the development of the trail will be consistent with all natural resource stewardship plans associated with the public properties directly traversed or adjacent to the trail corridor. The most pertinent of these are the provisions in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The natural resource preservation and protection policies adopted by Carver County pertaining to regional parks under their management authority will also be adhered to as appropriate as the trail is developed. Any related policies by the cities of Chaska and Victoria will be also be given due consideration.

Local Stewardship Opportunities

Carver County promotes numerous cost share programs and stewardship opportunities that encourage volunteers of all ages to aid the County with invasive species removal, water monitoring, an Adopt-A-Water program, and habitat restoration.

Awareness of the stewardship opportunities are located on the Carver County website with some promotion using social media outlets. The Carver County website utilizes varying methods to meet ADA accessibility guidelines.



Ecological Protection Strategy

There are two main aspects to the ecological protection strategy as it relates to the actual development of the trail within the trail corridor. The first is managing stormwater runoff from the trail in an ecologically sustainable manner. The second is aligning the trail to minimize disruption to natural systems. The following considers these in greater detail.

Natural Stormwater Runoff Management

Stormwater runoff is one of the major natural forces to contend with in trail planning, design, and development. Managing runoff in an ecologically sensitive way is fundamental to creating sustainable trails where impacts to adjacent ecological systems are minimal.

Using a natural approach to stormwater management that relies on passive, overland routing of runoff offers a couple of distinct advantages over conventional systems (i.e., storm sewers, engineered ponds, and other built structures), including:

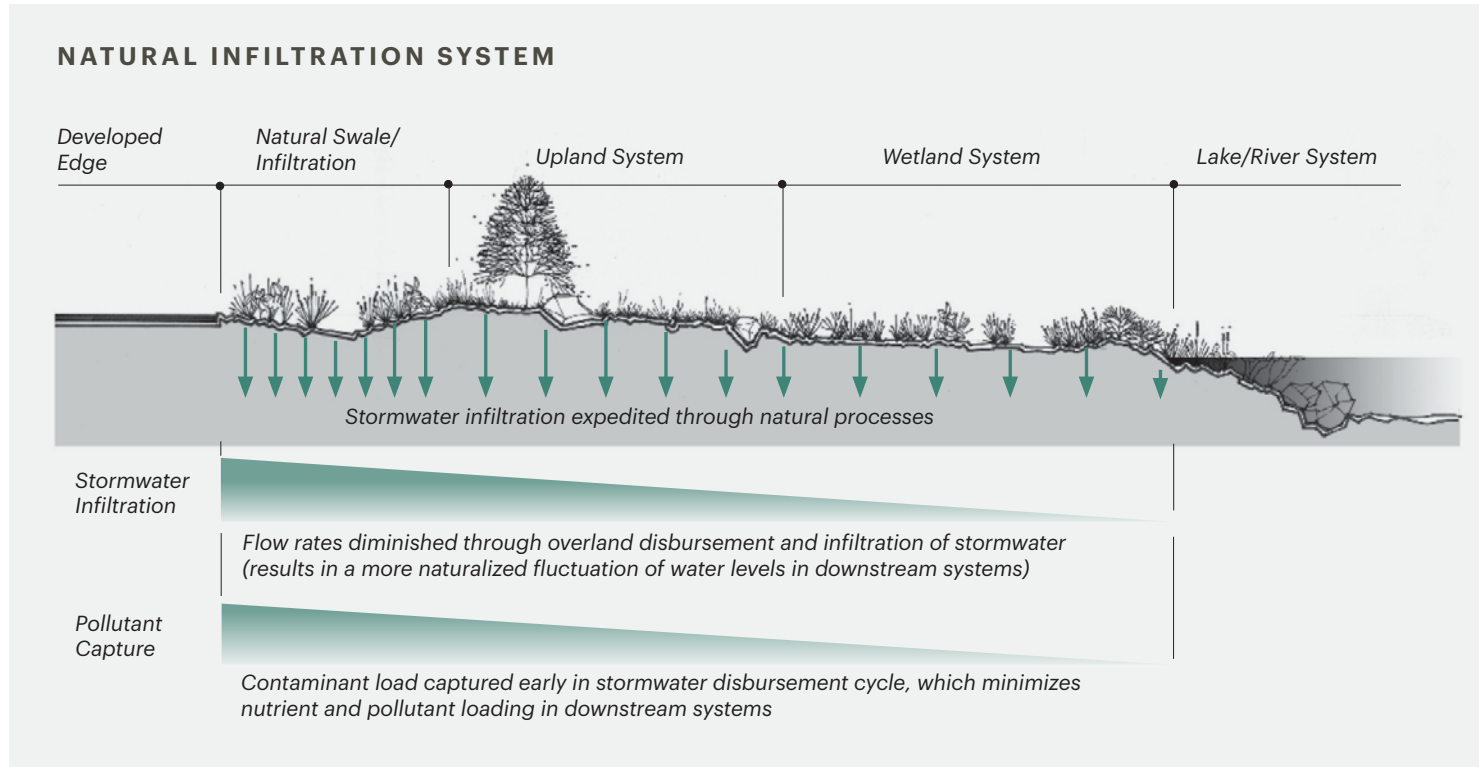
- Introduced contaminants picked up by runoff are removed at the initial stages of water flowage rather than being transported to downstream locations and accumulating in wetland, lake, and river systems. This greatly reduces degradation to water quality and vegetative health in downstream systems.
- Stormwater flow rates and volumes more closely emulate natural conditions. This greatly reduces unnatural fluctuations in water levels in downstream systems (wetlands and lakes) and therefore reduces impacts to the natural condition of water systems and vegetation.

For these reasons, the natural infiltration will be the primary approach used to manage stormwater associated with the development of the regional trail and related support structures.



COMPONENTS OF NATURAL INFILTRATION SYSTEMS

Natural infiltration systems typically consist of four primary components, as illustrated in the following graphic.



Each of the components illustrated in the previous graphic box function in sequence to treat the water before it enters wetlands, lakes and rivers. The following considers each of these components.



NATURAL INFILTRATION SYSTEMS

Initially, stormwater runoff from the built environment is routed into natural or man-made shallow vegetated swales, or in some cases, raingardens or infiltration basins that are planted with native plants with deep root systems and may include engineered soils and draitile. These swales, basins and raingardens provide initial infiltration and removal of pollutants, as well as convey runoff from developed areas and disperse it across upland and prairie systems.



