

Community Development Committee

Meeting date: June 18, 2018

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of June 27, 2018

Subject: Highway 5 Regional Trail Master Plan, Carver County, Review File No. 50208-1
District(s), Member(s): 3 and 4, Council Members Jennifer Munt and Deb Barber
Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statutes 473.313; Planning Strategy 1, *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*
Staff Prepared/Presented: Raya Esmaeili, Senior Planner (651-602-1616), Local Planning Assistance
Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Highway 5 Regional Trail Master Plan.
2. Require that Carver County, prior to initiating development of the regional trail, send preliminary plans to Scott Dentz, Interceptor Engineering Manager at Metropolitan Council Environmental Services, for review in order to assess the potential impacts to the regional interceptor system.

Background

The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan (RPPP)* identifies a regional trail search corridor that generally runs along Trunk Highway 5 (TH 5), providing a direct connection to the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail.

Carver County completed a master planning process to determine the alignment of the Highway 5 Regional Trail and has submitted a master plan for Council review and approval. The Highway 5 Regional Trail will travel about 8.9 miles through the cities of Chanhassen and Victoria.

The Highway 5 Regional Trail has been planned as a linking trail. The trail will provide an off-road alternative for people to travel east and west for commuting or for recreation, with connections to downtown Chanhassen, the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, and the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail. Many local trails connect to the trail corridor and the trail will create links to popular city parks, such as Chanhassen's Lake Ann Park.

Rationale

The Highway 5 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 Highway 5 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.

Funding

The estimated development costs to implement the master plan are just above \$6,000,000; including a 20% construction, design, and engineering contingency.

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 may be awarded through the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund, the Regional Parks

Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund. Further Council action is required to approve the CIP, the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund project list, and specific grants to Carver County.

Known Support / Opposition

The Cities of Chanhassen and Victoria passed resolutions of support for the Highway 5 Regional Trail Master Plan. Carver County Board of Commissioners will adopt the master plan after it is approved by the Metropolitan Council. There is no known opposition to the master plan.

Summary of Discussion

Raya Esmaeili, Senior Planner, presented the staff report to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. Martin Walsh, Carver County Parks and Recreation Director, was also in attendance. Commissioner Kopp asked whether special programming was planned for advancement of mental and physical health. Esmaeili responded that creating and managing the trail will facilitate the outdoor recreational opportunities.

Commissioner Moeller asked about the likelihood of reaching an agreement with University of Minnesota Board of Regents for the development of the trail portion in Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. Mr. Walsh responded that Carver County has been working closely with the University of Minnesota in establishing a partnership. Chair Yarusso followed up with whether this partnership is through a permanent easement or a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Mr. Walsh responded in the meeting and provided additional information after the meeting that Carver County is developing an MOU with the City of Chanhassen and the University of Minnesota Board of Regents that will lead to the establishment of a joint powers agreement. The agreement will include the responsibilities of each party for the trail, as well as recognize how the trail land ownership is controlled and how the trail will be managed to be open and available to the public. Chair Yarusso asked about the consistency of such partnership with the *Regional Parks Policy Plan*. Staff followed up to confirm that the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* Planning Strategy 3 encourages park implementing agencies to enter into joint powers agreements regarding the acquisition and operations of regional trails.

The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission approved the proposed action with a unanimous vote at its meeting on June 5, 2018.

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

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For the Community Development Committee meeting of June 18, 2018

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awarded through the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund, the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund. Further Council action is required to approve the CIP, the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund project list, and specific grants to Carver County.

