

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Report

For the Community Development Committee meeting of May 20, 2019

Subject: Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment, Washington County

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment.
2. Require that Washington County Parks, prior to initiating development of the regional trail, send preliminary plans to the Engineering Services Assistant Manager at the Metropolitan Council's Environmental Services Division, for review in order to assess the potential impacts to the regional interceptor system

Summary of Committee Discussion/Questions

Tracey Kinney, Planner, presented the staff report to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission at its meeting on May 2, 2019. Sandy Breuer, Parks Director and Connor Schaefer, Planner for Washington County Public Works Department were also in attendance.

Chair Yarusso requested that the trail accommodate multiple users at the horse camp with a wider trail. Chair Yarusso asked for clarification on the farm on the north side of the park reserve. Schaefer responded that the farm is owned and managed as agricultural land by Washington County.

Commissioner Taylor requested information on the trail alignment as compared to existing bicycle commuter routes. Schaefer responded that connecting the regional trail to the park reserve was a goal that shaped the alignment. Chair Yarusso stated that there will likely be two types of users: recreational riders using the regional trail and commuters riding on more direct routes.

Commissioner Kemery requested information on the existing Union Pacific Railroad. Schaefer responded that trains pass through a couple of times a day moving at slow speeds. Commissioner Kemery asked for clarification on the 58th Street and Minnesota State Highway 36 pedestrian crossings. Schaefer responded that the 58th Street overpass is a spur and the crossing at Minnesota State Highway 36 is an overpass. Commissioner Kemery advised that crushed granite trails need to be continually tamped down to remain accessible.

Commissioner Moeller requested information on how the master plan amendment addresses equity. Schaefer responded that equity was integrated into an inclusive approach to the project's community engagement plan. The input received shaped the trail alignment, design, wayfinding, and safety strategies.

Council Member Atlas-Ingebretson requested information on Washington County's efforts in promoting awareness and providing ongoing activities that build understanding and interest in the regional park reserve and trail. Schaefer responded that Washington County program staff conduct ongoing programming efforts.

The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission approved the proposed action unanimously.

Metropolitan Open Space and Parks Committee

Meeting date: May 2, 2019

For the Community Development Committee meeting of May 20, 2019

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of June 12, 2019

Subject: Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment, Washington County

MPOSC District, Member: F – Cecily Harris

Council District, Member: 12 – Francisco J. Gonzalez

Policy/Legal Reference: Minn. Stat. § 473.313; *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* Chapter 5, Planning Policy – Strategy 1

Staff Prepared/Presented: Tracey Kinney, Planner (651-602-1029), Regional Parks and Natural Resources

Division/Department: Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment.
2. Require that Washington County Parks, prior to initiating development of the regional trail, send preliminary plans to the Engineering Services Assistant Manager at the Metropolitan Council's Environmental Services Division, for review in order to assess the potential impacts to the regional interceptor system

Background

Central Greenway Regional Trail is located in the northeastern part of the Regional Parks System and centrally located within Washington County. When completed the trail will total 25 miles connecting Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, Lake Elmo Park Reserve, and Big Marine Park Reserve. The north-south trail consists of three segments that are in various stages of planning and development:

- South segment: a 9.65 mile existing and planned trail that has a 2017 Council-approved master plan ([Business Item 2017-182](#)).
- Lake Elmo segment: an 8.6 mile regional trail search corridor that connects the south and north segments and is the subject of this request.
- North segment: a 6.75 mile regional trail search corridor, that will be planned in the future.

Washington County is requesting a master plan amendment to the Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan to add the Lake Elmo segment. The Lake Elmo segment extends north from the Council-approved master plan for the south segment, beginning at Interstate 94 (I-94) in Woodbury, continuing through Lake Elmo Park Reserve all the way to Minnesota State Highway 36 in Oak Park Heights.

Rationale

The Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment is consistent with the requirements of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* including Chapter 5, Planning Policy -- Strategy 1, Master plan requirements.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan advances the Thrive outcome of livability by enhancing the quality of life in the region through increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation.

Funding

The estimated cost to implement the master plan is \$12,335,314 which includes \$1,417,000 for land acquisition, \$6,873,359 for development, approximately \$2,044,955 for a railroad underpass alternative, and \$2,000,000 for a pedestrian bridge. Approval of this master plan makes the acquisition and development costs eligible for Regional Parks System funding but does not commit the Council to any funding.

Known Support / Opposition

The Washington County Board of Commissioners approved the draft master plan amendment for Metropolitan Council consideration on February 19, 2019. Additionally, the Washington County Manager and the Washington County Parks and Open Space Commission provided a letter of support that is dated December 14, 2018.

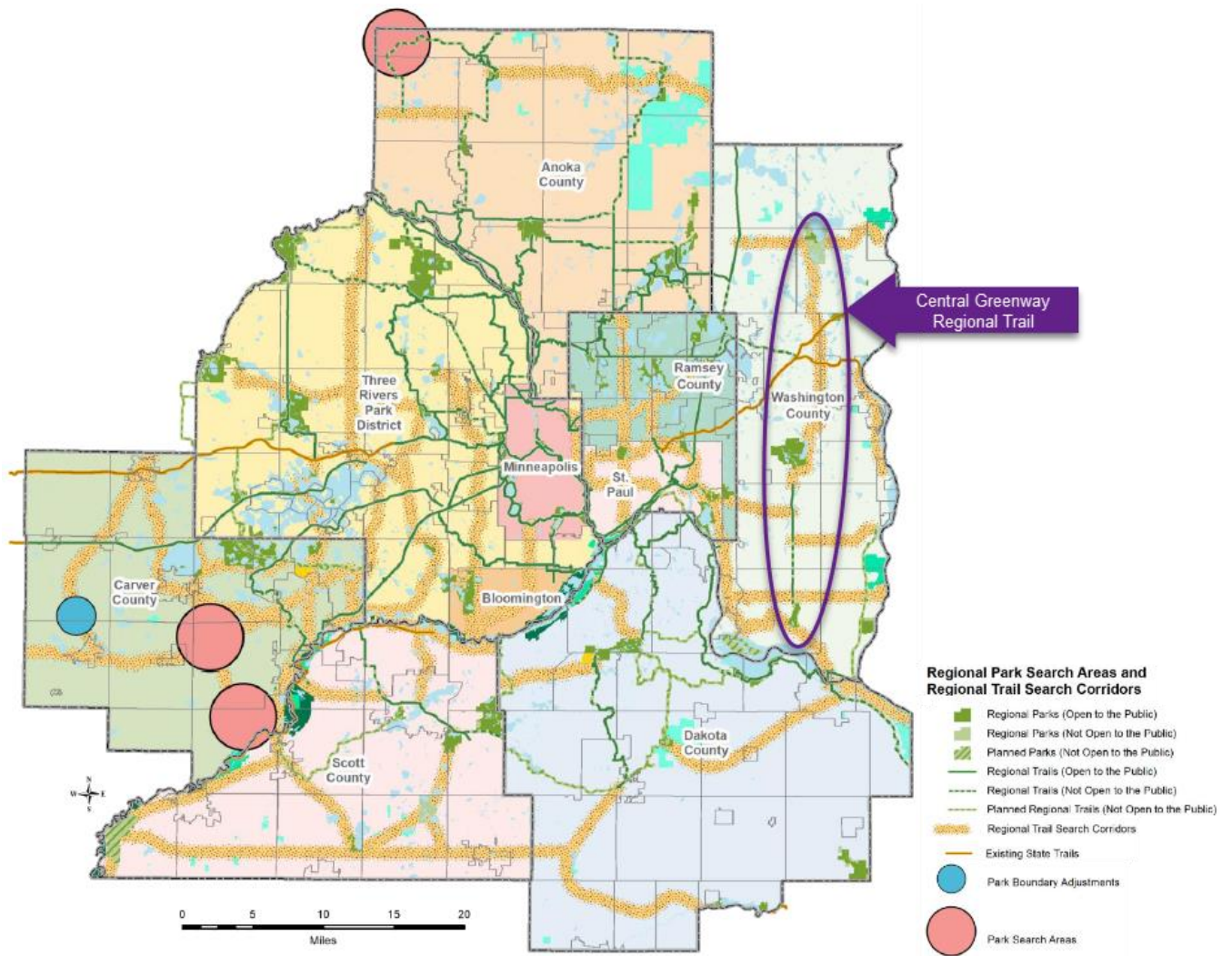
Analysis

Planning Strategy 1 of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that master plans for regional parks, park reserves, and special recreation features address each of the 9 items listed below. As noted above, because Washington County submitted this master plan amendment prior to May 1, 2019, the Council is reviewing this amendment under master planning requirements of the 2015 version of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

Boundaries and Acquisition Costs

Central Greenway Regional Trail is located in the northeast part of the Regional Parks System and centrally located within Washington County (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Location of the Central Greenway Regional Trail Feature within the Regional Park System



Central Greenway Regional Trail is located centrally located within Washington County. (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Location of the Central Greenway Regional Trail Feature within the Regional Park System

Regional Parks System Washington County

Regional Parks

- Regional Parks
- Park Reserves
- Special Recreation Features
- Planned Units
- Regional Trail Corridor Land

Regional Trails

- Existing
- Planned

Regional Park Search Areas and Regional Trail Search Corridors

- Boundary Adjustments
- Search Areas
- Regional Trail Search Corridors
- Regional Trails - 2040 System Additions

- Existing State Trails
- Lakes and Major Rivers
- Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
- State Parks
- State Wildlife Management Areas (Publicly Accessible)
- Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA)
- Other Parks and Preserves
- Main Roads & Highways



The Central Greenway Regional Trail will extend from Big Marine Park Reserve in May Township south to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park in the City of Cottage Grove. The trail will be a Regional Linking Trail, as defined by the Metropolitan Council. Linking trails are intended to provide connections between regional parks or park reserves. The Central Greenway Regional Trail includes three segments (Figure 3).