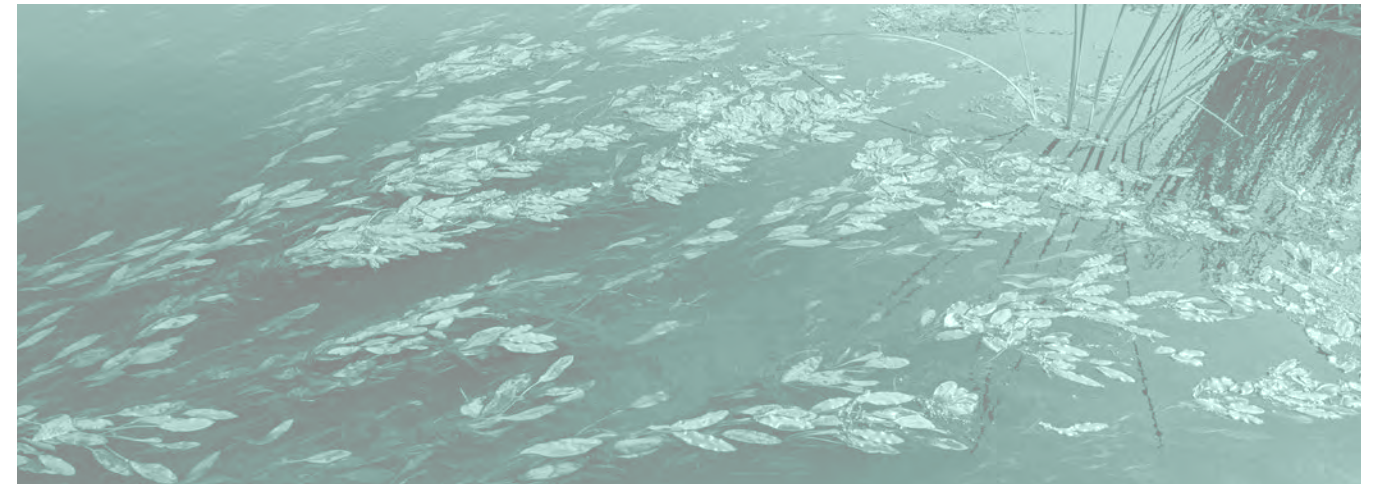
UPLAND SYSTEMS

The upland systems (i.e., prairies and oak savannas) are the second component of this method, functioning to convey stormwater as diffused overland flow to the wetland systems that often link directly or indirectly to bordering lakes and rivers. These systems infiltrate a substantial portion of the annual surface runoff volume due to their very deep root system. They also provide additional solids settling and biological treatment.



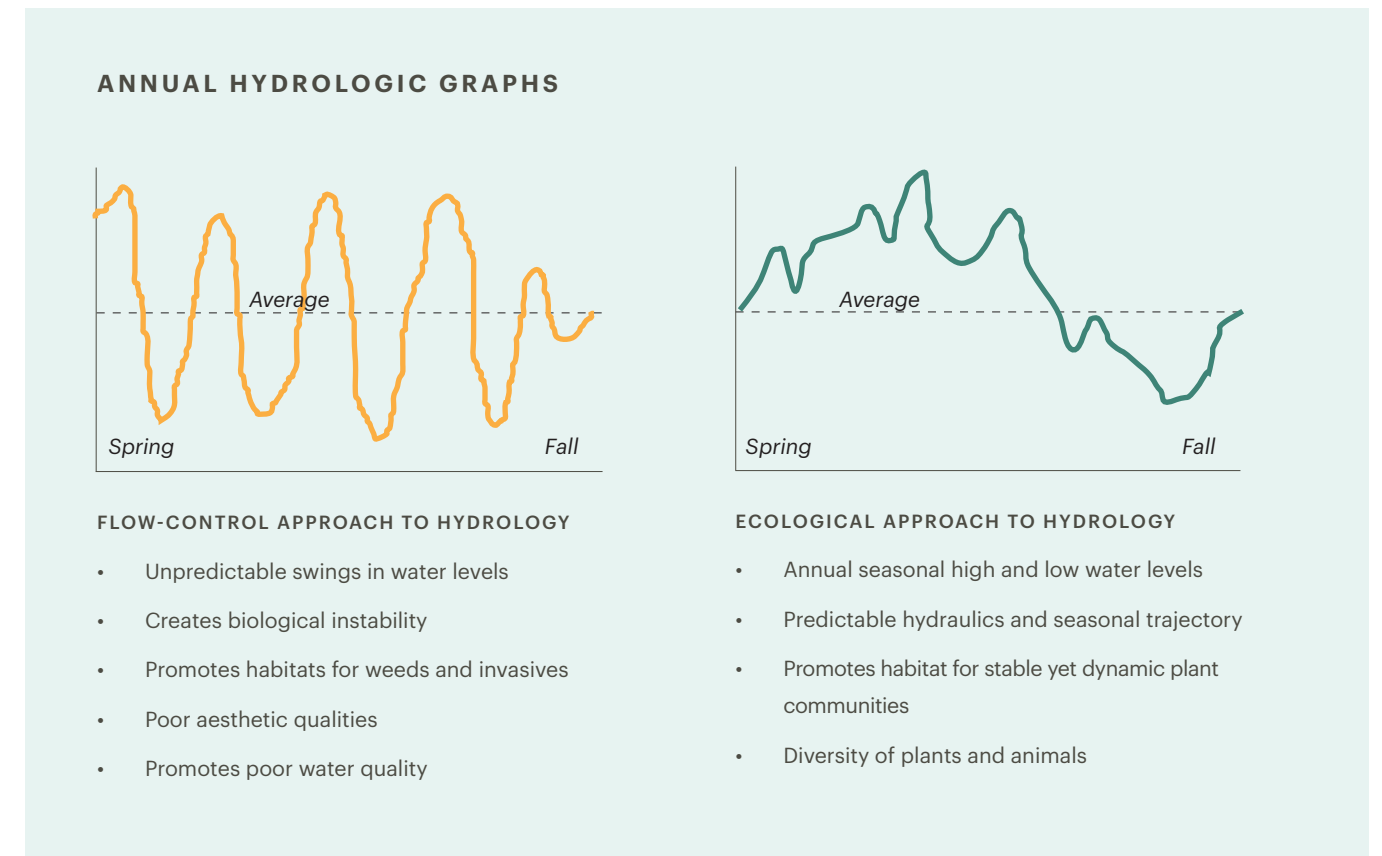
WETLAND, LAKE AND RIVER SYSTEMS

The wetlands are the third component of the natural infiltration method and provide both stormwater detention and biological treatment prior to runoff entering the lake and river systems. The final component is the lake or river, which provides stormwater detention, additional solids settling and biological treatment.



HYDROGRAPH ASSOCIATED WITH NATURAL AND FLOW RATE CONTROL APPROACHES

The use of a natural infiltration system also produces a much more natural hydrograph, resulting in lower peak flows and higher base flows relative to the hydrograph of a typical engineered flow rate control approach, as illustrated in the following graphic box.



For trail planning, design, and development, natural infiltration methods will be used as the primary approach to creating sustainable trails where impacts to adjoining natural systems are minimal. Engineered or mechanical systems for conveying stormwater will only be used when natural approaches are technically not feasible or reliable.



BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Under the master plan, the natural infiltration approach philosophy to managing stormwater is supported by Best Management Practices that address common development circumstances likely to be encountered as the trail is developed. These practices define specific techniques that can be applied to different development scenarios to achieve stated environmental protection objectives but final approaches will be coordinated with the local watersheds and Land and Water Management Organizations.

The Metropolitan Council's Urban Small Sites Best Management Practice Manual provides the basic underpinning for many of the techniques that will be employed wherever applicable as the trail is developed. Note also that newly emerging ecologically-based techniques will also be applied to achieve desired ecological benefits. Specific techniques envisioned to have application for the trail include:



INFILTRATION SYSTEMS

Use of infiltration systems (e.g., biofiltration systems, rain gardens, filter strips, swales, and slotted/flat curbs) as part of trail designs



SITE GRADING

Use of site grading techniques to achieve naturalized infiltration objectives



EROSION CONTROL

Use of contemporary erosion control techniques to prevent migration of soils during the construction process

In addition to the Best Management Practices, the master plan is also supported by the Metropolitan Council's Model Storm Water Management Ordinance, which defines specific approaches to protecting a site's ecological resources, especially wetland systems. The provisions of the model ordinance will be applied to the trail's development as applicable.



Section V:

Implementation and Management Plan

Overview

Implementing the master plan will require significant initial and long-term capital investments for physical development, operations, and maintenance. Implementation is expected to occur over a number of years as funding and other resources become available and plans become refined and ready for implementation.