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Analysis

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

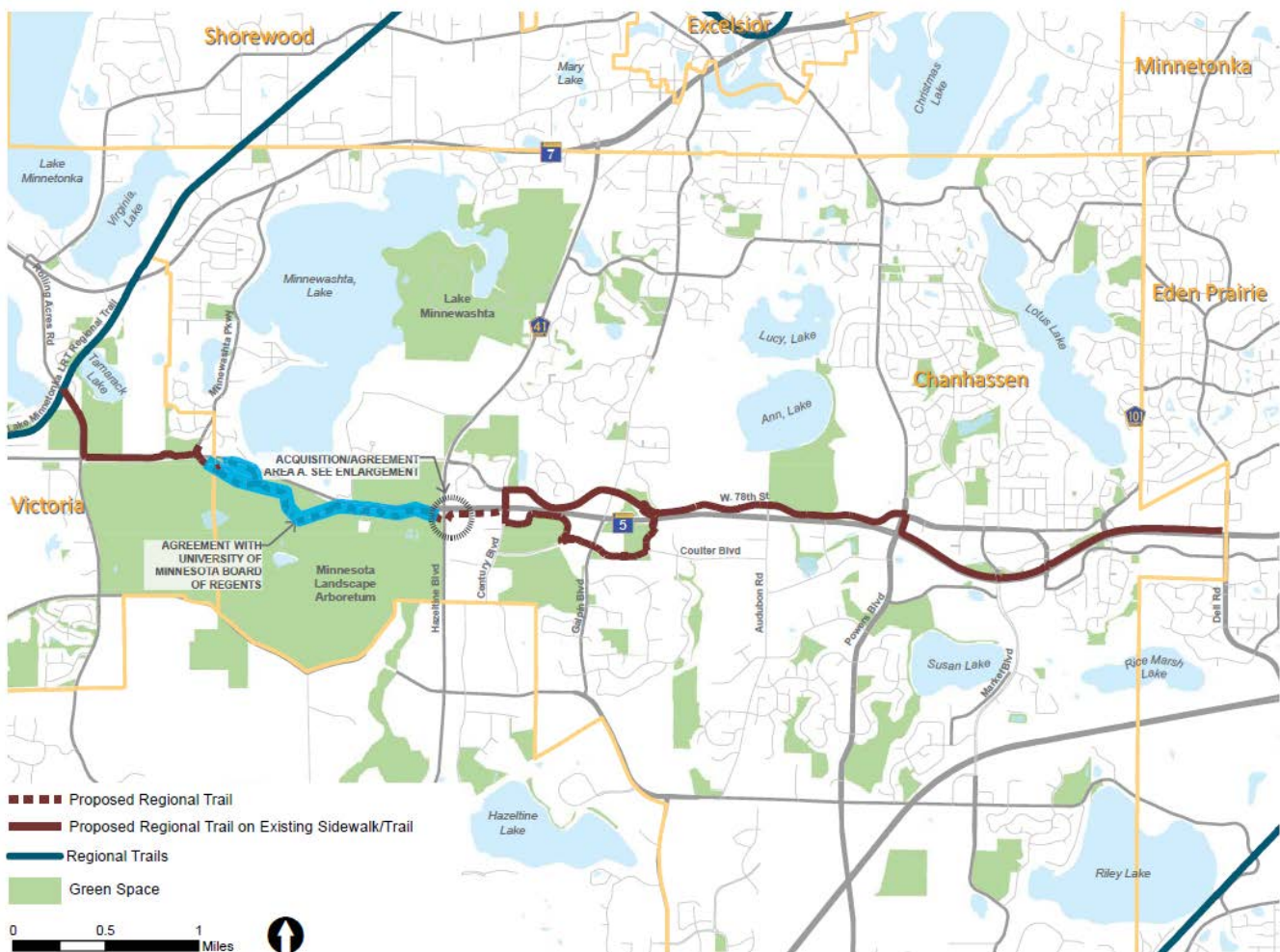
Boundaries and Acquisition

The TH 5 Regional Trail will travel 8.9 miles through Chanhassen and Victoria, providing a direct connection to the Lake Minnetonka LRT. The eastern boundary of the proposed trail corridor will be two miles from the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail, and existing local trails that extend along TH 5 in Hennepin County will provide trail connections to this regional trail.

Acquisition Needs: There are two locations within the trail corridor that will require agreements with the property owner for trail development. The first is Area A where additional land at the southeast corner of the TH 41/TH 5 intersection is needed to provide additional space for trail and underpass development. The second is Area B where an agreement with the University Board of Regents is needed to develop a trail within the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.

The cost of Area A right-of-way is based on 2017 tax assessment value is \$96,000. There may be other options including easements or agreements with property owners. The Highway 5 Regional Trail alignment and acquisition areas are shown in Figure 1.

