

## Community Development Committee

Meeting date: March 20, 2017

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of April 12, 2017

**Subject:** Crow River Regional Trail Master Plan, Three Rivers Park District

**District(s), Member(s):**

**Policy/Legal Reference:** MN Statutes 473.313; Planning Strategy 1 *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Jan Youngquist, AICP, Planning Analyst (651-602-1029)

**Division/Department:** Community Development/Regional Parks and Natural Resources

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Crow River Regional Trail Master Plan.
2. Inform Three Rivers Park District that only the portions of the Crow River Regional Trail that are located within Hennepin and Carver Counties are considered components of the metropolitan regional parks system and are thus eligible for regional parks funding through the Metropolitan Council.

### Background

The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan (RPPP)* identifies a regional trail search corridor that generally follows the Crow River through northwestern Hennepin County, connecting Lake Rebecca and Crow Hassan Park Reserves with the West Mississippi River Regional Trail Search Corridor. The *RPPP* also identifies a regional trail search corridor that travels north from the Luce Line State Trail in Carver County to the border with Wright County.

Three Rivers Park District, in partnership with Carver and Wright Counties, has completed a planning process to determine the alignment of the Crow River Regional Trail and has submitted a master plan for Council review and approval. The regional trail will travel 32 miles through Carver, Wright, and Hennepin Counties. Wright County is outside of the seven-county metropolitan area, so the portions of the trail that will be located in Wright County are not considered part of the metropolitan regional parks system and are not eligible for funding through the Metropolitan Council. Wright County has applied for regional designation for the trail from the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC), pending approval of a master plan. If approved, Wright County will be eligible for Parks and Trails Legacy Fund grants through the GMRPTC for the Crow River Trail.

The trail has been planned as a destination regional trail that weaves back and forth across the Crow River and provides several touchpoints for users to connect to the river. The trail will also travel through Lake Rebecca and Crow Hassan Park Reserves, which will allow users to enjoy the scenic landscapes these resources provide.

### Rationale

The Crow River Regional Trail Master Plan is consistent with the requirements of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, including Planning Strategy 1, and other Council policies.



## **Thrive Lens Analysis**

The Crow River Regional Trail Master Plan advances the Thrive outcome of livability through increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation, which enhances quality of life in the region. Additionally, the master plan supports the Thrive principle of collaboration through a partnership between Three Rivers Park District, Carver County, and Wright County to plan and implement the vision for the regional trail corridor.

## **Funding**

The estimated development costs to implement the master plan are \$37 million, which includes \$2.4 million for acquisition and \$34.6 million for development. These costs will be split between Three Rivers Park District, Carver County, and Wright County. The estimated implementation costs for Three Rivers Park District include \$1.2 million for acquisition and \$17.7 million for development. The estimated implementation costs for Carver County include \$465,000 for development. The remainder of the implementation costs are for Wright County's portion of the trail, which are not eligible for metropolitan regional parks funding.

Approval of the master plan does not commit the Council to any funding at this time. The acquisition and development costs based on this master plan for the portions of the trail within Hennepin and Carver Counties may be awarded through the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund, the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund. Council action is required to approve the CIP, the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund project list, and specific grants to Three Rivers Park District and Carver County.

## **Known Support / Opposition**

Resolutions of support for the Crow River Regional Trail were passed by Carver and Wright Counties, as well as by the Cities of Minnetrista, Independence, Greenfield, Rockford, Hanover, Rogers, and Dayton. There is no known opposition to the master plan.

## Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: March 7, 2017

For the Community Development Committee meeting of March 20, 2017

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of April 12, 2017

**Subject:** Crow River Regional Trail Master Plan, Three Rivers Park District

**District(s), Member(s):** MPOSC District A, Rick Theisen and District B, Robert Moeller

**Policy/Legal Reference:** MN Statutes 473.313; Planning Strategy 1 *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Jan Youngquist, AICP, Planning Analyst (651-602-1029)

**Division/Department:** Community Development/Regional Parks and Natural Resources

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## **Known Support / Opposition**

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## Analysis

Planning Strategy 1 of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan requires that master plans for destination regional trails address the eleven items listed below.

### **Boundaries and Acquisition**

The Crow River Regional Trail will travel through Watertown Township, Minnetrista, Independence, Franklin Township, Delano, Greenfield, Rockford, Rockford Township, Hanover, Rogers, Otsego, and Dayton. The regional trail will connect several regional parks and trails along its 32-mile route, including the Luce Line State Trail, Lake Rebecca Park Reserve, Lake Sarah Regional Trail Search Corridor, Crow Hassan Park Reserve, Lake Independence Regional Trail, Rush Creek Regional Trail, and the West Mississippi River Regional Trail Search Corridor.

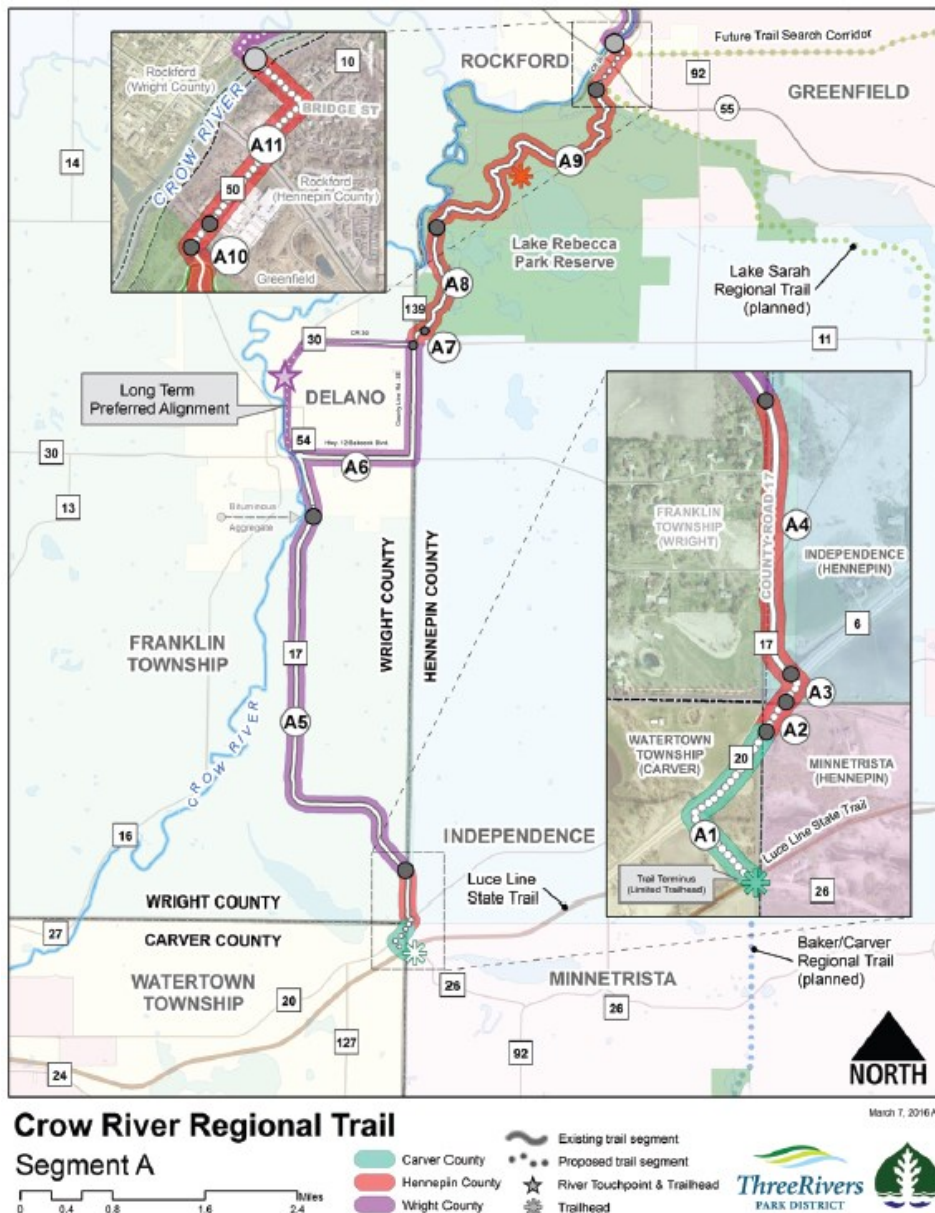
The trail corridor was split into five segments for planning purposes. The general alignment of the five segments of the Crow River Regional Trail is shown on Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Crow River Regional Trail Preferred Route**