The following considers an overall strategy for implementing the master plan and managing the trail once it is completed. This section also considers Carver County's approach to operations and management as it pertains to the trail. Implementation components include:

- Acquisition Plan
- Development Cost Considerations
- Implementation Strategy and Priorities
- Management and Operations
- Public Involvement in Implementing the Master Plan

This following considers each of these in greater detail.

Acquisition Plan

Property Boundaries and Acquisitions - SWRT

In 2018, Carver County completed a land acquisition amendment plan for portions of the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail (MRBRT) corridor that were owned by the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority for purchase by Carver County Parks. This plan illustrates the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail within the parcels now owned by Carver County Parks.

The boundaries of the proposed remaining segments of the Southwest Regional Trail (SWRT) are anticipated to remain within existing road right-of-way (ROW) with no additional land acquisitions or easements necessary for trail development. However, in the limited situations where it may traverse across private property or where additional land would be of benefit (ie: protection of natural resources, adequate buffer, etc.) a trail right-of-way or easement will be sought by the County in concert with the LGU as part of future land development proposals or direct negotiations with the land owner. If land acquisitions are not feasible through local park or trail dedication or by other negotiated means, Carver County will seek acquisition funding assistance through the Metropolitan Council.

The master plan allows Carver County and the local cities some flexibility on the final width of rights-of-ways or easements to accommodate site-specific concerns of property owners and the realities of negotiating with a developer or land owner under a willing seller context.

Property boundaries for select segments of the SWRT are illustrated in areas that are not currently developed and actual alignments would be determined during final platting of the proposed developments to include sufficient ROW for trail implementation.



Creek Road in Chaska is currently a County owned road that would be turned back to the City of Chaska. Chaska would provide ROW or easements for trail development within this corridor at no cost to Carver County. Additionally, Carver County will work cooperatively with the City of Chaska consistent with the City's Preferred Growth and Development Plan to identify potential opportunities for land acquisition along the Creek Road corridor through a willing seller process. This could allow for trailhead development, improved access to the creek and natural areas, and protection and bank stabilization efforts of the natural resources within this corridor. Refer to Trail Segment 3.

Property Boundaries and Acquisitions - MRBRT

The boundaries of the proposed Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail (MRBRT) for the sections within the railroad greenway through downtown Chaska currently includes parcels owned by the Carver County Regional Rail Authority from West 1st Street up to York Street, with the exception of the portion between Pine St. N and Chestnut St. N, all of which will require land acquisition to complete the trail as shown in the red boundaries below. The trail along the Crystal Court property will likely require land acquisition or easements for additional property where existing ROW is not sufficient and to make a connection to the existing levee trail.



Trail Easement and Land Acquisition Cost Projections

Once the master plan has been adopted, Carver County will maintain an open dialogue with the local cities and affected property owners to stay abreast of market rate acquisition costs and their level of interest in providing a right-of-way, easement or land acquisition. At the time of trail funding, Carver County will formally establish property values for review and approval by the Carver County Board and Metropolitan Council. To-date, no property owner has been individually contacted about acquisition or property valuations.

Development Cost Considerations

Cost projections for developing the trail segments are typical average costs for developing similar trails in Carver County and other local municipalities based on 2020 costs. Costs do not take into consideration special site conditions involving hazardous materials, wetland mitigation, special permitting needs, or road improvement costs.

The following table defines the projected cost for developing the trail.

GENERAL TRAIL DEVELOPMENT COST PROJECTIONS

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	COST ESTIMATE
New Trails	Development of new paved asphalt trail at 10 feet wide. Includes 3.0 to 3.5 inches of asphalt and 8 inches of Class 5 aggregate base, general earthwork and subgrade preparation, erosion control, restoration, pedestrian ramps, and crosswalks. Does not include environmental impacts and mitigation, signals, land acquisition, road improvement costs, or retaining walls.	\$250,000 - \$360,000 per mile
Soil Corrections	General soil correction costs to a 4 - 5 foot depth beneath trail. Does not include wetland impacts or mitigation.	\$500,000 to \$1.5M per mile
Upgrade Existing Trails	Remove existing trail and replace with new asphalt trail at 10 feet wide. Includes 3.0 to 3.5 inches of asphalt over existing trail + extra base work.	\$150,000 - \$250,000 per mile
Trail Box Culverts	Trail box culverts under roads. Does not include environmental impacts and mitigation, land or ROW acquisition, or road reconstruction costs.	\$1,300 per lineal foot for culvert
Boardwalk	Construction of a 12 foot wide boardwalk through wet areas. Assumes no environmental impacts or mitigation. Costs can be variable depending on depth needed for footings / helical piers per soil conditions.	\$1500 - \$1800 per lineal foot
Crosswalk Warning	Installation of crosswalk flasher system on low end to hybrid beacon system on high end.	\$15,000 to \$90,000 each
Trail Amenities	Basic support amenities, including trail information signage, trailhead kiosks, bike repair stations, benches, picnic tables, and related. Approximate costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kiosks: \$15,000 ea Bike Repair Stations: \$5,000 ea Bench: \$2,500 ea Trash/Recycling Receptacle: \$1,500 ea Bike Rack: \$1,000 ea Drinking Fountain: \$8,000 ea (not including water service) Signage: \$350 ea 	Varies

Note: A 15% construction contingency is recommended to be added for planning purposes with an additional 20% added for design, engineering and permits. Generally 3-5% added on a yearly basis should be added to account for inflation.

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL TRAIL DEVELOPMENT COST PROJECTIONS

TRAIL SEGMENT	DESCRIPTION	COST ESTIMATE
LMRT (anticipated location) to Marsh Lake Road	600 lineal feet of 12' wide boardwalk 1.7 miles of new paved asphalt trail at 10 feet wide Pedestrian activated signal	\$1.3 - \$1.8M
Marsh Lake Road to Pioneer Trail at Shady Oak Drive	2 miles of new paved asphalt trail at 10 feet wide Concrete pedestrian underpass culvert Road reconstruction, land acquisition or easements, and environmental costs are not included	\$700K - \$1.1M
Clover Ridge Drive from Pioneer Trail to Grimm Road Signal at Engler Blvd	800 lineal feet of new paved asphalt trail at 10 feet wide 3400 lineal feet of trail from 8 to 10 feet wide 1000 lineal feet of paved asphalt trail at 10 feet wide (currently concrete - assumes new base) Pedestrian activated signal	\$200 - \$450K
Chaska Creek Way from Engler Blvd to proposed Savanna Way	3500 lineal feet of new paved asphalt trail at 10 feet wide	\$165 - \$240K
Creek Road from Savanna Way to 3550 Creek Road	5500 lineal feet of new paved asphalt trail at 10 feet wide Assumes trail is built within existing ROW roadbed and does not include any trailhead facilities	\$260 - \$375K

Note: A 15% construction contingency is recommended to be added for planning purposes with an additional 20% added for design, engineering and permits. Generally 3-5% added on a yearly basis should be added to account for inflation.

Implementation Strategy And Priorities

Optimally, full development of the trail under one phase would be the most efficient and serve the broadest public need. Realistically, actual implementation of the master plan will occur over a period of time as funding becomes available and the remaining trail rights-of-way can be acquired as development occurs. The timing of local roadway realignments, reconstruction and abandonments will also factor into the time frame for trail development along some segments.