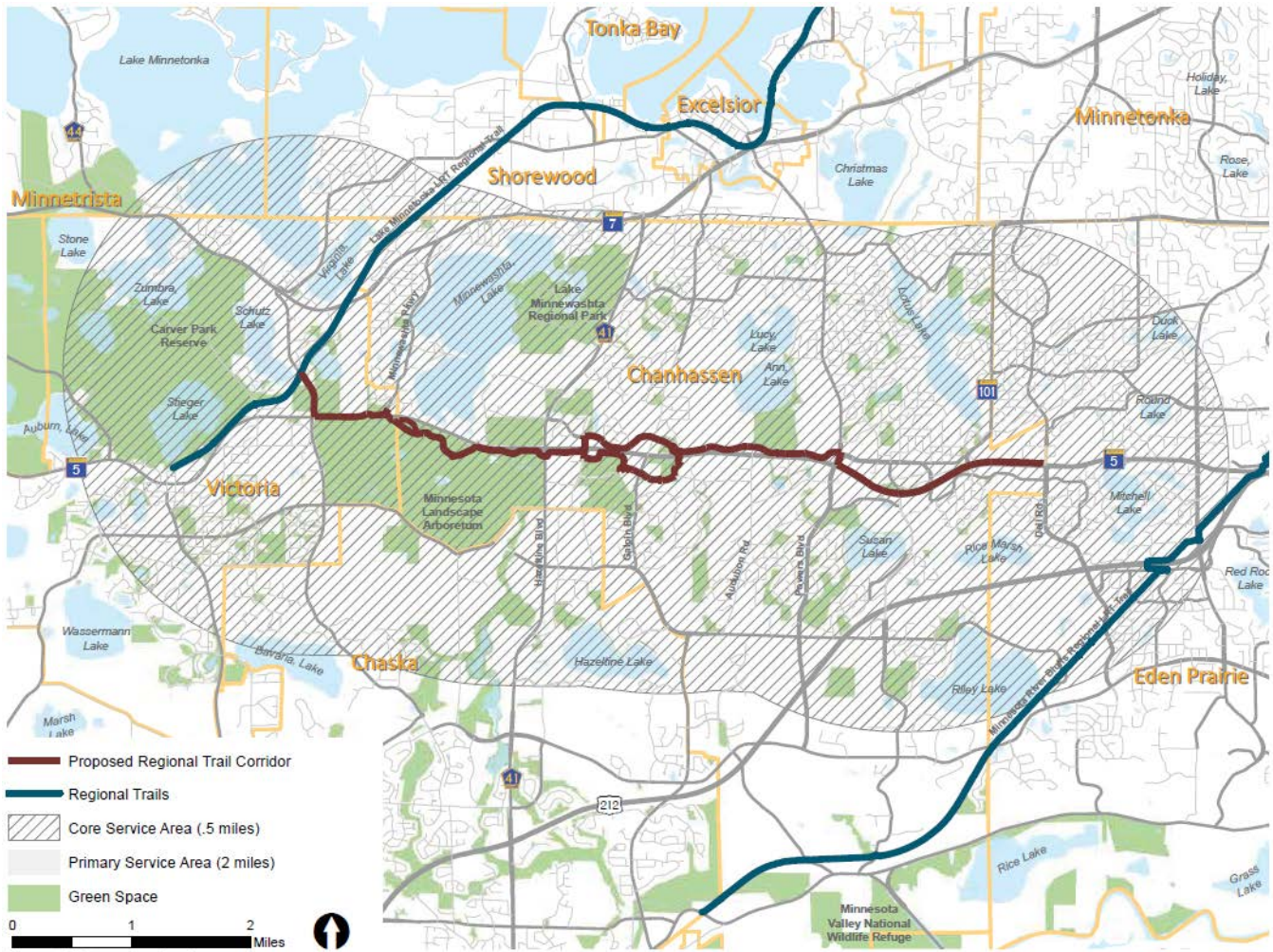
Figure 1: Highway 5 Regional Trail Route and Acquisition Areas



Demand Forecast

Carver County identifies a primary service area of two miles on all sides of the proposed trail corridor (Figure 2). Using a quantitative measuring methodology, the Plan provides details specific to the primary service area for the proposed trail corridor.

Figure 2: Highway 5 Regional Trail Primary Service Area



Based on the Metropolitan Council's *Thrive MSP 2040* forecasts, the Highway 5 Regional Trail's primary service area's population is anticipated to increase by approximately 22,000 people. The master plan discusses the importance of multi-use trails for all ages of people who want to spend time outdoors and stay physically active.

Approximately 41 percent of the residents in the primary service area are currently between the ages of 40 and 64. The Highway 5 Regional Trail provides a recreational opportunity for older residents. A continuous, wide, and separated trail with limited elevation changes will serve this population well. This trail will also serve the population under the age of 18, the second largest population group in the primary service area, by providing a safe bicycle route to schools, parks, and other destinations.