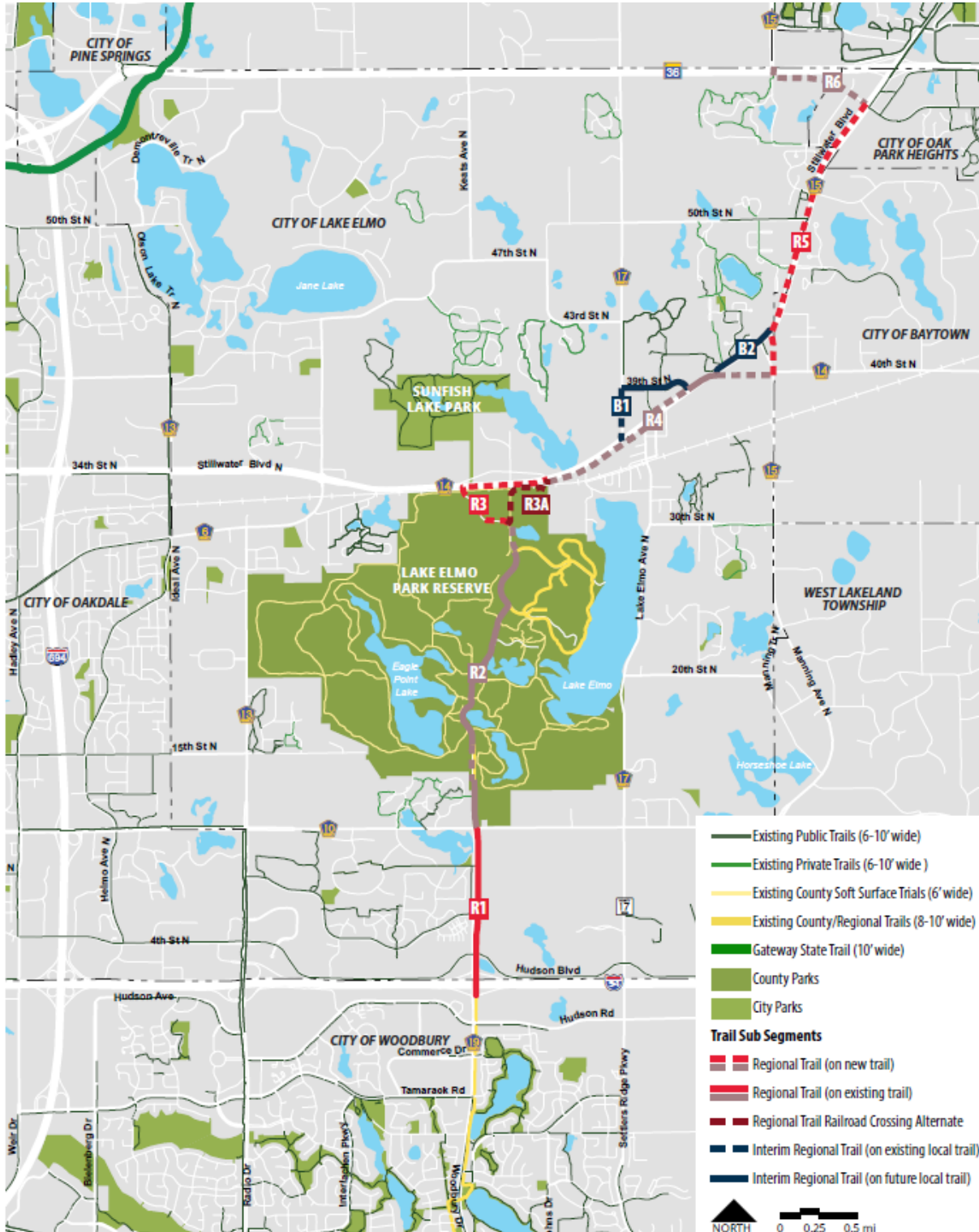
- South segment (shown in purple): a 9.65 mile existing and planned trail that has a 2017 Council-approved master plan ([Business Item 2017-182](#)).
- Lake Elmo segment (shown in red): an 8.6-mile regional trail search corridor that connects the south and north segments and is the subject of this request.
- North segment (shown in black): a 6.75-mile regional trail search corridor, that will be planned in the future.

Figure 3: Location of the Central Greenway Regional Trail within the Washington County System



This trail master plan amendment plans the middle segment of the Central Greenway Regional Trail that extends from I-94 to Minnesota State Highway 36, and is referred to as the Lake Elmo Segment. The Lake Elmo Segment consists of 5.25 miles of unbuilt trail primarily along Stillwater Boulevard with small unbuilt segments located within Lake Elmo Park Reserve and 3.35 miles of existing trail primarily between Lake Elmo Park Reserve and I-94. (Figure 4). The corridor is well suited for a regional trail. The topography is gentle and few wetland impacts are anticipated.