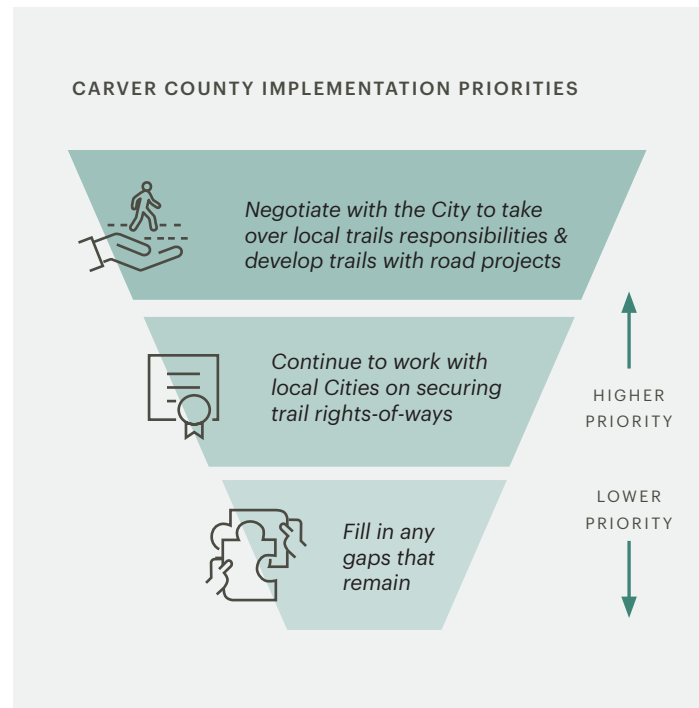


Project Phasing And Priorities

The implementation of the master plan is expected to start in Chaska, where the first priority will be for Carver County to negotiate with the City to take over the responsibility for operating, maintaining, and developing or redeveloping portions of the existing local trails that are identified as being part of this regional trail as well as develop trails in conjunction with road construction or improvement projects. Carver County's construction and operation of trails will be consistent with its established policies. This does not include plowing the trails in the winter, although the County will allow the City to take on this responsibility under a separate agreement, if so requested.

The second implementation priority is for Carver County to continue to work with each of the local cities on securing trail rights-of-ways as development continues to occur at a fairly rapid pace in order to accommodate the trail alignments as illustrated on the master plan. Ongoing collaboration between local cities and Carver County is critical during review and approval of development plans to ensure trail corridors are properly secured to avoid previous setbacks where trail route opportunities were lost.

The third implementation priority will be to fill in any gaps that remain. This will occur as funding allows over time.



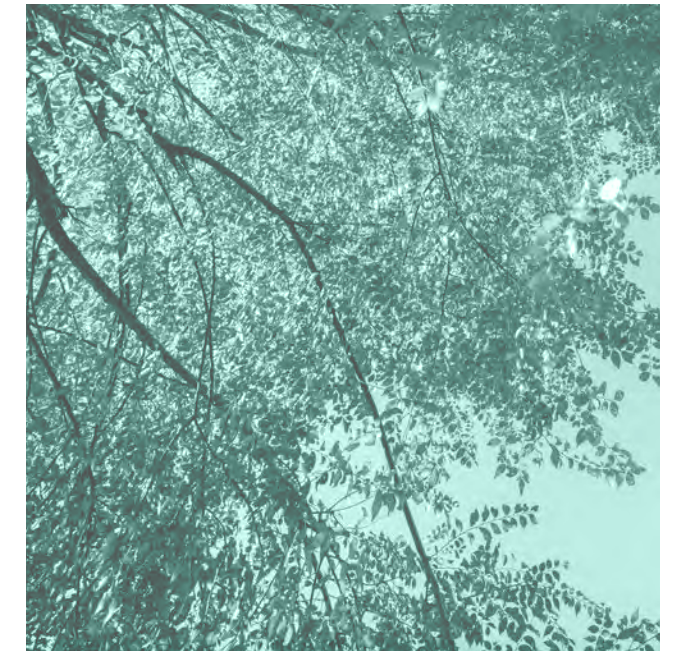
Management and Operations

Carver County is an implementing regional park agency of the Metropolitan Regional Park System. As an implementing agency, Carver County plans, operates and maintains regional parks and trails. The Metropolitan Council establishes policies governing regional parks and trails. The Council's capital improvement program budgets and prioritizes funds for the acquisition, development and redevelopment of regional parks and trails. Matching funds are provided by the State of Minnesota to the Metropolitan Council for capital improvements to the Regional Park System. The Metropolitan Council distributes capital improvement funds to implementing regional park agencies.

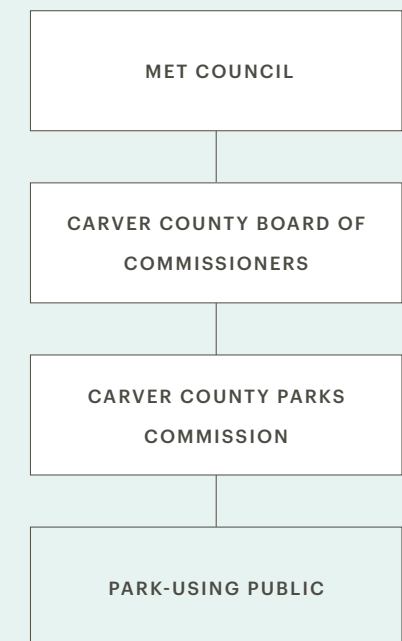
Carver County Parks is charged with the management and operation of the County's parks and trails system, including the trail defined by this master plan. The Carver County Board of Commissioners establishes policies and ordinance for the park and trail system. The County Board sets a budget for operations and maintenance as well as capital improvements for the Parks Department.

The Parks Commission, appointed by the County Board of Commissioners, serves as an advisory committee advocate for County parks and trails. Specific responsibilities include:

- Review proposals and make recommendations concerning park and trail acquisition
- Update the park and trail section of the County Comprehensive Plan
- Prepare master plans for regional parks and trails
- Recommend park operating policies and fees
- Perform fact finding tasks as directed by the County Board



ORGANIZATION CHART



ORDINANCES

The Southwest Regional Trail will be governed by the Carver County ordinance including all amendments. The ordinance incorporates pertinent Minnesota statutes and addresses the following issues:

- Regulation of Public Use
- Regulation of General Conduct
- Regulations pertaining to General Park Land Operations
- Protection of Property, Structures, and Natural Resources
- Regulation of Recreation Activity
- Regulation of Motorized Vehicles and Parking

A copy of the ordinance is available through Carver County and online.

ENFORCEMENT

Trail users will be informed of trail rules and regulations in a variety of ways. Kiosks and signs will be strategically located to address specific information about allowable trail uses, permitted and prohibited activities, fees, and directions. The Carver County Sheriff's Department responds to emergencies and criminal complaints.



GENERAL OPERATIONS

The Parks Division has an annual operations and maintenance budget of approximately \$1.4 million to operate and maintain the County's park and trail system with approximately 7 permanent employees. In addition, approximately 15 - 20 seasonal employees are hired each year for maintenance and recreation programs.

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance of facilities and lands is essential to protect public investment, enhance natural resource qualities and achieve the County's goals of providing users clean, safe, enjoyable year round park experiences. Carver County Parks Division has a clearly defined maintenance program. Reporting to the Park Director is the Parks and Natural Resource Supervisor who directs full and part-time maintenance workers in the maintenance and operations of the park system.

Accomplishing the maintenance needs of this regional trail will add new challenges. As trails and other park land and facilities are further developed, new or expanded maintenance services will need to be provided. Carver County recognizes the need to remain committed to the maintenance needs of parks and trails. The County will budget additional resources as appropriate to operate and maintain new units of the park system.