The master plan acknowledges the Metropolitan Council's forecast that approximately 40 percent of the population will be people of color in 2040. Currently 10.47 percent of the primary service area population are non-white, but a primary objective of the master plan is to accommodate present and

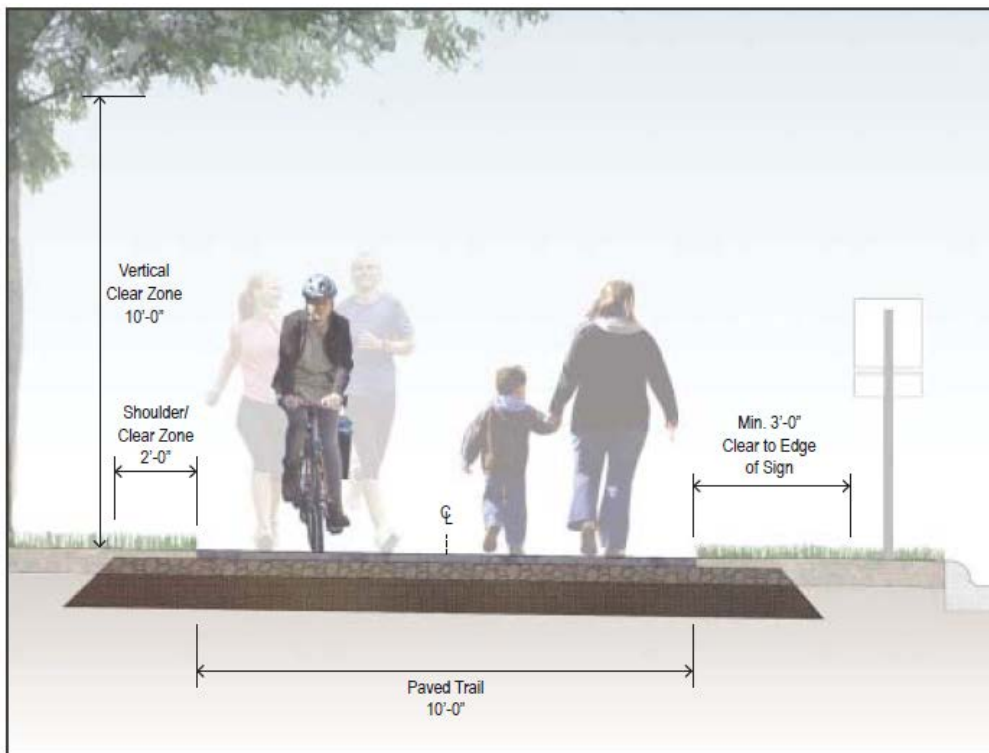
future trail users of all backgrounds. One strategy that the master plan considers exploring is providing Universal Pictorial Signage.

Other trends that the master plan addresses in affecting recreation demand includes concern for physical and mental health. The plan discusses the direct correlation between being active and spending time outdoors and improved physical and mental health. The outdoor experience offered along the Highway 5 Regional Trail will contribute positively to the collective well-being of the communities along the trail corridor.

Development Concept

The Highway 5 Regional Trail will provide residents of Carver County with trail access to downtown Chanhassen, the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, and the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail. The intended uses include walking, jogging, in-line skating, bicycling, and other uses mandated by state law including, but not limited to, non-motor electric personal assisted devices. Motorized vehicle and equestrian uses will be prohibited, except for maintenance and law enforcement, or permitted for ADA access.

Figure 3: Typical Trail Section



The trail design for the Highway 5 Regional Trail is a 10-foot wide paved surface separated from vehicular traffic (*Figure 3*). In some sections the trail will remain in its current eight-foot width until funding is available for upgrades. A bituminous trail surface is identified as preferred because it is cost-effective, less prone to erosion than aggregate surfaces, and provides for a more desirable trail user experience. In circumstances where right-of-way is limited, the trail will include a minimum paved two-foot-wide clear zone separating it from the roadway to buffer trail users from motorists.

Several factors will be taken into consideration as final designs for unconstructed segments are implemented, such as available right-of-way width, topography and drainage impacts, existing vegetation, curb cuts and driveway crossings, overhead and subsurface utilities, intersection crossings, and proximity to adjacent buildings and businesses.

Regional trail segments will be designed in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local codes.