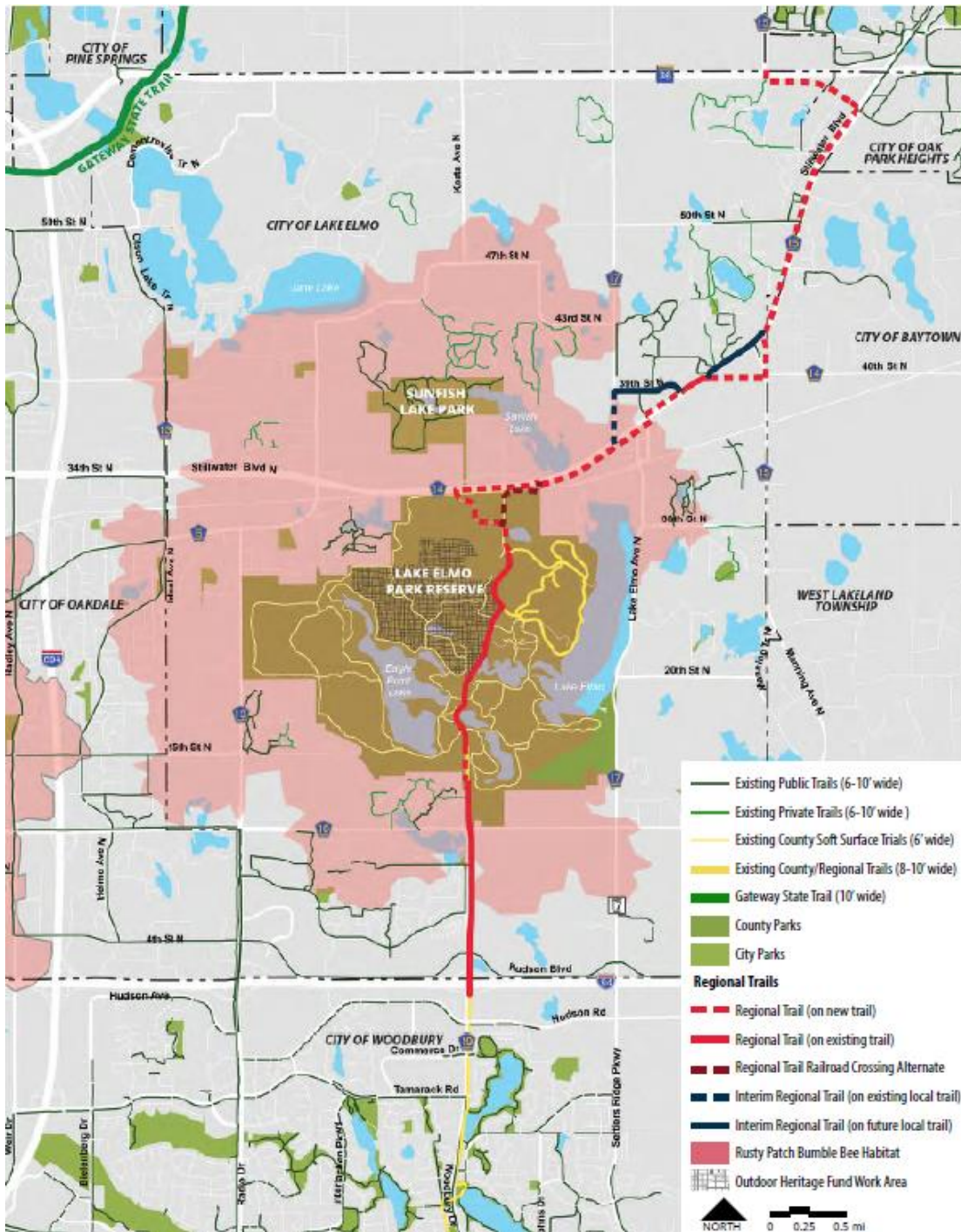
Figure 4: Lake Elmo Segment Boundary



Natural Resources

The Lake Elmo Segment is located primarily in the suburban edge community of Lake Elmo. The corridor makes a direct connection to Lake Elmo Park Reserve and extends near Sunfish Lake Park. The Central Greenway Regional Trail provides direct access to high quality natural resources in Lake Elmo Park Reserve. A few of the land cover classifications found within Lake Elmo Park Reserve are oak savanna, prairie, aspen glade, and mixed deciduous forest. These native plant communities provide great habitat for species such as the Rusty Patch Bumblebee which has been found close to the trail corridor and is illustrated in Figure 4. During design and construction of the trail, extra measures will be taken to ensure high quality habitat areas are not impacted.

Figure 4: Habitat



Acquisitions

The Central Greenway Regional Trail north of Lake Elmo Park Reserve is mostly undeveloped. Washington County will coordinate with the local municipalities and other potentially affected agencies, including the Minnesota Department of Transportation, as needed, if additional right-of-way is necessary for trail development. The proposed trail alignments along Stillwater Boulevard have been identified with the understanding that future roadway improvements, such as widening the road to four lanes, would require additional right-of-way. If, in the future, the County expands the roadway and additional land is acquired, it assumes that the proposed roadway plans will include trails in the design.

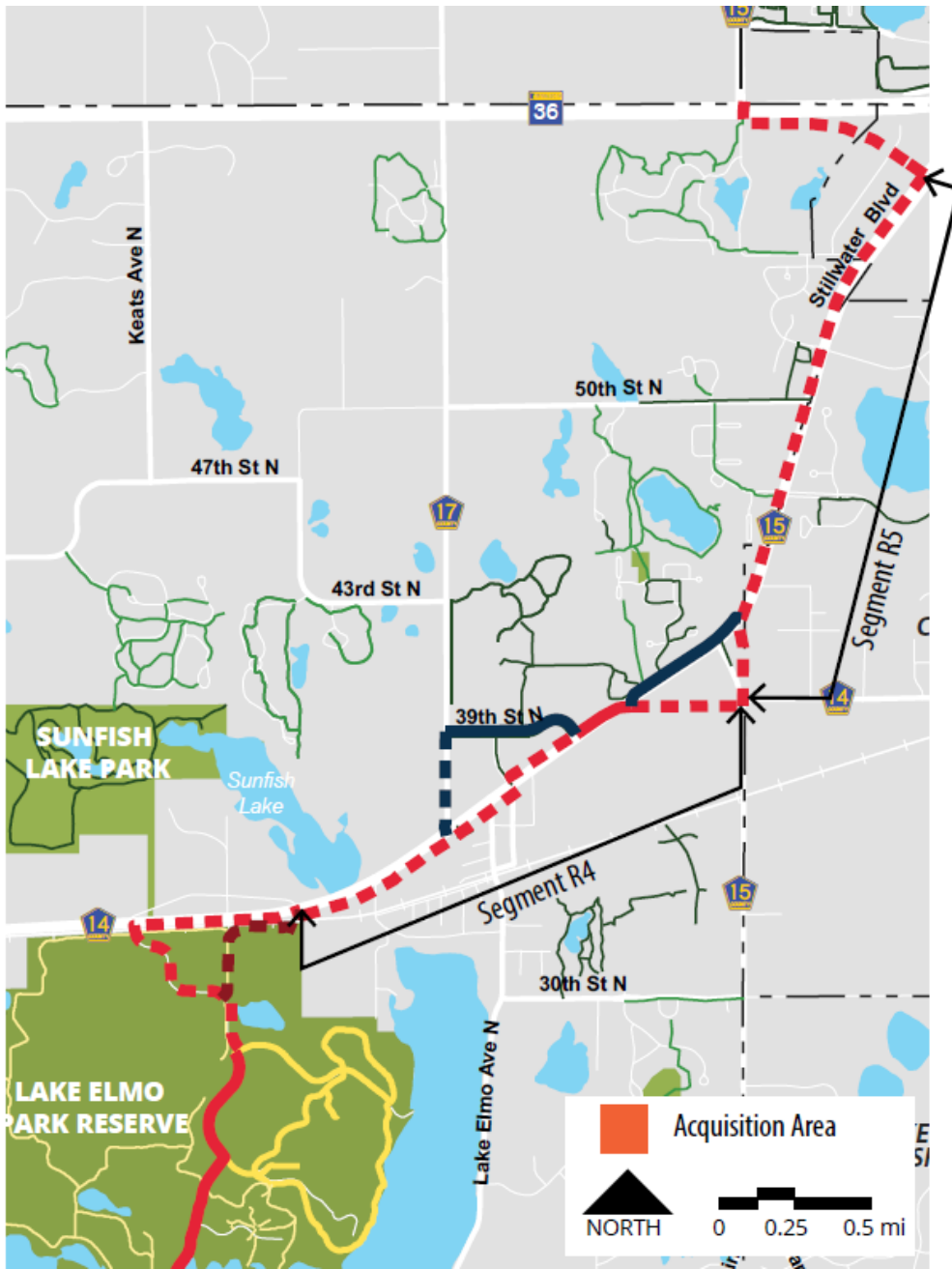
In the event Washington County does not expand Stillwater Boulevard or trail development precedes roadway improvements, additional right-of-way will be required to develop the proposed trail. The amount of right-of-way required depends on a multitude of conditions. There are nine locations identified in this master plan amendment where additional right-of-way may be required to develop or improve the proposed regional trail. The first eight parcels that potentially require acquisition are located along County Road 14 between Lake Elmo Park Reserve and Downtown Lake Elmo. The ninth parcel requiring additional right-of-way acquisition is located along County Road 15. Nine locations may need additional right-of way for development (Figure 5).

Acquisition for Segment R4 (see Figure 5 below) includes a total of 3.40-acres. The parcel numbers are: 14.029.21.42.0003, 14.029.21.41.0002, 13.029.21.23.0071, 13.029.21.23.0067, 13.029.21.23.0042, 13.029.21.23.0043, 13.029.21.23.0044, and 13.029.21.23.0077.

Acquisition for Segment R5 (see Figure 5 below) includes a total of 0.31-acres. The parcel number is: 06.029.20.34.0009.

The regional trail acquisition process is typically a “willing seller” approach. This means parcel acquisition typically occurs when a property owner is willing and ready to sell, and several acquisition alternatives are evaluated to best meet the needs of the property owner and the implementing agency. In addition, Washington County will work closely to coordinate with local communities to partner on opportunities to assist with securing the required trail right-of-way. At this time, it is difficult to determine when an acquisition will occur and when the trail construction will begin.

Figure 5. Acquisition Areas



Demand Forecast

The Lake Elmo Segment extends north and south from Lake Elmo Park Reserve. Lake Elmo Park Reserve had 640,800 visits in 2017 and was the most visited Regional Parks System unit in the Washington County System according to the most recent Regional Parks System Use Estimate (Table 1). Central Greenway Regional Trail recently opened to the public and will be included in the next Regional Parks System Use Estimate.

Table 1: Estimated Annual Regional Visits, Metropolitan Council (2017)

| Regional Park Unit | Total Visits |
|--|---------------------|
| Big Marine Park Reserve | 275,400 |
| Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park | 93,900 |
| Hardwood Creek Regional Trail | 150,800 |
| Lake Elmo Park Reserve | 640,800 |
| Pine Point Regional Park | 123,300 |
| Square Lake Special Recreational Feature | 151,600 |
| St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park | 146,300 |

According to the Council’s forecasts, the forecasted growth rate for the Central Greenway Regional Trail’s primary service area is anticipated to increase by close to 30,000 people from 2020 to 2040.

Approximately 24 percent of the residents in the primary service area are currently between the ages of 40 and 54 according to the American Community Survey.