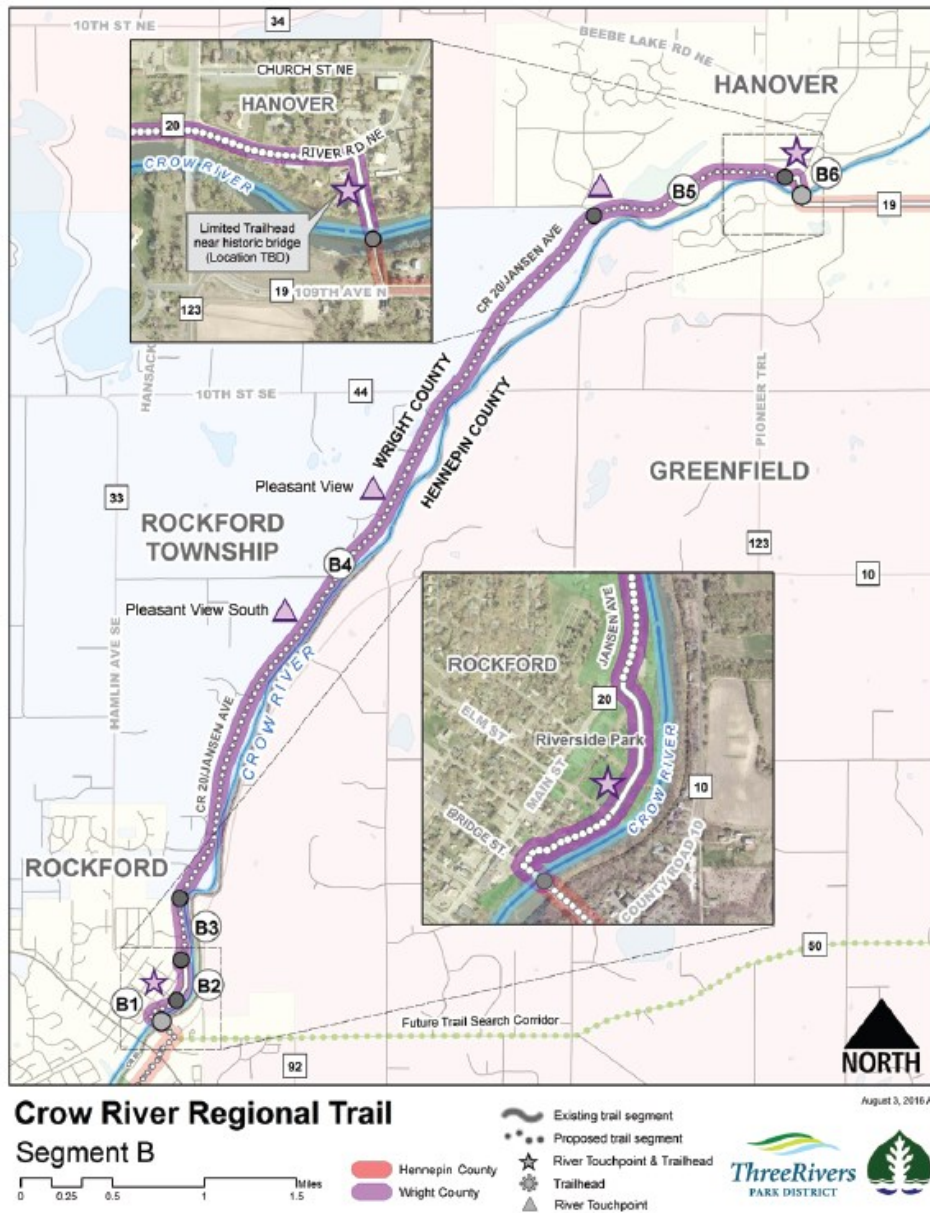
**Segment A:** This 11.7-mile segment begins in at the Luce Line State Trail in Watertown Township (Carver County) and briefly travels through Minnetrista and Independence (Hennepin County) before entering Franklin Township and Delano in Wright County. The trail then reenters Hennepin County, travels through Lake Rebecca Park Reserve, and crosses the river to downtown Rockford. Approximately 6.4 miles of Segment A are located in Wright County and are comprised of existing trails. The remaining 5.3 miles are located in Carver and Hennepin Counties, with 4.5 miles of existing trails and less than one mile for future construction. The segments planned for construction will be located within road right-of-way. Although the need to acquire substantial easements was not identified, future design of the trail will determine whether private easements will be needed to supplement existing right-of-way. The route for Segment A is shown in Figure 2.

*Figure 2: Crow River Regional Trail Segment A*



**Segment B:** All of Segment B is located in Wright County and follows the Crow River more closely than other segments, allowing users direct access to the river at several publicly-owned properties that will serve as “touchpoints.” Segment B is 6.5 miles, with 0.3 miles of existing trail and 6.2 miles identified for future construction. Most of the trail will be located on public land or within road right-of-way. Acquisition of easements along 0.6 miles of the trail corridor has been identified where there is inadequate right-of-way. Segment B’s route through Rockford, Rockford Township, and Hanover is shown in Figure 3.