The plan identifies several primary and supporting trail design elements. Primary elements include trail crossings and trail underpasses and supporting elements include trail amenities, wayfinding signage, rest stops, drainage features, and methods for addressing sub-standard trail segments.

There are numerous locations where the regional trail crosses higher volume roadways. The types of trail crossing treatments appropriate for each crossing location will be designed in accordance with industry best practices to minimize conflicts between trail users and roadway traffic. Trail underpasses are a good alternative to at-grade crossings of busy roadways. Currently there are three trail underpasses located at Bluff Creek just north of the Chanhassen Recreation Center, Minnewashta Parkway, and at Lake Ann Park. Two additional underpasses are proposed as part of this master plan at TH 41 just south of TH 5 and Century Boulevard at TH 5. Groundwater levels, existing grades, and sufficient right-of-way are all important considerations to assess when locating underpasses.

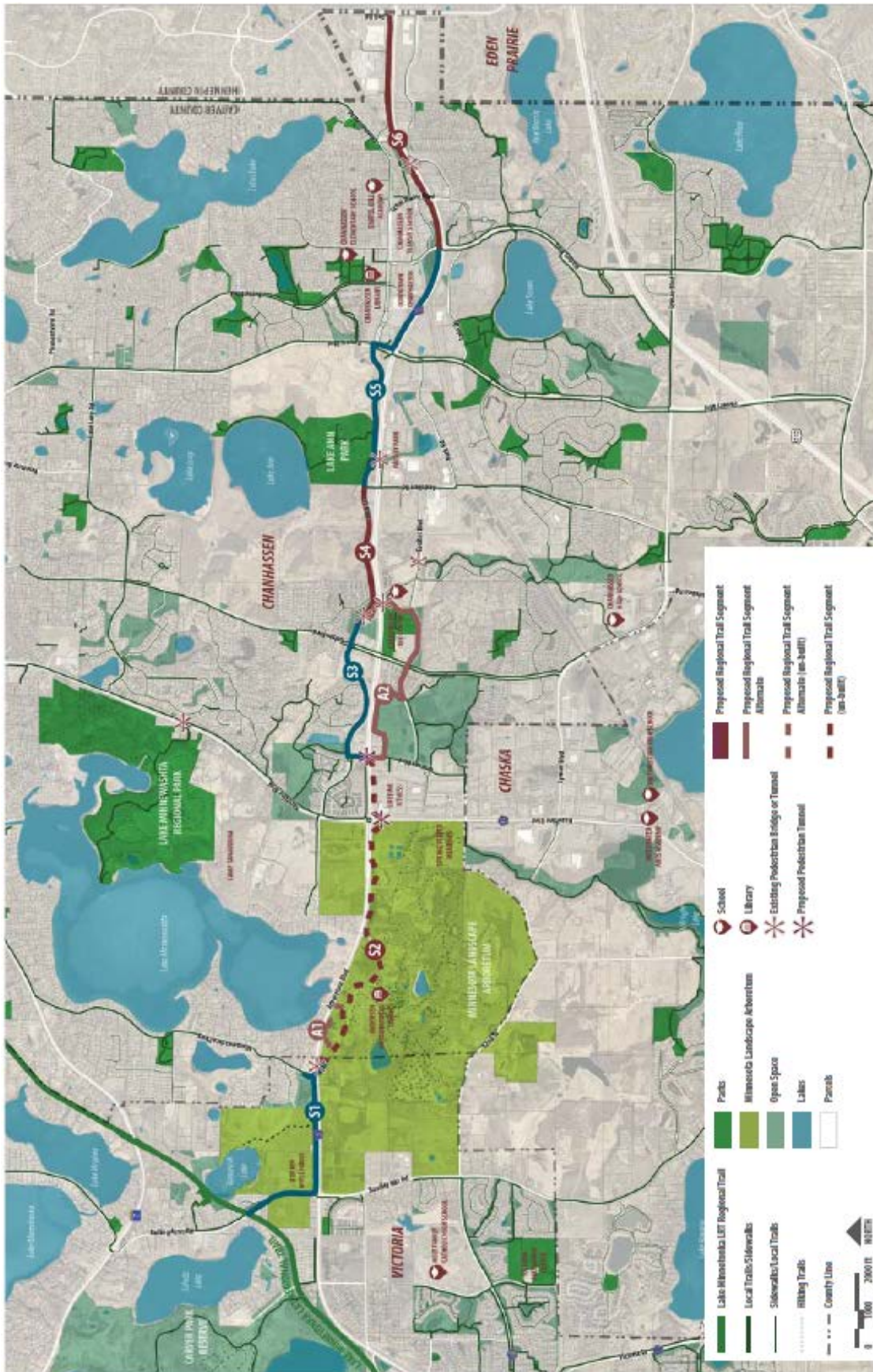
Wayfinding signage will support the regional trail. Wayfinding structures will include kiosks, directional signs, rest stops, and traffic signage. Kiosks will provide trail users with a map of the park or trail system, the park or trail rules, and general information about the park or trail. Directional signs depict the direction, the name, and the distance to major destinations and points of interest on the trail. Rest stops are located at key locations and provide places for trail users to stop and rest along the trail and an area for amenities such as benches, and bicycle racks. The cost per rest stop is approximately \$6,000 each (2017 dollars). The trail will also incorporate traffic control signs and devices, such as trail stop signs and trail crossing signage.