Within the primary service area, 11 percent of the population are non-white including 2% black or African American, 4% Asian, 3% Hispanic or Latino, and 2% that are two or more races

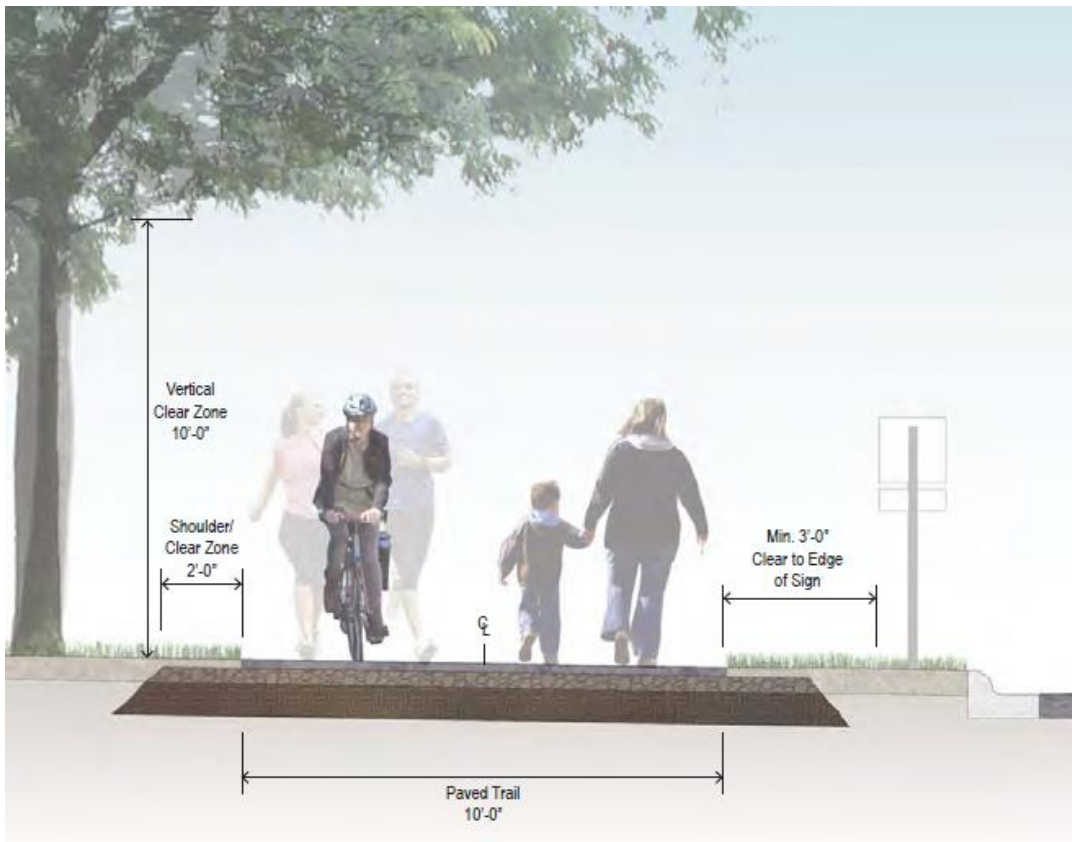
Development Concept

The 8.6-mile Lake Elmo Segment of the Central Greenway Regional Trail has six route components that address trail design, safety, and wayfinding for each condition (Figure 4).

- R1 extends from I-94 to County Road 10
- R2 is located with Lake Elmo Park Reserve
- R3 and R3A are railroad crossing options on the north side of Lake Elmo Park Reserve
- R4 extends from Stillwater Lane North to County Road 15/Manning Avenue
 - Interim location (B1) uses existing trails that bypass downtown Lake Elmo. The new trail will continue on Stillwater Lane North through downtown Lake Elmo.
 - Interim segment B2 uses existing trail on Stillwater Lane north to connect to County Road 15 until the preferred location of the trail crossing at County Road 15 is built.
- R5 extends from County Road 15/Manning Avenue to 58th Street North
 - Includes pedestrian bridge to access the trail from Stillwater High School
- R6 extends from 58th Street North to Minnesota State Highway 36

Trail Design: The Lake Elmo Segment includes both existing and undeveloped trail that when complete will be a 10-foot-wide paved trail that is separated from vehicular traffic (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Trail Section



Safety: Safety Strategies include signalized crossings at high traffic volume intersections, trail overpasses and underpasses, clear site lines and control signs and devices. Trail crossings at County Road 10, County Road 14, 50th Street, and 58th Street were identified to incorporate crossing treatments.

Wayfinding: The Center Greenway Regional Trail wayfinding plan includes kiosks, rest stops, and trailheads for orientation and location information for amenities and services.

The suburban nature of the Central Greenway Regional Trail requires wayfinding signage at strategic delineated points (Figure 7). These typically include major roadway intersections with other trails, trailheads, parks or adjacent public facilities.

Washington County Parks uses kiosks in their parks as wayfinding signage to identify trail routes and system amenities (Figure 8). 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 (Figure 9). The proposed trailhead locations utilize existing parking lots and include drinking fountains, portable toilets, bike repair stations, and wayfinding kiosks. These amenities were selected as a result of public comments received.

Figure 7. Wayfinding Plan

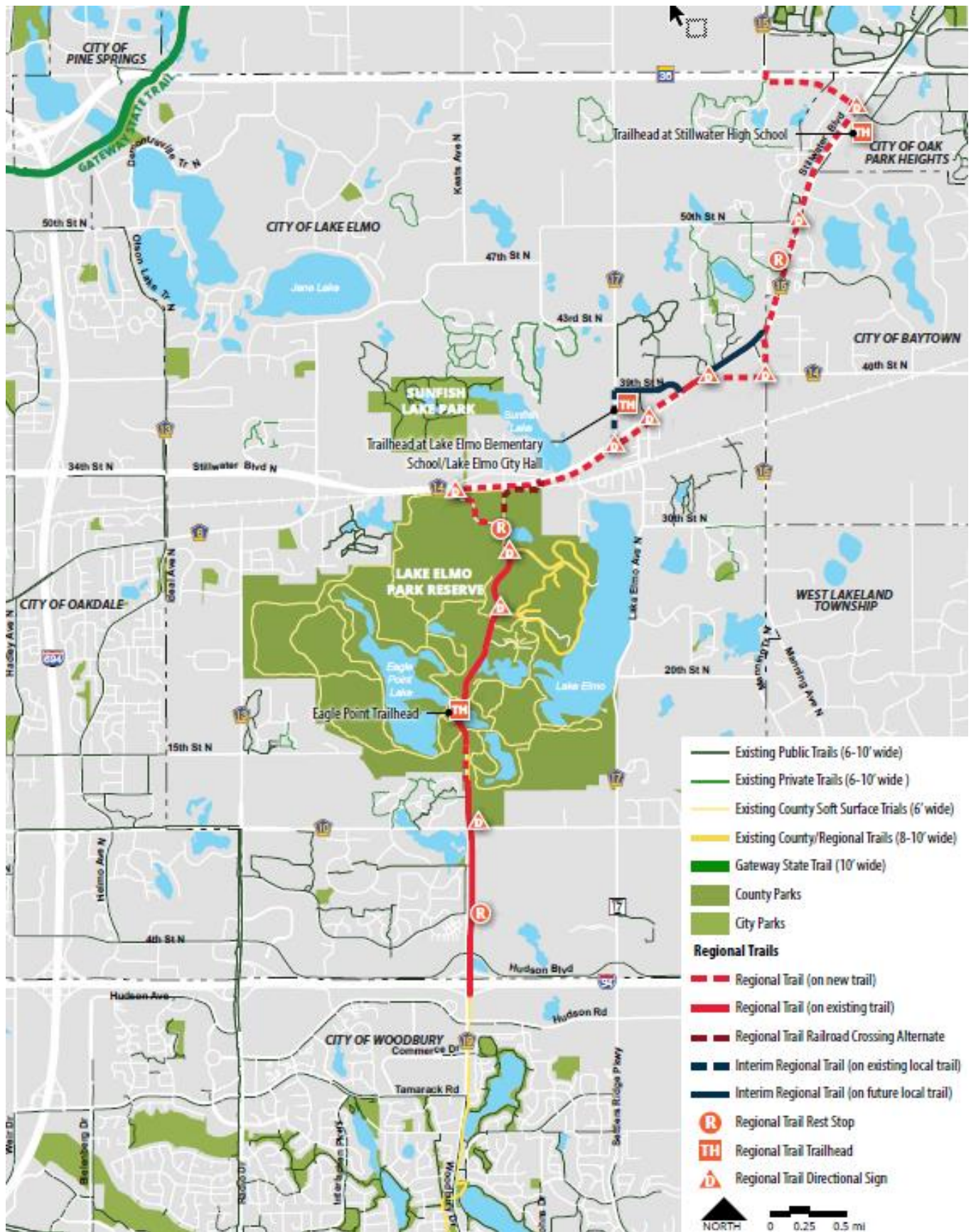


Figure 8. Kiosk Example



Figure 9. Kiosk and Rest Stop Example



Regional Bicycle Transportation Network: The Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN), which is identified as part of the Metropolitan Council's *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* (TPP). The RBTN helps define the region's on-street bikeways and off-street trail connections, and how they work together to serve regional transportation trips by bicycle. The RBTN is also used to identify corridors and alignments for future trail development and infrastructure investments. These corridors and alignments provide transportation connectivity to outlying regional destinations within and beyond the urban/suburban areas and serve to connect priority regional bicycle transportation corridors/alignments.