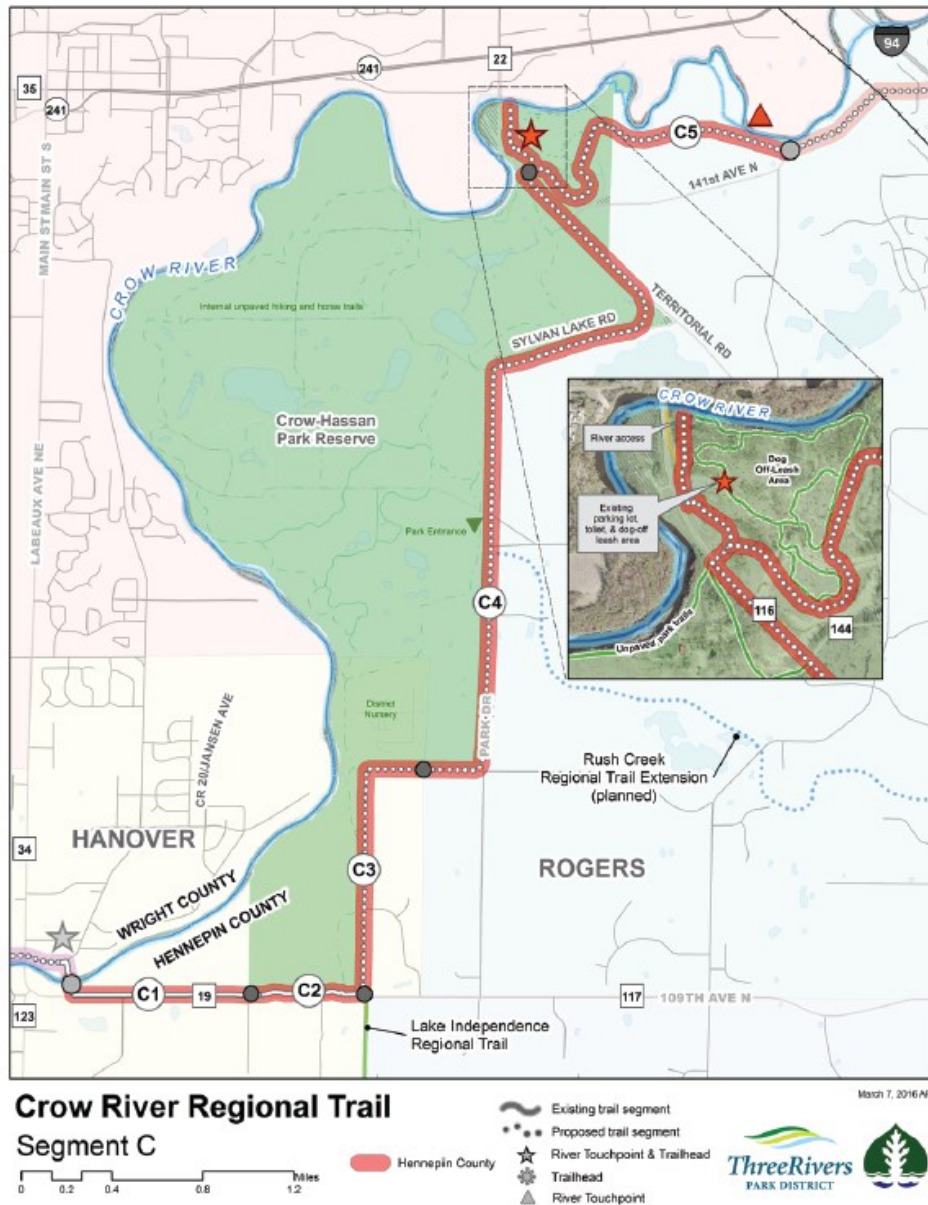
*Figure 3: Crow River Regional Trail Segment B*



**Segment C:** This 8-mile segment is located entirely within Hennepin County and travels from the Crow River in Hanover along the periphery of Crow Hassan Park Reserve to Rogers. Approximately 1.3 miles of the trail exists, with 6.7 miles for future development. There are opportunities for future connections to St. Michael (Wright County) from the active use recreation area at Crow Hassan Park Reserve. Since the majority of the trail identified for future development is located within Crow Hassan Park

Reserve, land acquisition is not necessary for this portion. As the trail exits the park reserve in Rogers, acquisition of a trail easement will be necessary. If acquisition of the easement is not feasible, the trail could be routed along 141<sup>st</sup> Avenue N. The route for Segment C is shown in Figure 4.

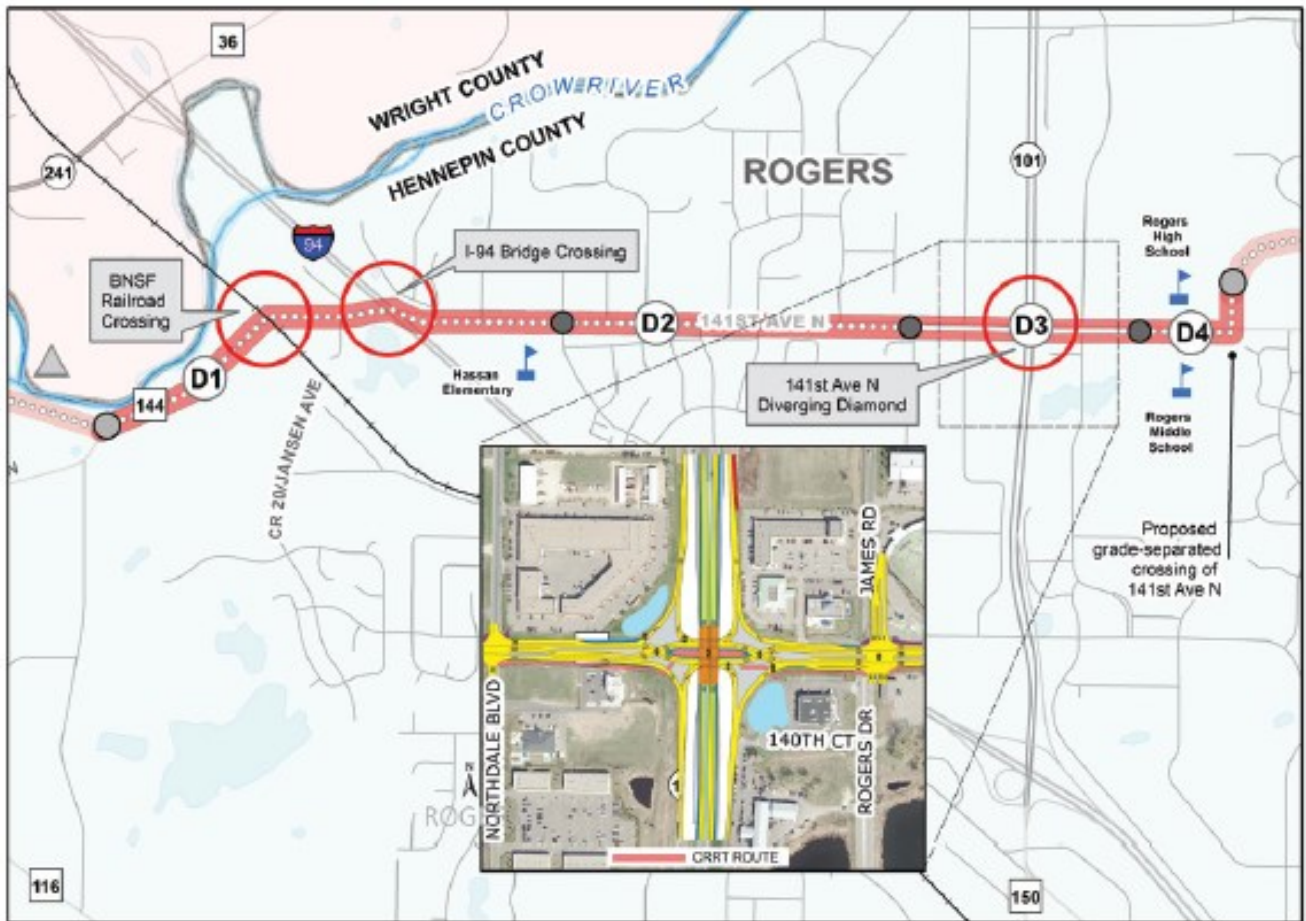
Figure 4: Crow River Regional Trail Segment C