OUTREACH AWARENESS & PUBLIC SERVICES

Carver County continues to expand its outreach effort, in an effort to improve public awareness of its park and trail facilities, programs, and public services. This outreach effort has various components, including the following:

- **Printed Materials:** Carver County has developed and distributes on a regular basis brochures and maps, including trail and park maps and picnic, camping, and other brochures. Park and trail fliers are also distributed to County departments, libraries, community agencies, and other contacts throughout the community.
- **Electronic Communication:** Carver County has a web page to inform citizens about the County's functions and services (e.g., Park Commission meetings, the master planning process, trails, park facilities, and programs). In addition, the public can contact the Parks office through the County's e-mail system.
- **Other Outreach:** Other forms of outreach and marketing include displays at the Carver County Fair, social media, the production of fliers and brochures and the display of information at County Service Centers, and park kiosks. The County publishes news releases and advertisements in local community and metropolitan area newspapers that highlight upcoming programs and facility openings. The County also promotes park and trail use through feature articles and presentations to other County departments and local agencies.
- **Marketing Initiatives:** Carver County will continue to expand its marketing efforts over time to increase public awareness, understanding, and use of park facilities, services and programs. In addition, the marketing plan will identify the need to expand and diversify marketing and communication efforts to advance park use by minority populations and special needs groups.

Public Involvement in Implementing the Master Plan

Public involvement and comment will continue to be sought during the design and construction phase to ensure that any individual concerns about trail development are addressed in a good-faith manner. In addition, forums for broader public input (e.g., open houses and presentations) are also envisioned as needed to communicate and exchange ideas with interested citizens.

The objectives associated with involving citizens in the implementation process include:

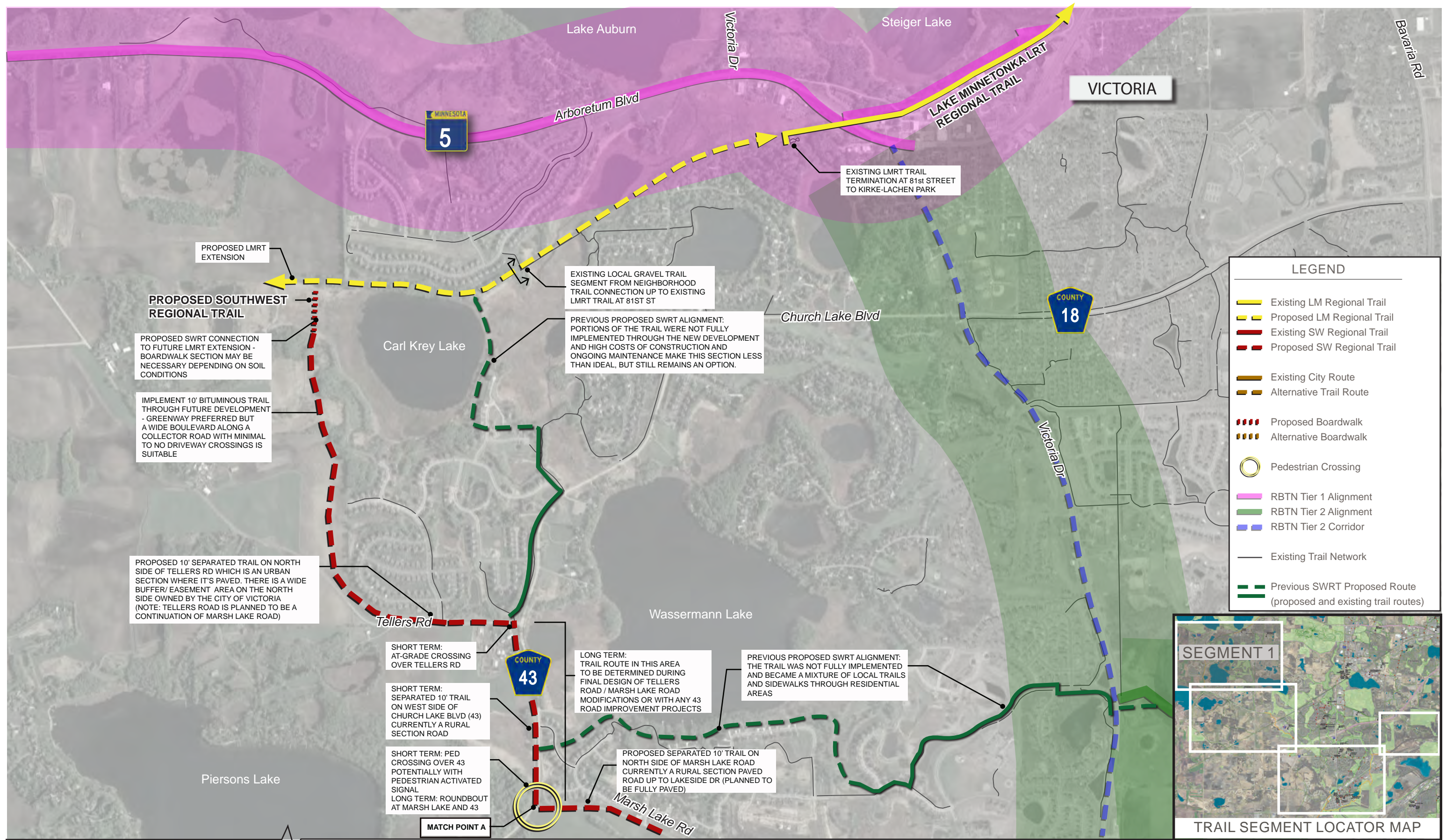
- Determine who the stakeholders are and their interest in a particular segment of the trail
- Understand their needs and unique perspectives
- Identify and understand concerns and problems
- Develop alternatives and find appropriate solutions with input from stakeholders

In addition, Carver County has an appointed Park Commission that advises the County Board on development initiatives within the county. The public is welcome to attend its regularly scheduled meetings. Also, Carver County is continuing to develop numerous tools to provide a consistent level of communication with interested citizens, as previously defined.