Within the Lake Elmo Segment, R3, R3A, and R4 that run adjacent to Stillwater Blvd (CSAH 14) are Tier 2 Corridors; and R1, R2, and R5 designated as Tier 2 alignments.

Segment Components, Alternates, and Interim Locations

The Lake Elmo Segment of the Central Greenway Regional Trail has six segments. R1 provides connection from the south segment of Central Greenway Regional Trail to the Lake Elmo Park Reserve. R2 has two destinations including Eagle Point Trailhead and the Lake Elmo Nordic Center. R3 has an alternate location to access the Lake Elmo Park Reserve under the railroad. R4 has two interim locations to utilize existing trail until the long-term vision is complete. R5 includes a rest stop for a Metro Transit bus stop and a pedestrian bridge for access to the Stillwater High School. R6 connects to the north segment of the Lake Elmo Park Reserve that is a Search Corridor and will be planned at a later date.

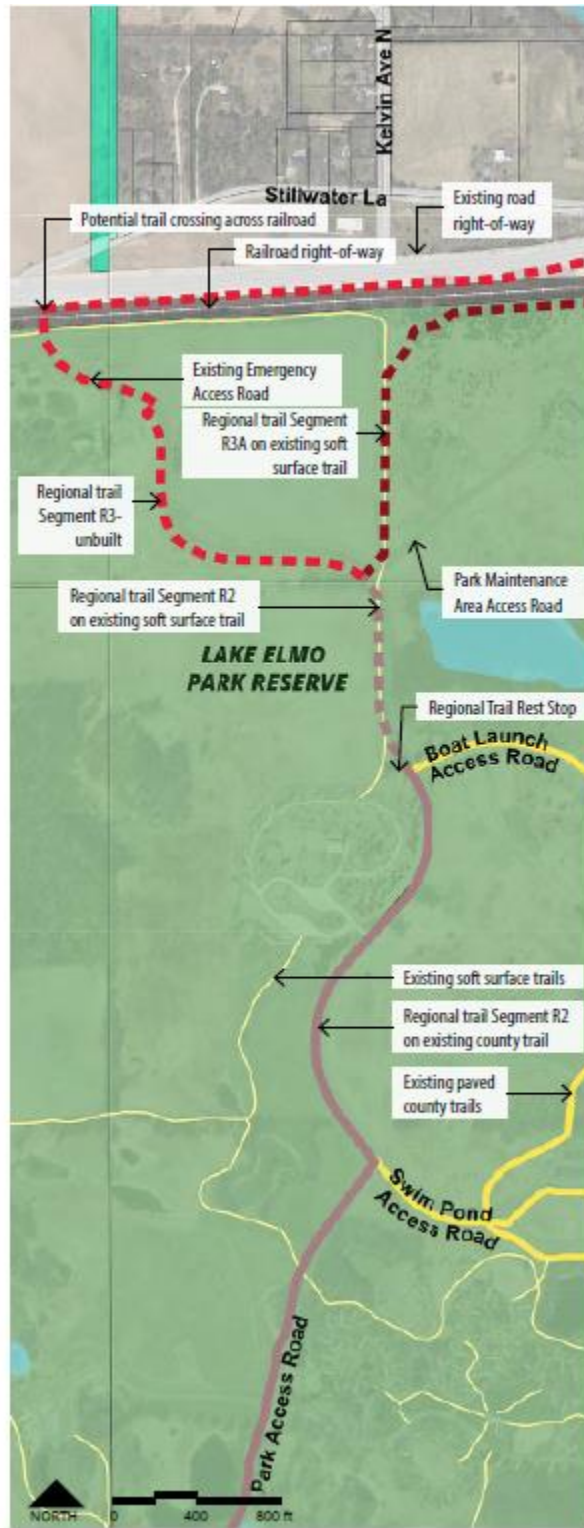
Segment R1: Segment R1 measures approximately 1.1 miles long and extends from I-94 to County Road 10 (Figure 10). This trail segment utilizes an existing trail along the east side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue that will be upgraded to 10-foot wide when complete. The trail crosses two signalized intersections that have Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliant pedestrian ramps with raised truncated domes and trail crossing push buttons.

Figure 10: Route 1



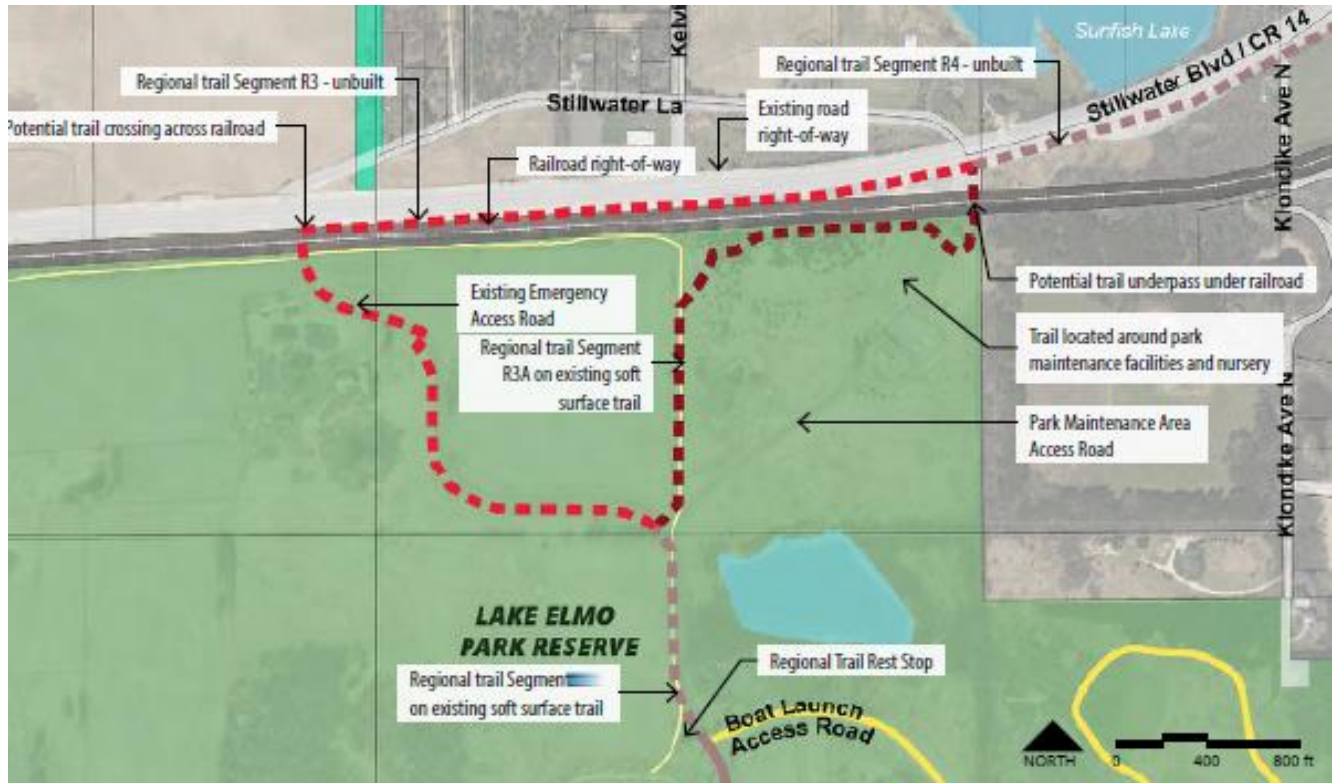
Segment R2: Segment R2 is approximately 2.2 miles long and extends from County Road 10 through Lake Elmo Park Reserve along Lake Elmo Park Reserve Maintenance Area Access Road (Figure 11). The existing eight-foot trail will be widened to 10-12 feet to appropriately accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians. Visitors cross County Road 10 via a four-way stop and continues north on the existing trail on the east side of Keats Avenue. The trail crosses to the east side of the street to avoid the pay station vehicle backup area then continue north to the Eagle Point Trailhead and the Lake Elmo Nordic Center.