**Segment D:** This 2.9-mile segment is located in Rogers (Hennepin County) and crosses several major physical barriers that include a Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad line, Interstate 94, Highway 101, and 141<sup>st</sup> Avenue N. This segment provides an off-road connection between Hassan Elementary, Rogers Middle and Rogers High Schools through an area with heavy vehicular traffic. A tunnel under 141<sup>st</sup> Avenue N is proposed to connect the middle school and high school. Approximately 0.6 miles of the trail exist, with 2.3 miles for future development. This segment is planned to be located within existing road right-of-way, although the need for minimal easements may be identified during the design phase. The route for Segment D is shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5: Crow River Regional Trail Segment D



August 2, 2016 AR

### Crow River Regional Trail Segment D

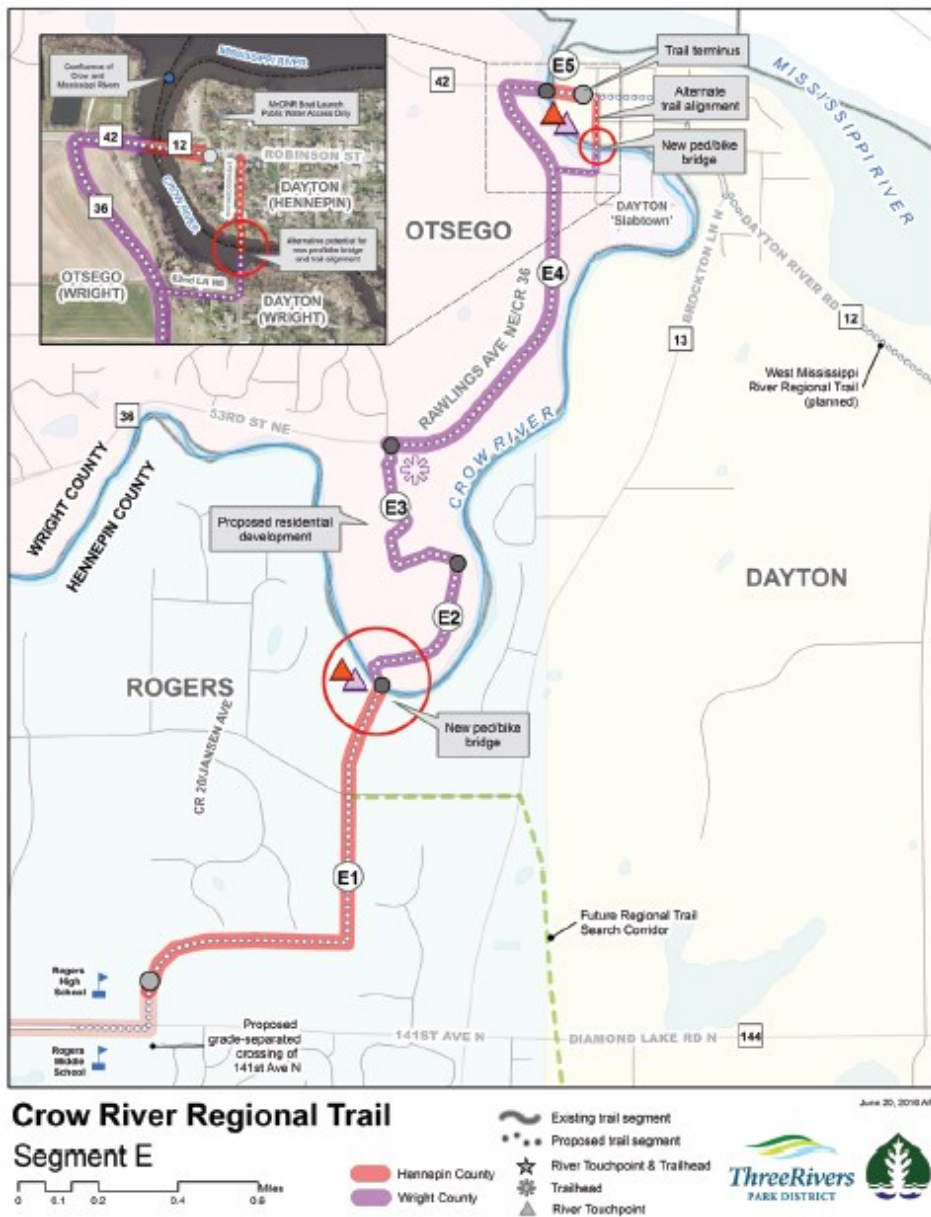


- Hennepin County
- Existing trail segment
- Proposed trail segment
- River Touchpoint & Trailhead
- Trailhead
- River Touchpoint



**Segment E:** This segment travels northeast through Rogers, crosses the Crow River into Otsego (Wright County) and ends at the West Mississippi River Regional Trail Search Corridor and the confluence of the Crow and Mississippi Rivers in Dayton (Hennepin County). The segment is 3.5 miles long, with 1.3 miles in Hennepin County and 2.2 miles in Wright County. The entire trail segment is identified for future construction. The portion of the trail in Rogers is dependent on implementation through future residential development or acquisition of easements. The portions in Wright County will travel through parkland, a new residential subdivision that provided land for the trail corridor, and along road right-of-way. Approximately 0.1 miles of the trail in Dayton will also be located within road right-of-way, although the need for minimal easements may be identified during the design phase. The route for Segment E is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Crow River Regional Trail Segment E



**Acquisition Needs:** The Crow River Regional Trail route will travel adjacent to roads using existing right-of-way, through public property, and through private property that will require easements. The master plan assumes that there will be no acquisition costs for the portions of the trail that travel within road right-of-way or through public property. The acquisition of easements from private property owners will be primarily pursued through a willing-seller approach. Three Rivers Park District and its agency partners will work with the property owners and local municipalities to explore acquisition options such as easements, lot splits, resale of surplus property, and transfer of development rights to meet the needs of the involved parties. Therefore, acquisition for the regional trail may take decades to achieve. The minimum estimated acquisition costs for the Crow River Regional Trail are \$2,333,808 in 2016 dollars. Approximately \$1.2 million is for the portions of the trail under Three Rivers Park District's jurisdiction and \$1.1 million is for the portions of the trail in Wright County. No land acquisition needs have been identified in Carver County.