In many locations stormwater flows over the trail pavement and onto the adjacent roadway where it is collected and conveyed by the roadway stormwater drainage system. In areas where the regional trail is on an independent route, such as through parks or other green spaces, alternative stormwater best management practices, such as rain gardens and infiltration swales, may be explored during the design phase of the regional trail.

Eight existing trail segments do not meet regional trail design standards. Carver County intends to bring existing segments of the trail into compliance when reconstruction is needed or other opportunities present themselves.

The master plan divides the trail into six segments that are composed of developed and undeveloped trail (*Figure 4*).

Figure 4: Highway 5 Regional Trail Segments Map



Segment 1- Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail to Underpass at Minnewashta Parkway:

Segment 1 measures approximately 1.2 miles long and extends from Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail to the underpass at Minnewashta Parkway, near the west trail entrance into the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum (Figure 5). While the entire length of segment 1 utilizes existing trail, trail widening and intersection upgrades will be required to meet ADA and the preferred regional trail width standards.

Figure 5: Segment 1 Existing Trail Width



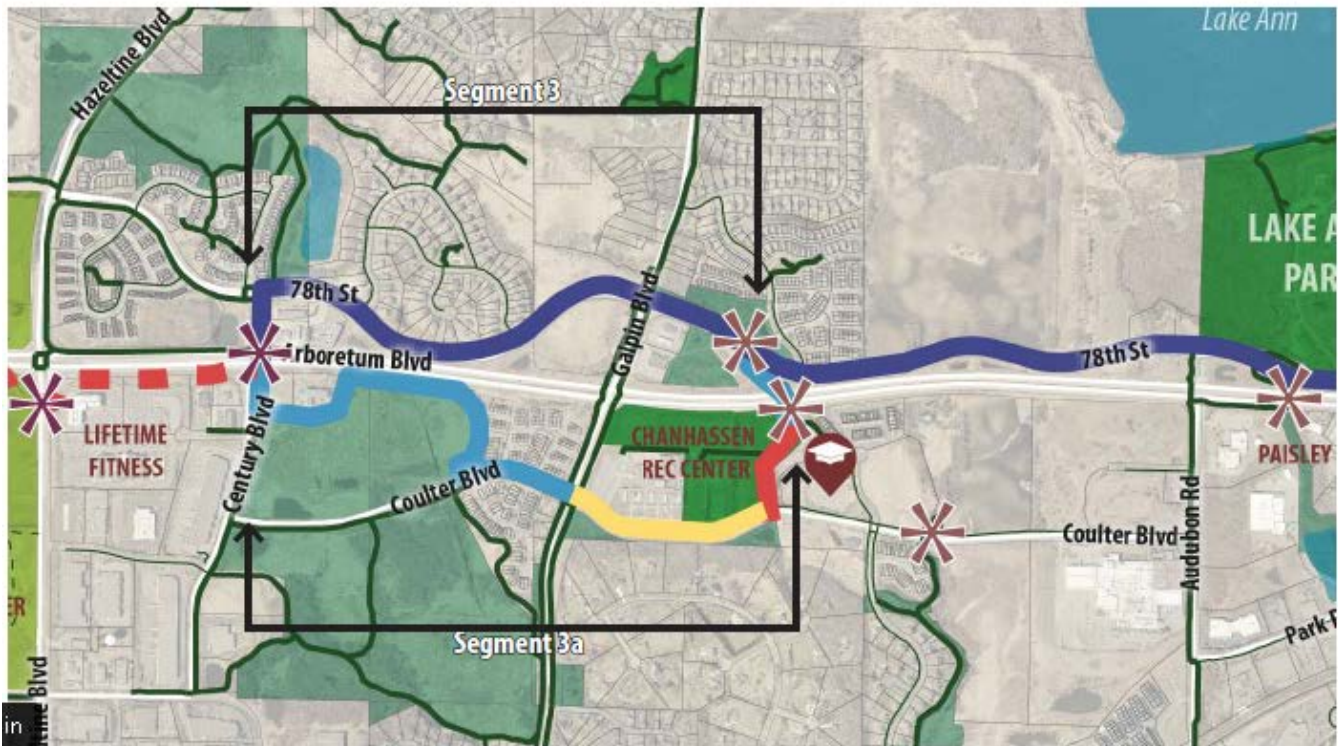
Segment 2- Underpass at Minnesota Landscape Arboretum to Century Boulevard: Segment 2 measures approximately 1.8 miles long and extends from the underpass at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum to Century Boulevard (*Figure 6*). Wetland impacts and tree removals will be required to construct a trail along Arboretum Drive. An alternative trail alignment with less wetland impacts utilizes an old road alignment through the upland forest north of the wetland complex. Both trail options will utilize the same route from the existing parking lots to Century Boulevard. Some portions require retaining walls and tree removals to construct.