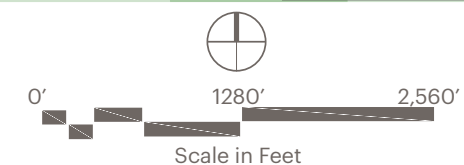


Appendix

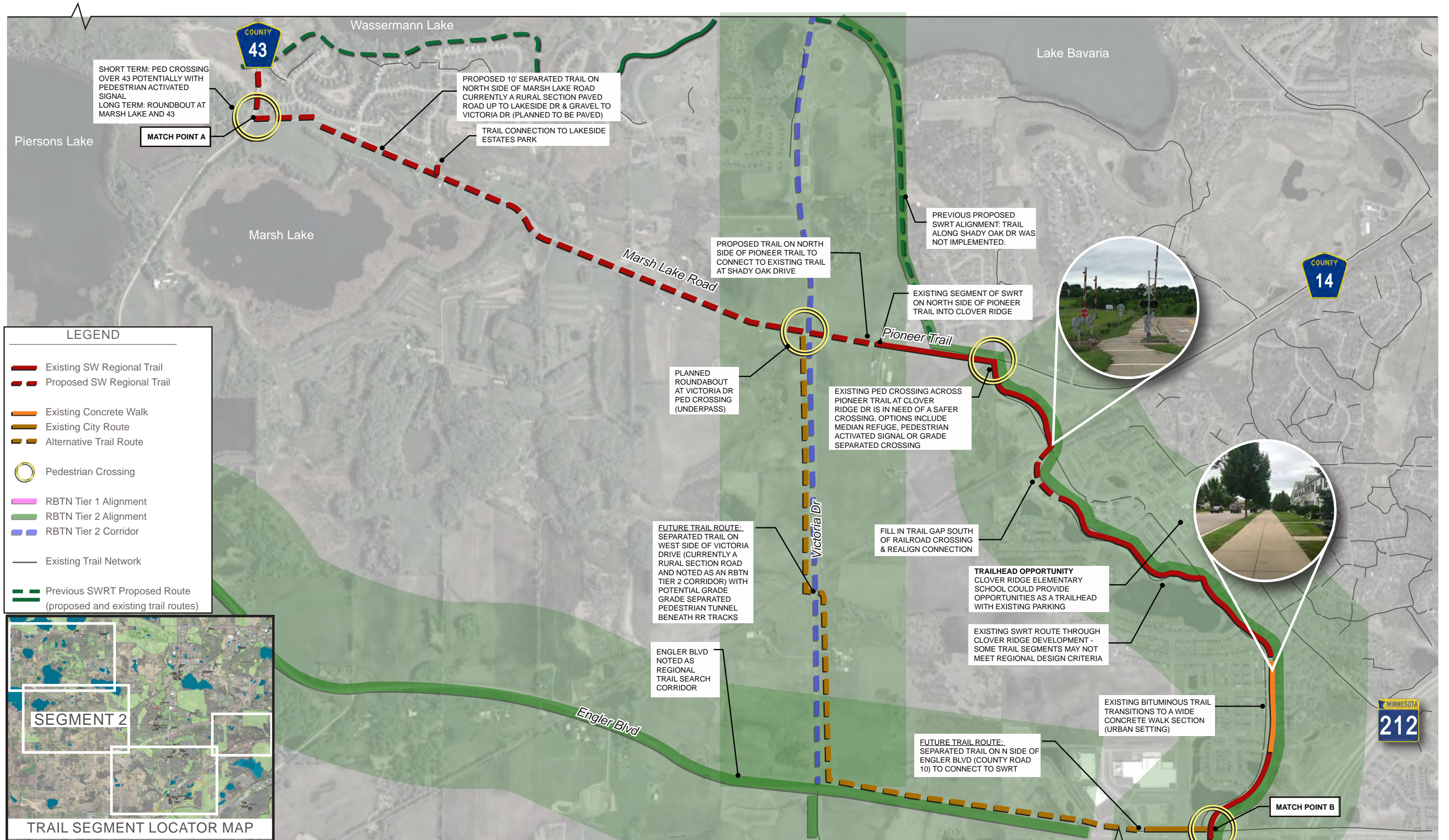
Proposed Southwest Regional Trail: Segments 1 - 4



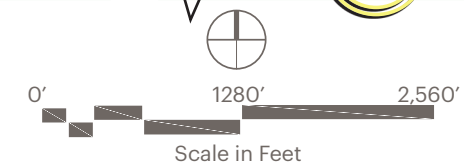
Southwest Regional Trail: Victoria to Chaska Segment 1



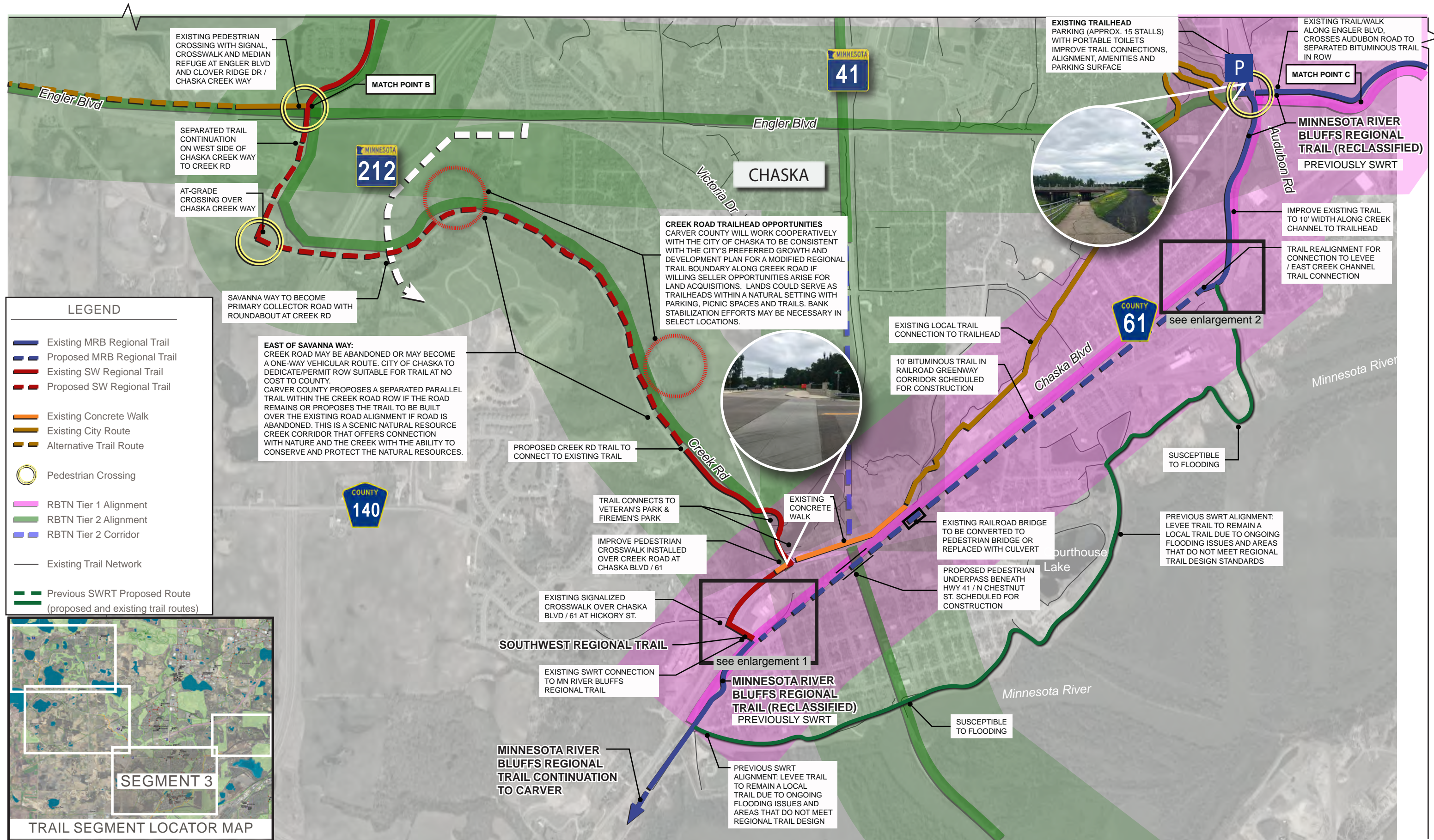
K:\012391-000\Graphics\Maps\12391 Maps_Existing Conditions_Proposed Trails_2021



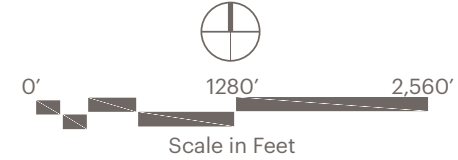
Southwest Regional Trail: Victoria to Chaska Segment 2