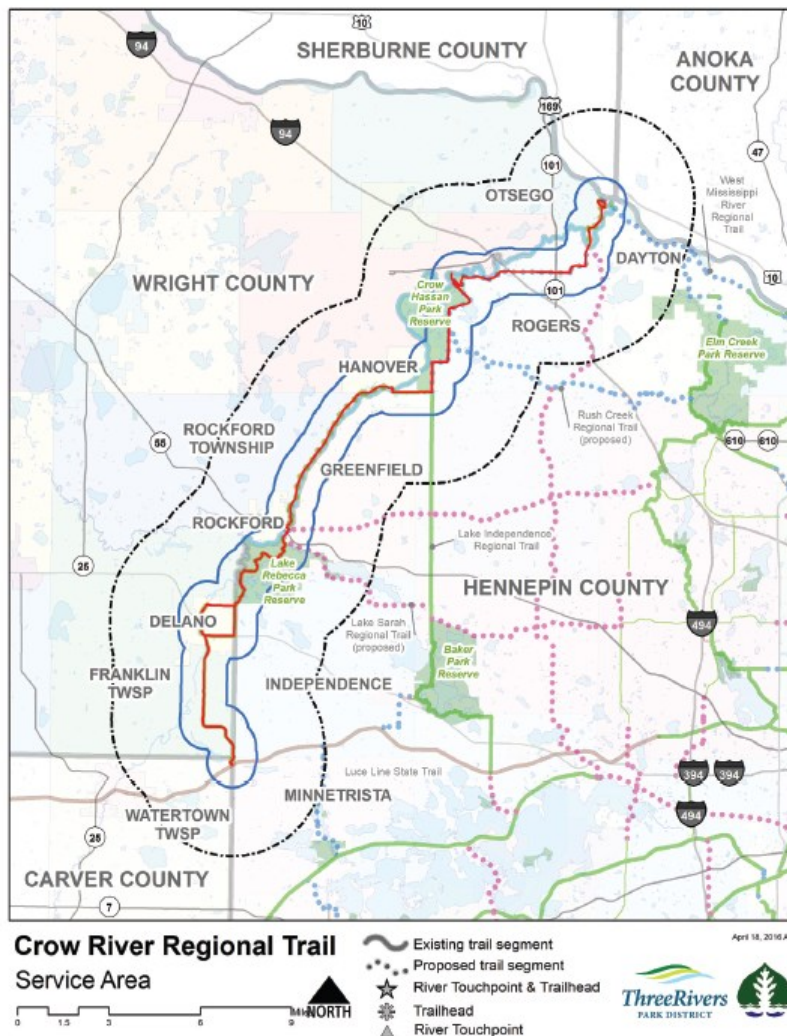
## Demand Forecast

Three Rivers Park District estimates that once fully developed, the Crow River Regional Trail will generate approximately 290,000 annual visits, based on methodology that considered the trail's connectivity to existing recreational amenities, its destination trail aesthetic qualities along the corridor, and its connections to commercial areas. Significant use of the trail is anticipated to occur in spring, summer, and fall. Winter use of the regional trail will be dependent on weather conditions and the assistance of local communities in maintaining the trail. It is anticipated that local communities will maintain the trail during the winter months as resources allow and as demand warrants.

Three Rivers Park District user data indicates that biking is the predominant activity on regional trails (73%), followed by walking (18%) and running (7%). Inline skating and other miscellaneous uses make up the balance of trail uses. Three Rivers' data shows that biking falls to 28 percent of winter use, with walking and running making up 71 percent of winter use.

Figure 7 depicts the core and primary service areas for the regional trail. The regional trail route is shown in red, the core service area is outlined in blue, and the primary service area is shown by the dashed black line on Figure 7. Typically, fifty percent of trail users originate from within 0.75 miles of the trail (core service area) and 75 percent originate from within 3 miles of the trail (primary service area).

*Figure 7: Crow River Regional Trail Core and Primary Service Areas*



The master plan discusses the regional population trends forecasted by the Metropolitan Council, including:

- Population will grow by 824,000 and the number of households will grow by 391,000 between 2010 and 2040
- More than 20 percent of the population will be age 65 and older in 2040
- Approximately 40 percent of the population will be people of color in 2040

These trends will influence park and trail planning and decision making. The population growth will increase the need for access to near home recreation opportunities. As the Baby Boom generation ages, it is anticipated that they will be healthier and more active than previous generations. Regional trails provide opportunities for low impact activities such as walking, that may be appealing to older adults.

The master plan acknowledges that outdoor recreation participation is far greater for white and non-Hispanic populations in the state and the region than for people of color and that new immigrant groups are not participating in regional trail use at the same rate as non-immigrant groups. The master plan states that Three Rivers Park District will study this issue with the goal of attracting regional trail users that represent the demographics of the region.

### **Development Concept**

Planning for the regional trail route was guided by principles that were developed by the Agency Stakeholder Committee and Advisory Committee, which are described in the Public Engagement and Participation section of this business item. These guiding principles stated that the Crow River Regional Trail must:

- Engage with the Crow River
- Connect to local destinations, such as parks and trails, schools, employment and entertainment
- Be politically supported
- Be fiscally responsible
- Be direct and not duplicative of efforts led by other agencies
- Be environmentally sustainable (avoid traveling through wetlands and sensitive areas)
- Promote trail user safety

The Crow River Regional Trail will be designed as an off-road, 10-foot wide, non-motorized, paved multi-use trail. A bituminous trail surface is preferred because it is cost effective, less prone to erosion than aggregate surfaces, provides a desirable trail experience, and is appropriate given its expected visitation and its connections to other paved facilities. The regional trail will be designed with a preferred maximum trail grade of 5 percent, with a 2 percent cross-slope for drainage purposes.

In instances where the trail will not initially meet the preferred design, alternative trail design will take into account a number of factors such as topography, vegetation, safety, and cost. Unless the alternative design is an acceptable long range solution, it is anticipated that these sections would be improved as funding, right-of-way, or other opportunities become available.

Much of the trail will be an independent trail corridor separate from roadways. In areas where the trail will be located adjacent to a roadway, the trail design will seek to maximize the boulevard width to provide for sign placement, snow storage, and potential trees or other enhancements. In circumstances

where right-of-way is limited, the trail is still planned to be off-road and will include a minimum paved two-foot-wide clear zone separating it from the roadway to buffer trail users from motorists.

Portions of the regional trail corridor may cross wetlands and floodplains. In these instances, the trail design may incorporate boardwalks and bridges to minimize potential impacts to natural resources and maintain a continuous trail corridor. Boardwalks and bridges will be coordinated with appropriate regulatory agencies to ensure requirements are met and any potential impacts are minimized.