Figure 6: Segment 2 Existing Trail Width



Segment 3- Century Boulevard to Bluff Creek Underpass: Segment 3 measures approximately 1.1 miles long and extends from Century Boulevard and TH 5 to the Bluff Creek Underpass (*Figure 7*). When TH 5 is reconstructed or when funds are available, a trail underpass will be installed under TH 5 at Century Boulevard. Pedestrian ramps will need to be upgraded to meet ADA standards. Since the underpass at TH 5 and Century Boulevard is several years from development, an interim alignment (Segment 3A) that utilizes the existing Bluff Creek Underpass is proposed. This interim alternative alignment, measuring about 1.5 miles, will provide a safe crossing of the busy TH 5 until an underpass is constructed and/or until pedestrian ramp and other safety improvements are made at Century Boulevard and TH 5.

Figure 7: Segment 3 Existing Trail Width



Segment 4- Bluff Creek Underpass to Audubon Road: Segment 4 measures approximately 0.6 miles long and extends from the Bluff Creek Underpass to Audubon Road, along West 78th Street (Figure 8).

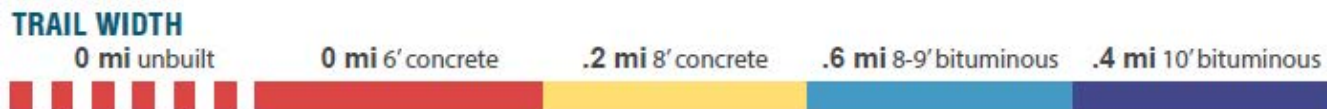
Segment 5- Audubon Road to Market Boulevard: Segment 5 measures approximately 1.5 miles long and extends from Audubon Road to Market Boulevard (Figure 8). Pedestrian ramps will require improvements to meet ADA standards. Several notable destinations can be reached by local trail connections, including downtown Chanhasseen, the Chanhasseen Library, and Paisley Park.

Figure 8: Segments 4 and 5 Existing Trail Width



Segment 6- Market Boulevard to Dell Road: Segment 6 measures approximately 1.2 miles long and extends from Market Boulevard to Dell Road/Carver County-Hennepin County line (Figure 9). The proposed TH 5 Regional Trail ends at Dell Road, but an existing local trail extends approximately 1.9 miles along the north side of TH 5 where it connects to the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail.

Figure 8: Segment 6 Existing Trail Width



Conflicts

The master plan identifies potential conflicts with existing utilities that may arise during final design of the unbuilt segments. Further coordination with utilities will be required during design development to ensure that the trail is constructed without impacting existing utility infrastructure.

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

Carver County manages and operates its park and trail system with internal staff including 7.5 permanent employees. In addition, approximately 40 seasonal employees are hired each year as life guards, maintenance workers and gate attendants. The Parks Division has an annual operations and maintenance budget of approximately \$1.36 million to operate and maintain the County’s park and trail

system. The Highway 5 Regional Trail will be overseen by professional public safety, operations and maintenance staff. The trail consists of existing local trail segments in both Chanhassen and Victoria. City maintenance crews will continue to maintain the trails for day-to-day and annual trail maintenance activities.