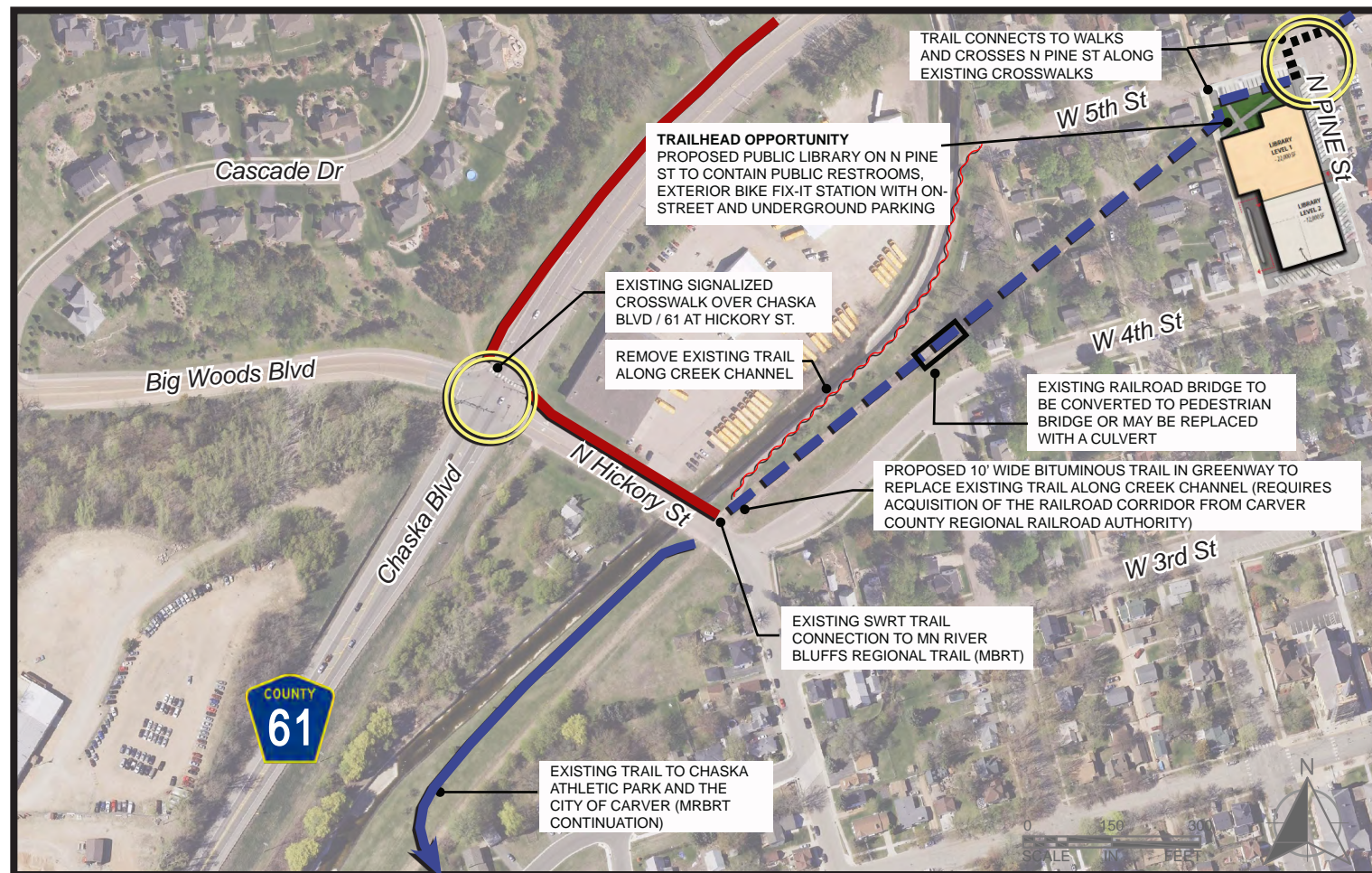
K:\012391-000\Graphics\Maps\12391 Maps_Existing Conditions_Proposed Trails_2021



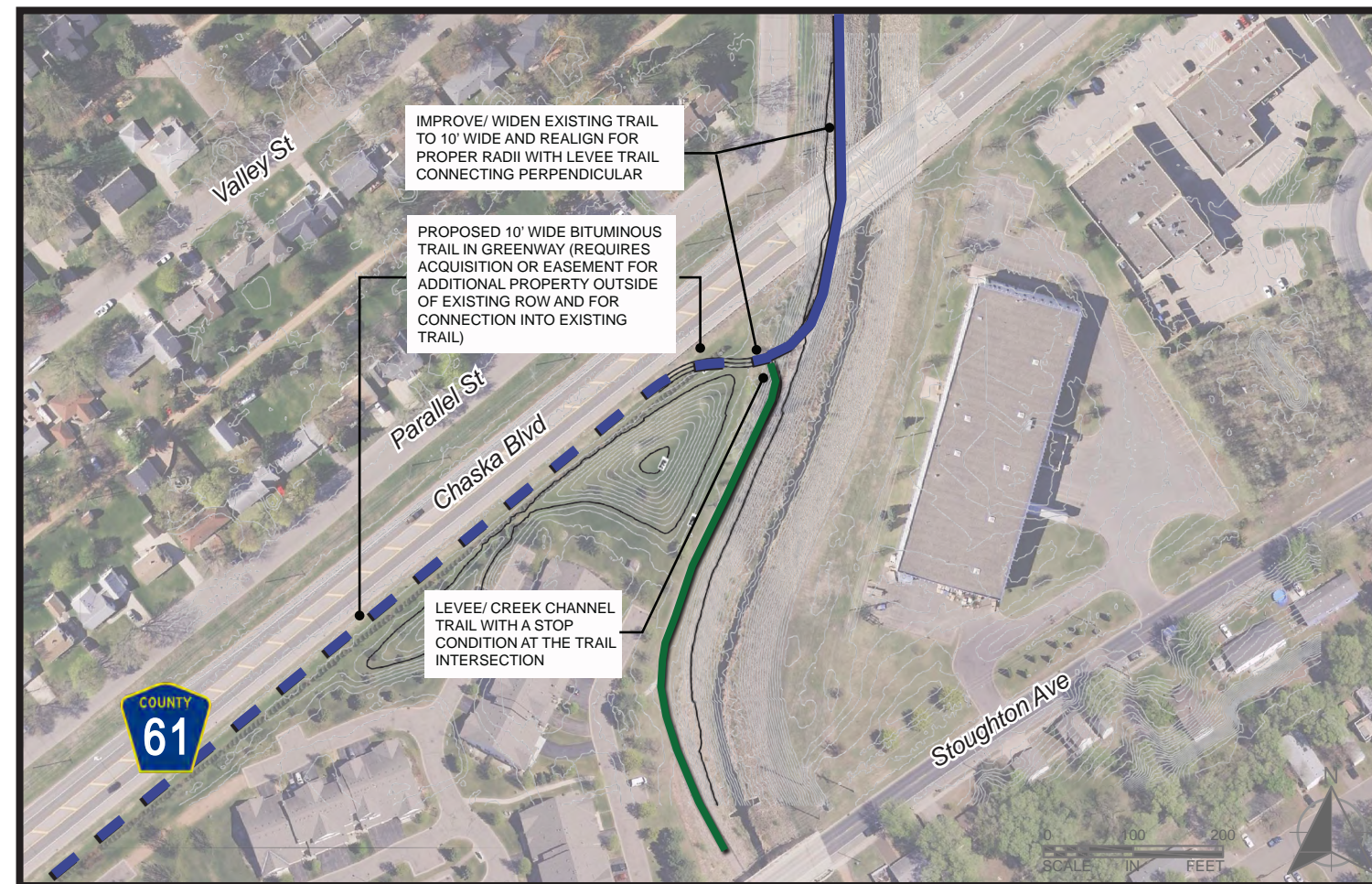
Southwest Regional Trail: Victoria to Chaska Segment 3