Figure 11: Route 2



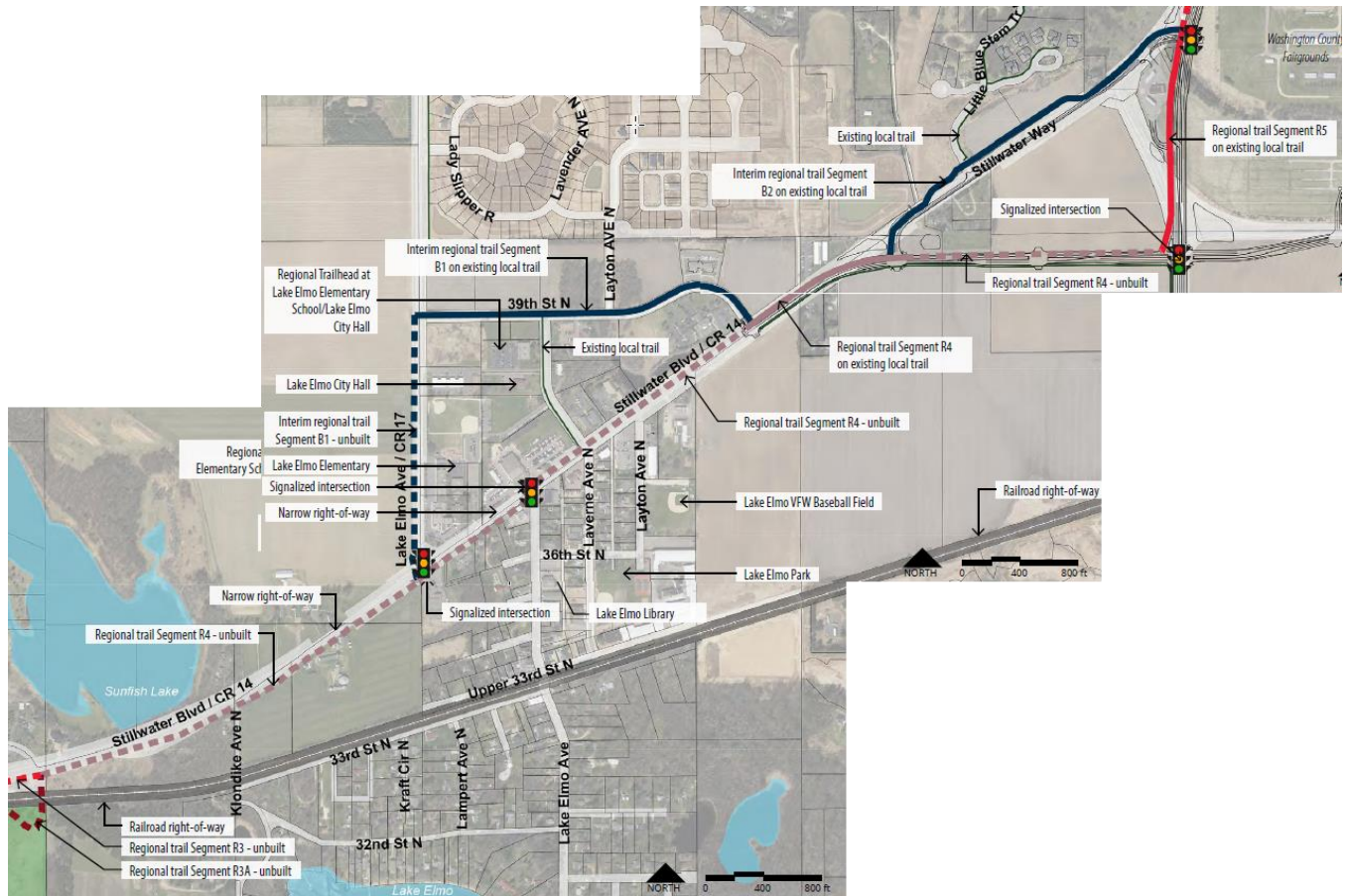
Segment R3 and R3A: Trail access to the northside of park (R3 and R3A) requires crossing an existing Union Pacific Railroad (Figure 12). The preferred 1.0-mile route (R3) would utilize an at grade crossing to cross the Union Pacific Railroad at a natural low-point in the geography, while the alternative 0.5-mile option (R3A) would cross the Union Pacific Railroad with an underpass. The three options for crossing the railroad (at grade, overpass, or underpass) will be further evaluated during design development.

Figure 12: Route 3A and 3B



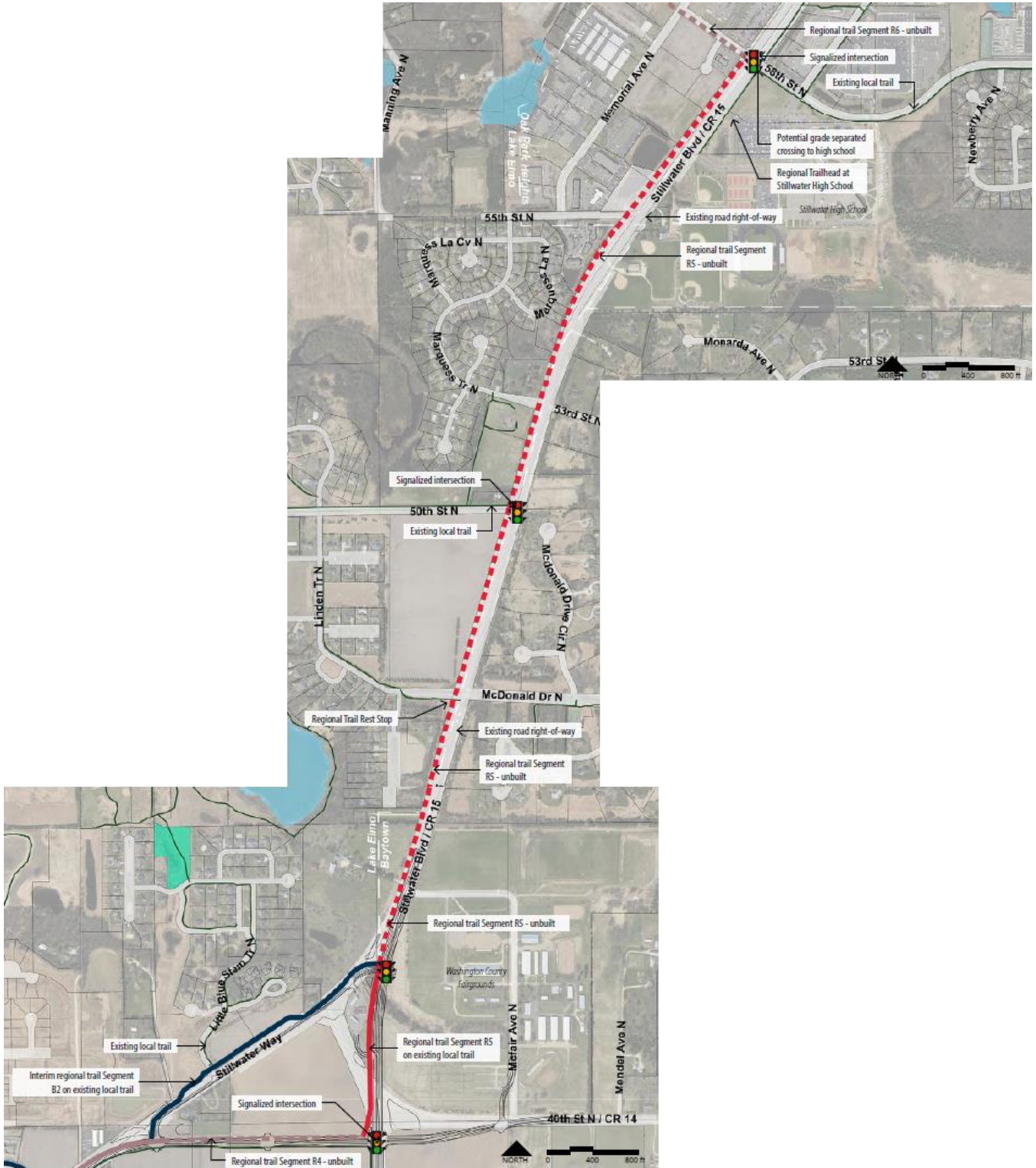
Segment R4: The 1.7 mile trail alignment extends along Stillwater Boulevard N/County Road 14 from Stillwater Lane to County Road 15/Manning Avenue (Figure 13). Segment R4 includes two interim locations that use existing trails. The first interim location (B1) uses existing trails to bypass downtown Lake Elmo until the new trail is incorporated into the right-of-way. The second interim location (B2) is located along a recently constructed trail on Stillwater Lane to connect to County Road 15 until the preferred location of the trail crossing at County Road 15 is built.