Maintenance operations will include seasonal condition assessments and periodic inspections, followed by necessary maintenance actions. Inspections will address possible safety issues, vandalism, and non-routine maintenance concerns.

There will be no additional maintenance or operations cost to the regional trail system for the developed segments of trail that are currently operated and maintained by the cities of Victoria and Chanhassen. The cities will continue to maintain the local trail segments until improvements and agreements are reached to convert these sections of trail to the regional system in accordance with their trail maintenance programs. Annual operations and maintenance costs for the new trail segment between Century Boulevard and Minnewashta Parkway will cost an estimated \$3,000 in personnel wages and \$5,000 in equipment for a total of \$8,000.

Carver County and the cities of Chanhassen and Victoria will split costs 50/50 for preservation, repair, and replacement of bituminous surface.

Public Engagement and Participation

Carver County staff developed a plan to provide information to the public in multiple ways. Two open houses and two pop-up events were held. The County also distributed online surveys.

A Highway 5 Regional Trail Task Force Committee was established that included representatives from the cities of Chanhassen and Victoria, Carver Community Public Health, Carver County, Carver County Parks Commission, Carver County Parks, Eastern Carver County Trails, Eastern Carver County Schools, University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, and Lifetime Fitness. The Task Force was responsible for coordinating with governing bodies, assisting in implementing public participation opportunities, and providing information and support necessary to identify feasible trail routes. The full Task Force met three times. These meetings often involved other individuals, groups, and organizations as detailed route information was exchanged.

The public open houses were held at the Chanhassen Recreation Center, which is centrally located. A total of approximately 86 people attended the two open houses held two months apart.

Carver County also held two public pop-up events, allowing for more in depth, one-on-one conversations. The pop-up events were held at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum during the annual Spring Bud Run 5K Race, and Chanhassen Lifetime Fitness Center. Approximately 140 people were engaged through the pop-up events and provided input on the master plan.

The County also established an online questionnaire that was promoted on the County's web page and social media site. Using the questionnaire, 86 people, mostly recreational trail users, provided comments. There was a strong preference to utilize existing trail underpasses rather than at grade crossing to cross TH 5 even if it required traveling farther.

Public Awareness

Carver County builds awareness of its facilities, programs, and services through the website, press releases, event planning and promotional materials.

Carver County Parks engages the public through several on-line and social media tools. The tools will be updated as new technologies become available.

Accessibility

The master plan indicates that all regional trail facilities, including the trailheads and amenities will be designed in accordance with Americans with Disabilities (ADA) standards and guidelines. Crossing major roadways is necessary because the trail passes through fully developed urban areas. Carver County will investigate opportunities to coordinate grade-separated pedestrian crossings with appropriate agencies, and modify, or add traffic signals as necessary. Carver County does not charge entrance fees for use of its trails, making the regional trail available to all users.

Review by Other Council Divisions

Transportation – Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (Steve Elmer 651-602-1756) –

The master plan should acknowledge that TH 5 is designated in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* as a Tier 1 alignment on the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network, making it a high priority for regional transportation investment. This could be included in the Introduction (p. 1) and under “Implementation” on page 38. Staff encourage the inclusion of a map showing this designation and similar in scale to the map of regional trail corridors shown in Figure 11 (p. 14).

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

Environmental – Sewers (Roger Janzig 651-602-1119) – The construction of any new or updating of existing trails may have an impact on multiple Metropolitan Council Interceptors in multiple locations. To assess the potential impacts to our interceptor system, prior to initiating any proposed project, preliminary plans should be sent to Scott Dentz, Interceptor Engineering Manager (651-602-4503) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review and comment.

Metro Transit (Steve Mahowald 612-349-7775) – Current transit service along this corridor, provided by SouthWest Transit, ends at Great Plains Blvd and Market Blvd just west of the Chanhassen Transit Station. The plan appropriately addresses the need to highlight connections from the trail to that facility.

Transportation Planning (Russ Owen 651-602-1724) – No additional comments.

Local Planning Assistance – Land Use (Angela Torres 651-602-1566) – The trail utilizes a combination of existing local trails, existing regional trails, and unbuilt trail segments in Victoria and Chanhassen in Carver County along TH 5. The land uses along the trail segments described in the Master Plan vary but are compatible with the proposed trail use. There may be a need for communities to incorporate the Master Plan’s information in their local comprehensive plans.