The regional trail route includes four crossings of the Crow River, with three existing bridges and one proposed bridge:

- Bridge Street in Rockford—the bridge exists as a two-lane vehicular bridge with pedestrian sidewalks on both sides. The master plan calls for bridge deck modification to accommodate the regional trail. If modifications are not feasible, a new grade separated pedestrian bridge is recommended adjacent to the existing bridge. It is anticipated that any improvements would be initiated by Hennepin and Wright Counties, in cooperation with Three Rivers Park District.
- Historic Bridge in Hanover—this historic bridge was originally constructed in 1885 and carried traffic until 1966. The bridge was recently rehabilitated for pedestrian and bicycle use only. The City of Hanover will retain ownership of the bridge.
- Pedestrian Bridge in Rogers/Otsego—a new river crossing is proposed to serve pedestrians and bicyclists. It is anticipated that any improvements would be initiated by Hennepin and Wright Counties, in cooperation with Three Rivers Park District. Permitting at the State and Federal level is anticipated for the proposed bridge.
- CSAH 12/Robinson Street Bridge in Otsego/Dayton—this existing bridge currently accommodates two lanes of vehicle traffic with a 3-foot-wide sidewalk on the north side of the bridge. Hennepin County Transportation Department staff indicated that an eight-foot-wide trail with a barrier could be accommodated by reworking the bridge deck and reducing the driving lane widths. If this option is not feasible, agency stakeholders including Hennepin County, Wright County, and Three Rivers Park District may consider a new bicycle pedestrian crossing further south. Permitting at the State and Federal level is anticipated for a new bridge.

Two vehicle crossings and one railroad crossing along the regional trail route present challenges that were addressed in the master plan.

- At-Grade Railroad Crossing in Rogers—the regional trail crosses a BNSF railroad route along 141<sup>st</sup> Avenue N, west of I-94. The at-grade crossing will require additional engineering analysis due to the horizontal curve along 141<sup>st</sup> Avenue N that poses potential design and safety challenges. Coordination with BNSF and Hennepin County will be required as the project moves forward to implementation.
- Interstate 94 Overpass Bridge in Rogers—this bridge provides a critical connection over the interstate and currently accommodates two lanes of vehicular traffic with paved shoulders and no sidewalks. The master plan proposes to modify the bridge deck to accommodate the regional trail. It is anticipated that any improvements would be coordinated with Hennepin County Transportation Department and the Minnesota Department of Transportation.
- Diverging Diamond Interchange in Rogers—Highway 101 was recently reconstructed in Rogers to improve traffic congestion near I-94. The intersection of Highway 101 and 141<sup>st</sup> Avenue N was reconstructed to elevate Highway 101 and a diverging diamond interchange (DDI) along 141<sup>st</sup> Avenue N was created. Rogers public safety and city staff documents that some pedestrians and bicyclists do not traverse the DDI correctly, which creates safety issues. During

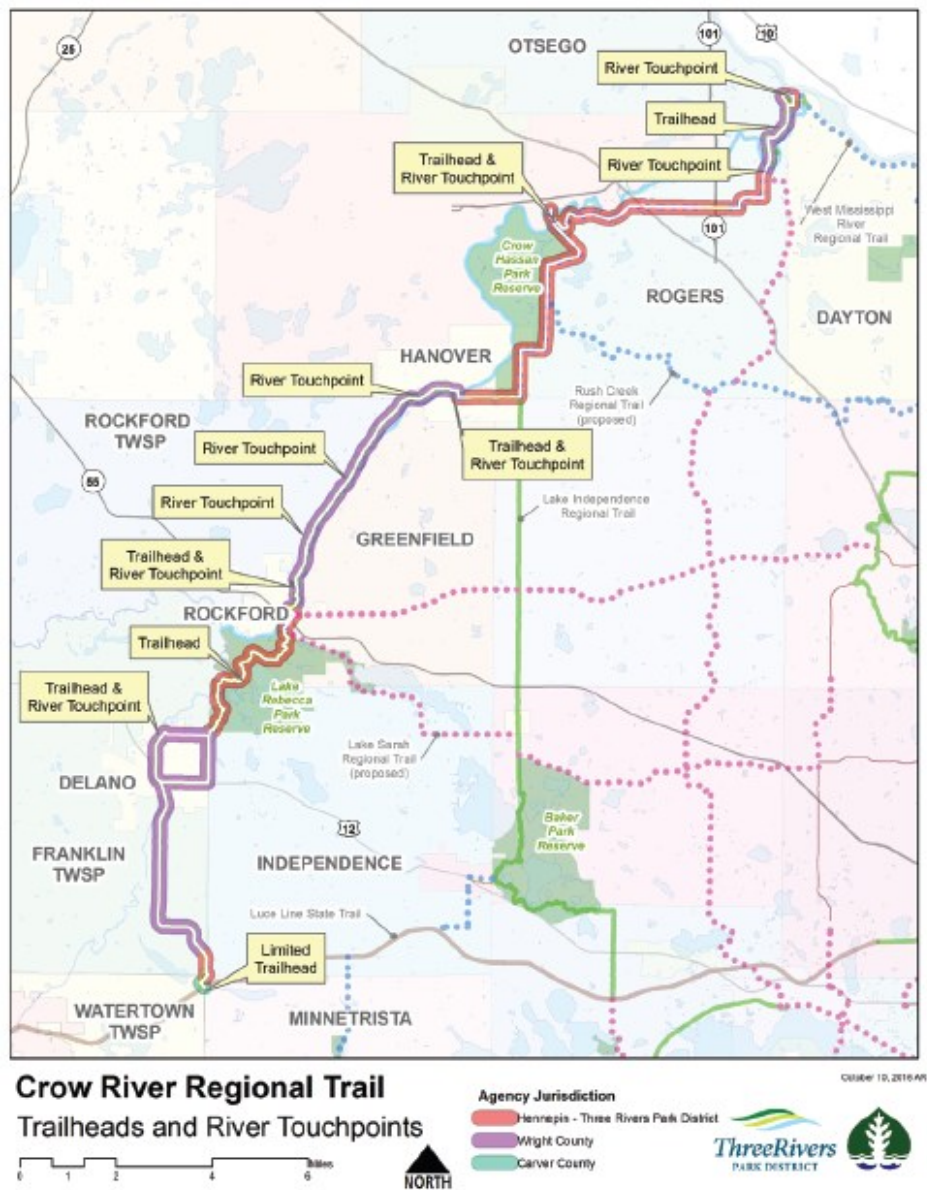
the master planning process, MnDOT staff indicated that MnDOT was committed to investigating safety concerns and work with regional trail partner agencies toward modifications.

The regional trail will be supported by wayfinding signage. It is the intent to utilize Three Rivers Park District wayfinding structures along the entire route, with cross-marketing content for all agency partners. Wayfinding structures will include system kiosks, regional trail kiosks, and directional signs. System kiosks will be located at the beginning, end, and halfway point of the regional trail corridor and will include a map of the agency partner's trails systems, regional trail rules, and general information about the agency partnership. Regional trail kiosks will be located approximately every 2 miles along the route and will provide an aerial map, a description of trail highlights, and a map of the entire trail corridor that depicts local trails, amenities, and services nearby. Directional signs will be located approximately every mile along the route and will depict the direction, the name, and the distance to major destination and points of interest along the trail. The exact location and content of the wayfinding signs will be determined within the context of local community input and the availability of public right-of-way.