Figure 13: Route 4



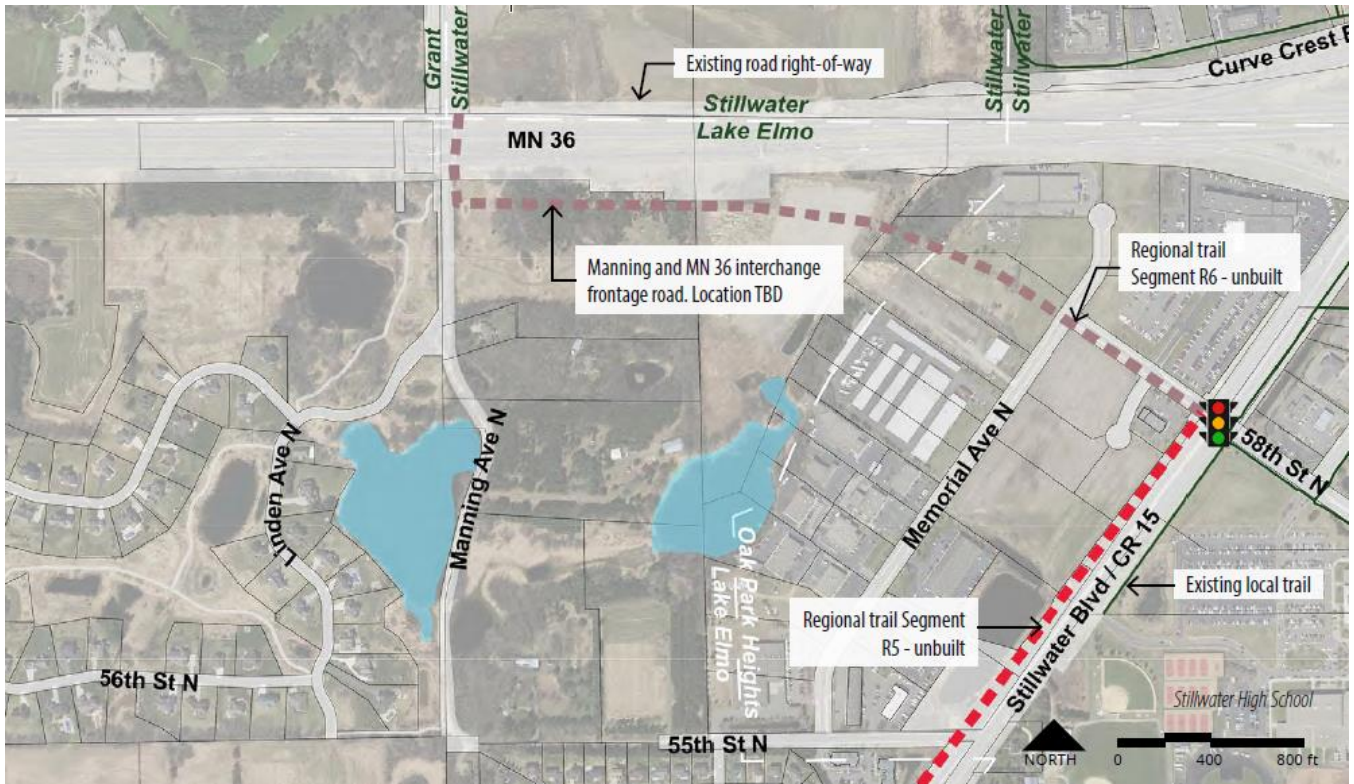
Segment R5: Segment R5 extends 1.9 miles along the west side of County Road 15/Stillwater Boulevard from County Road 14 to 58th Street (Figure 14). This segment includes recently constructed eight-foot trail that will eventually be widened to preferred regional trail width of 10 feet wide. The remaining unbuilt portion of trail Segment R5 continues on the east side County Road 15/Stillwater Boulevard to 58th Street. The signalized intersection located at 58th Street will be updated with truncated domes and pedestrian push buttons. A trail overpass is proposed at 58th Street to provide a safe crossing from the regional trail to Stillwater High School. A rest stop planned that is adjacent to an existing bus stop located at Linden Trail to provide trail users to transit access space to park their bicycle.

Figure 14: Route 5



Segment R6: Segment R6 connects to the future north segment of the Central Greenway Corridor that is currently a search corridor and will be planned at a later date (Figure 15). Segment R6 is 0.7 miles of trail that extends from County Road 15 to Minnesota State Highway 36 via 58th Street and the proposed frontage road alignment. The alignment is being developed as part of the Manning and 36 Interchange Study conducted by Washington County to help determine the road and trail network alternations that will be needed as part of any interchange project.

Figure 15: Route 6



Conflicts

The Policy Plan requires the identification of conflicts with other existing or proposed projects or land uses affecting the trail unit, including steps necessary for their resolution.

The master plan amendment addresses conflicts by managing access through Lake Elmo Park Reserve and roadway crossings.

Access through Lake Elmo Park Reserve: Trail design for the Central Greenway Regional Trail is a 10-foot-wide paved surface separated from vehicular traffic. The regional trail may be wider than 10 feet if forecasted user volumes warrant an increased width, and space is available for the trail. For example, the regional trail segment extending through Lake Elmo Park Reserve may include additional limestone and/or bituminous shoulders to accommodate higher pedestrian and cyclist usage.

Roadway Crossings: The suburban setting for the Lake Elmo Segment of the Central Greenway Regional Trail requires that it coexist with higher volume roadways. There are numerous locations where the regional trail crosses such roadways. Trail crossings at County Road 10, County Road 14, 50th Street, and 58th Street were identified to incorporate crossing treatments.

The types of trail crossing treatments appropriate for each crossing location will be designed in accordance with industry best practices, in order to minimize conflicts between trail users and roadway traffic. In all cases, existing roadway configuration, infrastructure elements, vegetation, and other potential visual obstructions will be evaluated so sight lines can be maintained. These types of design considerations and trail enhancements will be addressed during the trail design development phase.

Trail Underpasses/Overpasses: It may be appropriate to install a grade-separated trail underpass or overpass to provide safe crossing over the Union Pacific Railroad or for Stillwater High School students to access the regional trail. The benefit of a trail underpass/overpass is that it provides safe access to the other side of a high-volume roadway or the Union Pacific Railroad without interaction with vehicular or train traffic.

Public Services

The Policy Plan requires a description of any non-recreational public services and facilities, such as roads or sewers, needed to accommodate the proposed trail, including the timing of these services and the arrangements necessary to provide them.

Public services needed for the Lake Elmo Segment of the Central Greenway Regional Trail include additional right-of-way, identification of utilities, a safe railroad crossing north of the Lake Elmo Regional Park, and a safe crossing at 58th Street for Stillwater High School.

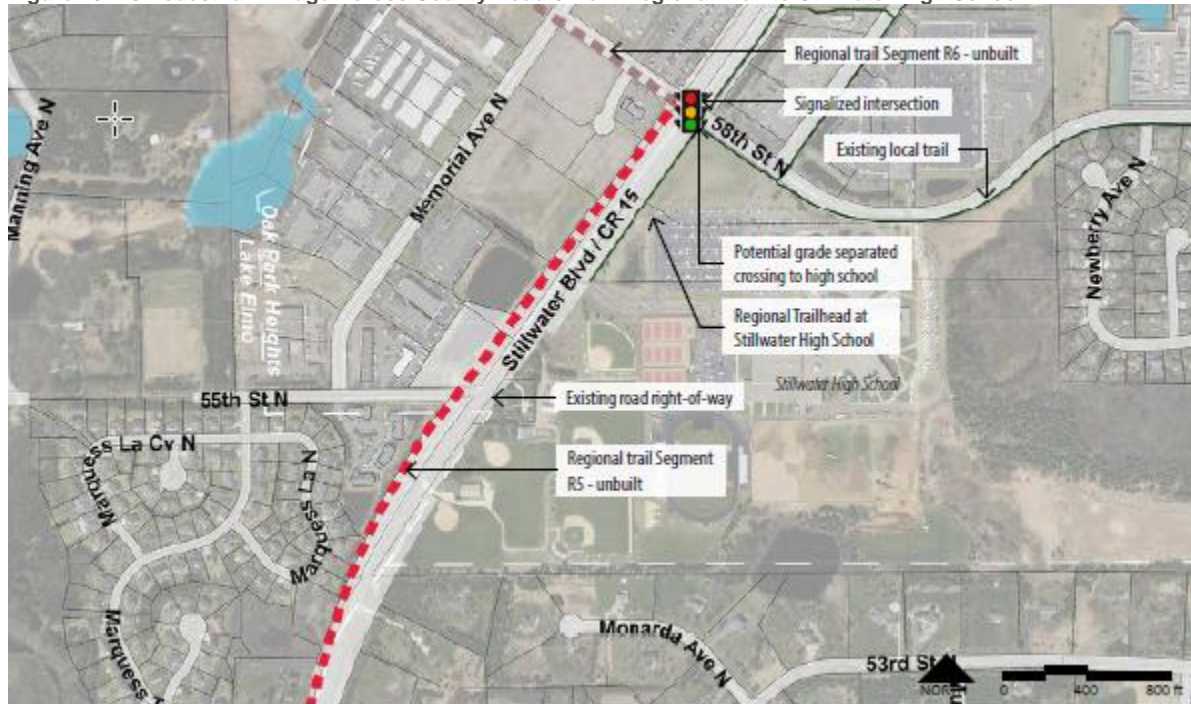
Additional Right-Of-Way: The Lake Elmo Segment of the Central Greenway Regional Trail is proposed to be developed within the public right-of-way. Additional right-of-way may be needed to develop some segments of the trail along County Road 14. Final determination of right-of-way needs will be identified when trails are proposed, which may coincide with road widening projects or adjacent property development. The total estimated cost of additional right-of-way is \$1,417,000 in 2018 dollars.