K:\012391-000\Graphics\Maps\12391 Maps_Existing Conditions_Proposed Trails_2021



Chaska Enlargement 1



Chaska Enlargement 2

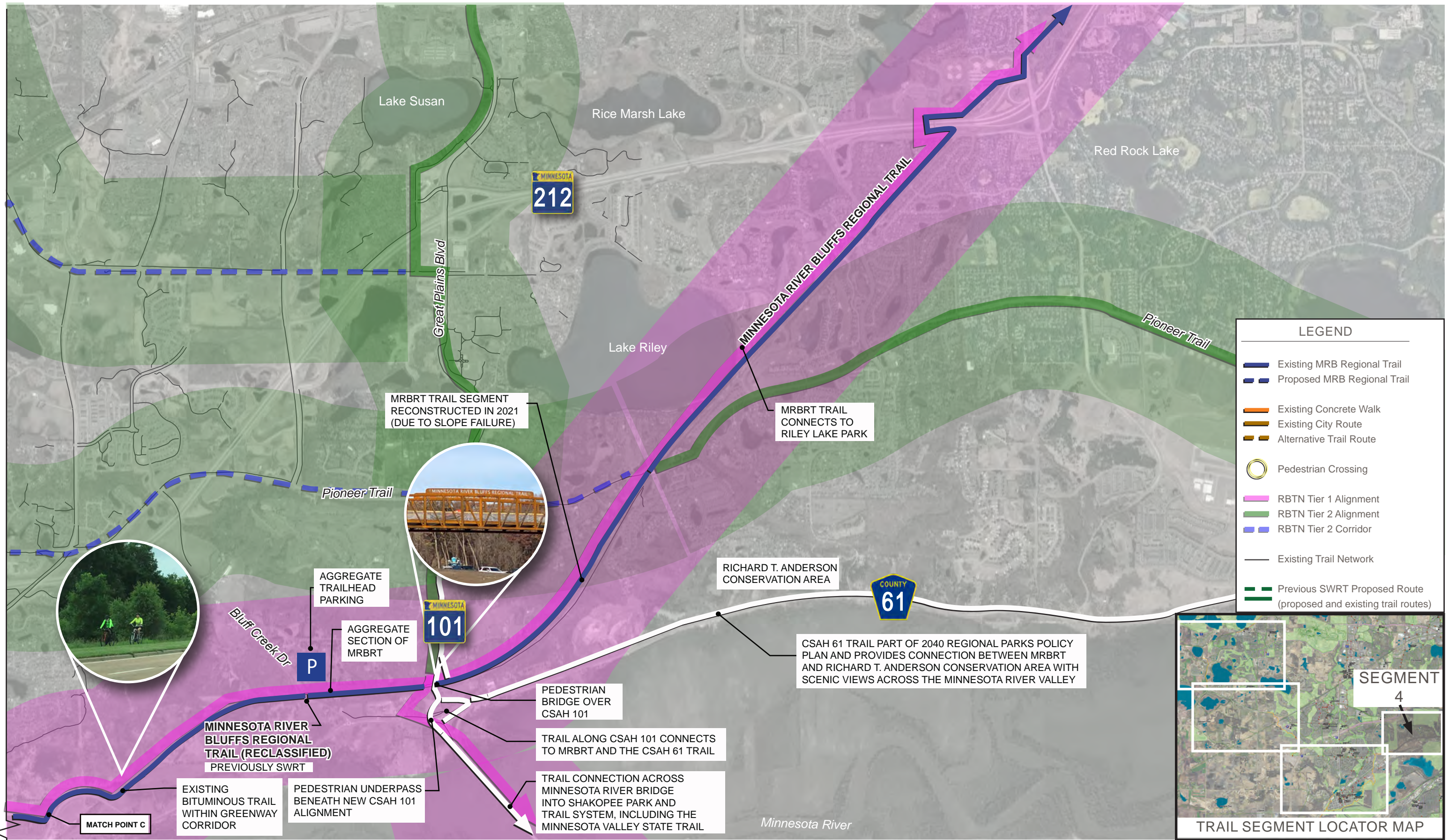
Southwest Regional Trail: Victoria to Chaska Enlargements

Carver County, Minnesota

November 2021 | WSB Project number: 012391-000

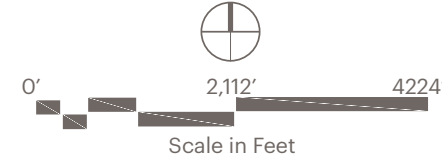


K:\012391-000\Graphics\Maps\12391 Maps_Existing Conditions_Proposed Trails_2021



MN River Bluffs Regional Trail: Segment 4

Carver County, Minnesota
 November 2021 | WSB Project number: 012391-000



K:\012391-000\Graphics\Maps\12391 Maps_Existing Conditions_Proposed Trails_2021



MEMO

TO: Members of the Park Commission
CC: Martin Walsh, Parks Director
FROM: Sam Pertz, Parks & Trails Supervisor
SUBJECT: Marketing and Public Communications 2022 Work Program & Initiatives
DATE: March 4, 2022

At the February meeting, staff provided to the Commission an overview of the park service’s donation items eligible for 2022. That topic led to good discussion around marketing and outreach initiatives that are on the annual work program in public communications. The below is a more detailed overview of what is planned for 2022, the projects & outcomes, as well as the supporting Department budget.

The Department operates annually with a \$15,000 budget to cover all projects and initiatives related to public communications. The below represents the draft work program and related budget allocation.

Work Program & Associated Budget, Marketing, & Outreach: 2022	
Item	Budget
Legal Notice Ads (Ex. Aeration System, Project Bids, etc.)	\$ 1,500
Direct/Saturation Mail 1 (Winter Season)	\$ 4,000
Direct/Saturation Mail 2 (Summer Season)	\$ 4,000
Social Media (Facebook) Paid Advertisements - Various Subjects	\$ 2,000
Summer Program Guide Publication	\$ 2,000
General Printed Advertisements (Ex. Employment Ads, etc.)	\$ 1,000
Contingency	\$ 500
Total	\$ 15,000

The table reflects the larger initiatives that are planned, as well as allocates funds needed to accomplish some of the routine annual tasks (ex. Aeration system notice). The table does not explain the work that is done in this area on a weekly basis. Routine upkeep to the Department webpage and the release of new & relevant information on social media (Facebook & Instagram) occurs weekly. In addition, the local agency partners (Community Education Offices, municipal Park & Recreation Departments, etc.) advertise programs and event offerings that are coordinated through our partnership arrangement. For many of the larger agencies, a direct mail program guide publication is issued to all residents.

In general, the strategy applied is to drive users to the county webpage for the most comprehensive listing of information. The work program activities listed above, as well as engagement on social media, is designed to drive this outcome. When consideration is made for how saturation mailers will be targeted, staff weigh factors such as: where is the service occurring; how far will the budgeted funds reach within a portion of the County; are other forms of communication more effective in a particular area; is there a particular audience to be targeted; and others.

Staff would indicate that one of the continued challenges for the Department is public awareness of the park & trail places and services available. There are still many park users that staff engage with each year who are residents within the County that have never heard of the outdoor recreation programming available or have never been out to the various park/trail locations. While the annual budget shown allows some level of work in this area to be performed, a stronger commitment of resources is likely needed to accommodate the growth occurring in the County as well as align with the Department's trajectory to become more independent in the way outdoor recreation services are provided.

Recommendation:

Staff are not seeking a recommendation on this item; this information was provided for the Commission's increased awareness and continued discussion from the February meeting.



CARVER COUNTY