Other amenities along the trail route include trailheads, Crow River touchpoints, rest stops, and bicycle repair stations. Trailheads were identified at large regional and community parks as well as public facilities along the trail route that can provide water, parking, restrooms, and picnic facilities. Rest stops will generally be provided every mile and will include amenities such as trash receptacles, benches, and bike racks. Bicycle repair stations that provide air pumps and tools to perform basic bike repairs are recommended to be located at the system kiosk locations.

Figure 8 depicts the trailheads and river touchpoints along the regional trail route.

Figure 8: Crow River Regional Trail Trailheads and River Touchpoints



The development costs for the Crow River Regional Trail are estimated to be \$34,617,394 in 2016 dollars. The costs by agency are estimated at \$17,671,670 for Three Rivers Park District, \$16,482,594 for Wright County, and \$463,130 for Carver County. Additional cost estimate details are provided in the master plan. All cost estimates include 18 percent for design and engineering and 10 percent contingencies.

Development of the regional trail will be phased and coordinated with opportunities that utilize external funding sources, road reconstruction projects, development initiatives, as well as local and regional political support.

**Conflicts**

The master plan did not identify any conflicts between the Crow River Regional Trail and any existing or proposed projects or land uses. The trail was identified in the Wright County 2011 Trail and Bikeway

Plan and the Hennepin County 2040 Bicycle Transportation Plan, as well as in local comprehensive plans. Hennepin County Transportation staff provided positive feedback on the master plan and affirmed that it is consistent with the 2040 Bicycle Transportation Plan.

The regional trail will connect with the Luce Line State Trail, which is owned and operated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). DNR staff indicated that the planned connection point to the Luce Line State Trail was acceptable and that future coordination will be necessary if additional amenities such as wayfinding are programmed at the location. The Crow River falls under the DNR's jurisdiction as a state water trail, so the river touch points identified in the master plan will provide additional opportunities for coordination such as site amenities and cross-marketing campaigns. Any new pedestrian bridge crossings, such as the one connecting Rogers and Otsego, will require DNR review and permits.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has jurisdiction of Highways 12, 55, and 101 as well as Interstate 94 along the regional trail route. Early stakeholder input on the regional trail by MnDOT staff was positive. Continued coordination with MnDOT for safety improvements as well as the interaction of the regional trail with planned roadway construction projects is important.

### **Public Services**

The master plan does not identify any non-recreational public services or facilities that are needed to accommodate the proposed regional trail.

### **Operations**

The operations described in the master plan pertain to Three Rivers Park District's portion of the regional trail corridor. The master plan encourages Wright and Carver Counties to follow these guidelines for consistency between agencies. Portions of the Crow River Regional Trail in Hennepin County will be operated under Three Rivers Park District ordinances which define the rules and regulations for the use of its regional parks and trails. The trail hours will be 5 am to 10 pm.

Three Rivers Park District's maintenance of the trail will include mowing, sweeping, and trash cleanup as well as specialized services such as non-paved trail repair and grooming. Three Rivers Park District will maintain the trail from April 1 to November 14. Local municipalities may choose to operate and maintain the trail during the winter months with a winter use permit.

The maintenance plan also includes seasonal condition assessments and periodic inspections, with subsequent maintenance actions when necessary. Routine maintenance throughout the year will include sign inventory and replacement, spring cleanup, and minor bridge and underpass repair (April-May); erosion repair, fence repair and sign replacement (July-September); and bituminous patching and striping replacement (October-November), as needed. The regional trail will receive scheduled striping, sealcoating and redevelopment under Three Rivers Park District's pavement management program. Three Rivers will seek opportunities to work with Hennepin County and local jurisdictions in conjunction with roadway projects to improve trail design and surfacing. A onetime expense of \$110,000 (in 2016 dollars) is anticipated to cover the cost of additional maintenance equipment that will be needed.

Maintenance staffing will come from the Elm Creek and Carver Work Clusters, which provide services to several regional parks and trails in the general area. An additional .5 FTE maintenance position will be needed to provide regional trail maintenance services.



Three Rivers Park District Public Safety Officers and volunteers will patrol the regional trail corridor, with the goal of educating trail visitors on the use of the trail as well as Three Rivers Park District ordinances and state statutes. No additional staffing or operational costs are anticipated to provide public safety services along the trail.

There are 4.4 miles of the regional trail that are currently in operation within Lake Rebecca (4 miles) and Crow Hassan (0.4 miles) Park Reserves. These operations and maintenance costs are currently being absorbed through existing maintenance budgets. Operations and maintenance costs for new segments of the trail in Hennepin County will be primarily funded through Three Rivers Park District's Operating Budget, with property taxes as the main source of funds. Revenue is also received from the State of Minnesota as part of the Operations and Maintenance Fund allocation administered by the Metropolitan Council. Some of the costs associated with trail surface maintenance also may be funded from the Three Rivers Park District Park Asset Management Program, which includes revenues from the State of Minnesota as well as Three Rivers Park District's general obligation bonds.

When the regional trail corridor within the Three Rivers Park District's jurisdiction is fully developed, routine operations and maintenance costs are estimated to increase by \$26,500 per year (2016 dollars). Additional costs for trail surface preservation and rehabilitation are estimated to increase by \$96,000 per year (2016 dollars), assuming a 30-year pavement life. The combined annual operations and maintenance costs are \$123,400 annually (2016 dollars).

### **Public Engagement and Participation**

A process to engage stakeholders including the public as well as affected agencies, and local units of government was identified at the beginning of the planning process. Public engagement and participation activities occurred between March 2015 and March 2016 and consisted of a variety of meetings and events.

Three Rivers Park District formed an Agency Stakeholder Committee to discuss opportunities to coordinate the regional trail master plan with current trail, bikeway, recreation, and capital improvement plans along the corridor. The committee included staff from Wright County, Carver County, Hennepin County Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Council, DNR, and MnDOT.

An Advisory Committee was also formed to understand local municipality issues and opportunities for comprehensive community outreach. The Advisory Committee was comprised of staff representatives from each community along the regional trail route. The Advisory Committee met three times between June 2015 and February 2016 to discuss challenges and opportunities, route evaluation criteria, route alternatives, the preferred route alignment, and steps for local jurisdictional review.

The community outreach process explored using alternative venues and methods instead of holding traditional open houses. The following community groups were contacted: Black Girls Do Bike Twin Cities, CROSS Food Shelf, Albertville/St. Michael Golden Age Club, Lions Club (Rockford, Hanover, Dayton), Minnesota Association of Small Cities, RiverWorks Community Helping Community, Delano Loretto United Way, Healthy Delano, and Northwest Hennepin Human Services Council. Participation varied across groups. Most groups were supportive of the regional trail, but many provided noncommittal responses regarding outreach participation.

Opportunities for public engagement occurred at community festivals, pop-up events, and design charrettes, including the Hanover Harvest Festival, Rockford River Days, Otsego Prairie Festival, Rogers Farmers Market, Minnesota Design Team Visit in Dayton, and Independent School District 728

Safe Routes to Schools Design Charrette. During these events, the public was asked to vote on their preferred route for the regional trail and give feedback on trail amenities. Over 150 people provided feedback at these events and participants were of various ages, classes, and ethnic groups.

A project website was established that included information on the project, schedules and maps, alerts for in-person participation activities, survey results, and committee meeting agendas and minutes. From June 2015 to March 2016, over 4,200 visits to the website were recorded.

A mySidewalk webpage was established to provide an online engagement forum. Over the course of a year, the webpage received over 6,300 views, but resulted in only 17 responses and interactions. An online survey was created to solicit feedback regarding route evaluation principles and proposed routes. The survey was posted from August to November 2015. The survey received over 350 responses with an estimated 86 percent approval rating. Survey responses were included in the master plan.

Based on the engagement activities, the master plan includes the recommendations moving forward:

- Continue to pursue and foster relationships with local jurisdictions and interested community groups, since often the time between planning and trail construction can span several years.
- Continue to go where people are already congregating to build relationships and get feedback.
- Plan and design the master plan project website to be a one stop shop. As described above, three different web locations were established, which was found to be confusing.

The master plan was available online from November 1, 2016 to January 6, 2017 for public review and comment. Feedback was also solicited from Hennepin County Department of Transportation, DNR, and MnDOT. The master plan will also be submitted to the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission for review and consideration of regional status for the portions of the trail that are located in Wright County.

## **Public Awareness**

Three Rivers Park District builds awareness of its facilities, programs, and services through the website, direct mail, press releases, a District-wide map, brochures, ads, and on-site promotion.

## **Accessibility**

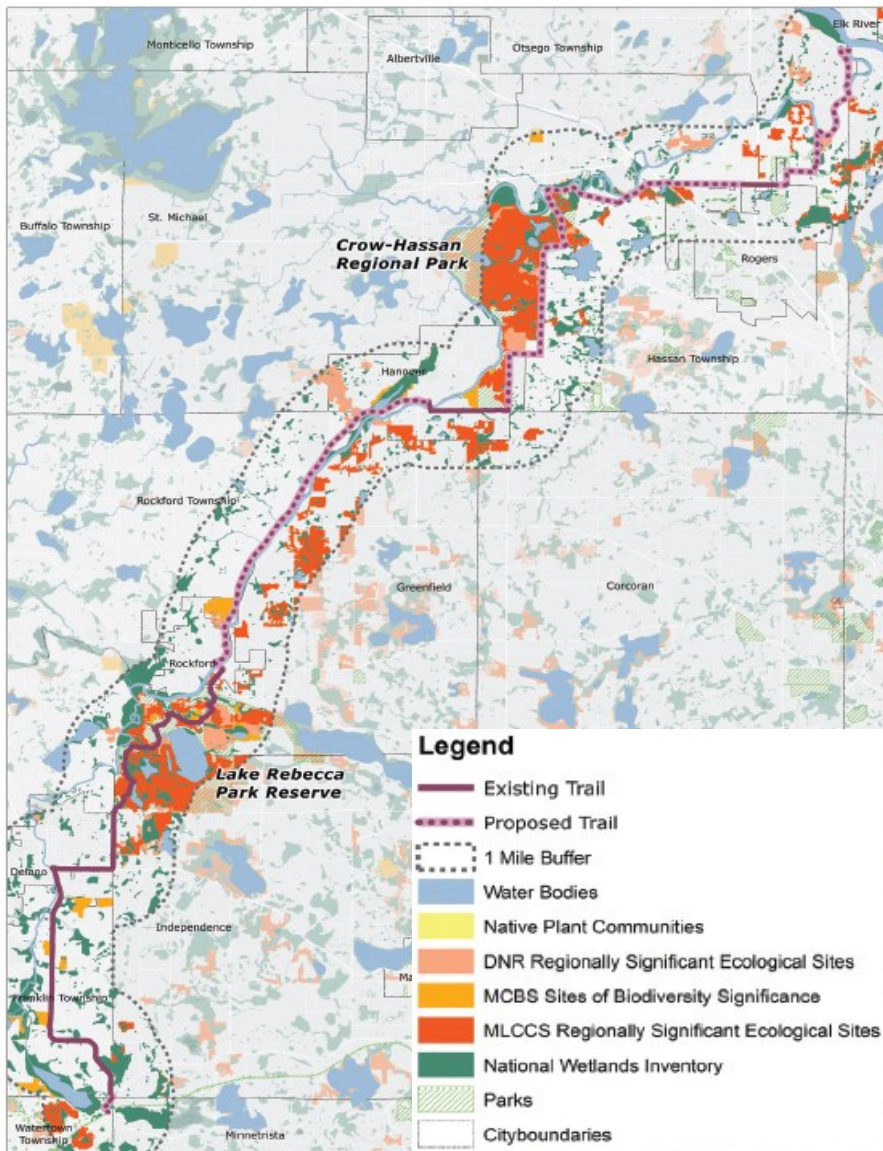
The master plan indicates that Three Rivers and their agency partners are committed to providing access and recreational opportunities to all people, including persons with disabilities, minorities, and other special-population groups. All regional trail facilities, including the trailheads and amenities will be designed in accordance with Americans with Disabilities (ADA) standards and guidelines. Three Rivers works with special interest organizations, including the Courage Kenney Rehabilitation Institute and Wilderness Inquiry to encourage participation in activities and use of park and trail facilities. Three Rivers does not charge entrance fees for use of its trails, making the regional trail available for all users.

## **Natural Resources**

Since a portion of the regional trail corridor will be located within road right-of-way, the highest quality natural resources are primarily located within the park reserves along the route. Lake Rebecca Park Reserve offers access to a gently rolling forested landscape and numerous wetland areas. Crow

Hassan Park Reserve is comprised primarily of tall grasses, forest, and wetland complexes. Figure 9 depicts the parks, wetlands, and natural resources along the Crow River Regional Trail route.

*Figure 9: Crow River Regional Trail Natural Resources*



### Stewardship Plan

Three Rivers Park District's Natural Resource Department is responsible for restoring and protecting natural resources on its property, including native plant communities, wildlife diversity and water quality. The regional trail is routed for the user to access and enjoy the natural resource corridors within Lake Rebecca and Crow Hassan Park Reserves and will be operated and maintained to highlight but not negatively affect the adjacent natural resources.

The master plan indicates that Three Rivers will use best management practices to minimize impacts on natural and cultural resources, work with adjacent property owners regarding how to protect and manage natural resources, and incorporate opportunities to enjoy and interpret the resources.

*Review by Other Council Divisions*

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

**Environmental Services – Sewers** (Roger Janzig 651-602-1119) – No comments.

**Transportation Planning** (Russ Owen 612-349-1724) –No comments.

**Local Planning Assistance** (Eric Wojchik 651-602-1330) –No comments.