Utilities: There are buried utilities, including gas and sanitary sewer in the right-of-way along portions of the regional trail. High voltage overhead powerlines are located near the location of the new frontage road being designed as part of the Manning Avenue and Minnesota State Highway 36 interchange project. Coordination with utilities will be required during design and development to ensure that the trail is constructed without imposing on utility easements or otherwise impacting the utility corridors.

Union Pacific Railroad crossing option: Segment R3A (see Figure 14 below) measures approximately 0.5 miles long. The trail extends along the existing soft surface trail that runs in a north-south direction from the Lake Elmo Park Reserve Maintenance Area Access Road to the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way. Near the Union Pacific Railroad and park boundary, the trail alignment extends east through sparsely distributed coniferous trees. The trail then crosses the Union Pacific Railroad using a trail underpass at an existing low point (Figure 12)

Safe High School Crossing: In addition to updating pedestrian ramps and signals to meet current ADA design standards, a trail overpass is proposed at 58th Street to provide a safe crossing from the regional trail to Stillwater High School (Figure 16).

Figure 16. R5 Pedestrian Bridge Across County Road 5 from Regional Trail to Stillwater High School



Operations

Washington County manages and operates its park and trail system with seasonal and full-time employees. The Parks Division has an annual operations and maintenance budget of approximately \$4,000,000 to run the County's park and trail system.

The Lake Elmo Segment will be overseen by public safety and operations and maintenance staff officed out of Lake Elmo Park Reserve. Washington County, the City of Lake Elmo, and relevant public jurisdictions will provide maintenance services for the regional trail through joint powers agreements.

This trail will add new mileage to the Washington County's regional trail system and operations and maintenance costs will increase because of the expansion. Additional staff time and equipment will be needed to maintain the new trail segments. No new equipment will be needed as the County will utilize existing trucks and mowers to maintain the trail.

It is anticipated that the annual cost to maintain the trail upon full build out will be \$5,500, including additional staff, time and resources. An additional annual investment of \$10,000 will be needed for each of the first five years to establish the prairie and pollinator plantings.

Public Engagement and Participation

Washington County strives to provide an inclusive public engagement process for its trail planning efforts. The comments received in the community engagement process supported the expansion of the regional trail system and the development of the trail in a safe and thoughtful way. Themes and ideas summarized from the public process focused on ensuring regional and local connections to Lake Elmo Park Reserve, City of Lake Elmo, and Stillwater High School; avoiding impacts to Lake Elmo Park Reserve and providing safe routes.

The majority of the concerns focused on safety at intersection crossings which was addressed in the master plan amendment through a variety of pedestrian crossing systems. A few concerns addressed the safety and experience of adding the regional trail to the Lake Elmo Park Reserve. The master plan amendment addresses this concern with a number of possible strategies including widening the trail, crossing treatments, stripping, and signage.

Washington County conducted a public and partner engagement process. The Washington County Board, Lake Elmo Parks Commission, Lake Elmo City Council, and the Washington County Park Commission reviewed planning updates and the final draft master plan amendment. The following meetings informed and guided the master plan amendment.

- Technical Advisory Committee: three meetings, February 13, 2018, June 16, 2018, and October 1, 2018
- Community Advisory Committee: three meetings, March 8, 2018, June 21, 2018, and October 4, 2018
- One-on-one listening sessions with businesses, community groups, and municipal partners: over six meetings
- Public Open Houses:
 - August 28, 2018, Lake Elmo Christ Lutheran Church, 32 attended
 - October 30, 2018, Stillwater High School, 25 attended
- Pop-up Events:
 - February 26, 2018 Lake Elmo Nordic Center, 28 attended
 - August 8, 2018 Washington County Fair, 40 attended
- Wikimapping website and online social media: open during the project process, six comments received

Technical Advisory Committee and Community Advisory Committee: A Technical Advisory Committee and Community Advisory Committee were established to guide the trail master plan amendment and coordinated planning efforts within the local communities and greater region. Each committee met three times.

Members of the Technical Advisory Committee included public agency staff from the following stakeholders: City of Lake Elmo, Lake Elmo Park Reserve, City of Stillwater, Valley Branch Watershed Organization, Metropolitan Council, Brown's Creek Watershed.

Members of the Community Advisory Committee included community stakeholders from the City of Lake Elmo, City of West Lakeland Township, Lakeview Hospital, Stillwater High School Bike Team, ISD #384, Parks and Open Space Commission, Washington County, and community advocates.

Listening sessions: Washington County reached out to STAR Snowmobile Club, FamilyMeans, Lake Elmo Inn, and Common Ground Church on several occasions to share project information and to invite them (and their partners/members) to the master plan public engagement events. Washington County

staff presented updates on the master plan amendment process to local city planners and Lake Elmo Park Reserve staff.

Public Open Houses: Washington County held meetings at public buildings that were accessible to the public. Washington County sent out press releases to advertise each open house, and stories were posted in local newspapers. Public open house meetings.

- August 28, 2018, Open House at Lake Elmo Christ Lutheran Church: Attendance at the open house included 32 members of the public and representatives from Washington County. Feedback from the first open house was positive with interest in developing a linking regional trail along through downtown Lake Elmo with connections to Lake Elmo Park Reserve.
- October 30, 2018, Open House at the Stillwater High School cafeteria: Attendance at the open house included 25 members of the public and representatives from Washington County. The preferred trail alignment that was developed based on comments received from previous public engagement was presented at the second open house. Those in attendance provided valuable input on the proposed preferred alignment. Overall, positive feedback was given about the proposed regional trail.

Pop-up Events: Staff set up tables at strategic locations and times that are frequented by Washington County residents of all backgrounds. Pop-up style tabling allowed for more in-depth, one-on-one conversations. The pop-up meetings were held on the following dates:

- February 26, 2018 Lake Elmo Nordic Center: This pop-up event was strategically located here because this is a popular destination for many community members who actively invest in active living, are potential trail users, and the Center is located adjacent to the trail corridor. Twenty-eight people provided input during the pop-up event. Positive feedback was received with many desiring the trail to connect to downtown Lake Elmo while not disrupting the cross-country ski trails located in Lake Elmo Park Reserve.
- August 8, 2018 Washington County Fair: The event was held in the Washington County booth during the afternoon to provide an alternative to evening meeting times and the fairgrounds are located adjacent to the preferred trail corridor. Forty people stopped by the pop-up event to provide comments and/or ask questions about the trail master plan amendment. Many people who stopped by were excited to see more trails in Lake Elmo and Washington County.

WikiMap: A WikiMap site was developed for the master plan amendment to provide the public an opportunity to provide input on the regional trail alignment without attending a public engagement meeting in person. A total of 6 comments were received.

Online and social media tools: Washington County website was the primary on-line portal for meeting information and for posting draft plans for public review. The County utilized its Facebook and Twitter accounts to promote the pop-up events. In addition, fliers were printed and posted at County facilities, libraries, coffee shops, post offices, parks, city halls, and schools to promote the pop-up events and open houses.

Public Awareness

Washington County uses their website, event planning activities, press releases, and promotional materials to increase awareness to the public of their parks and trails. Washington County also collaborates with a wide array of community, business, and government organizations to promote their facilities, programs, and services and to educate the public about available resources.

Opportunities for expanding social media and on-line resources for public awareness will likely grow in the future as new media tools and new platforms become available. Younger park users are more likely to access public service information on-line and will continue to seek additional ways to engage with the County about the park system through social media.

Accessibility

Washington County is committed to providing access and recreational opportunities to all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, ability, or income. Washington County meets this commitment through appropriate facility design and programming considerations and by actively addressing potential barriers to participation.

All regional trail facilities described in the master plan amendment will be developed in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and guidelines. All unconstructed segments and those associated with regional trail reconstruction, associated trailheads and trail amenities, such as rest stops, parking, rest rooms and water access, will be designed to be fully accessible.

The trail has been planned to provide access to important local community destinations such as parks, commercial areas, community facilities, and transit facilities. The regional trail passes through a variety of neighborhoods with varying demographics, providing access to people with a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds.

The Lake Elmo Segment has access to several Metro Transit bus stops. Segment R5 includes a trail rest stop near an existing bus stop at Linden Trail.

Trails are free to use in Washington County, providing recreational opportunities for residents of all income levels. The Central Greenway Regional Trail will also provide access to the Lake Elmo Park Reserve without purchase of a parking pass.

The Washington County Parks Division and Community Services is working to provide free park permits to individuals who receive financial assistance from the County.

Review by Other Council Divisions

Community Development – Environment and Surface Water Management (Jim Larsen 651-602-1159) – staff finds the master plan amendment complete. Advisory comments:

- The lowest trail identification box on Figure 27 on page 28 of the Plan inaccurately refers to that portion of the unbuilt new trail as being a part of Segment R4 but should correctly be identified as R2.
- Some details on the "Issues and Opportunities" figure on page 63 (also on figure 5 on page 9) are difficult to interpret. It's legend coloring is internally consistent with other figures in the Plan, but the brown color created by the rose overlay of "Rusty Patch Bumble Bee Habitat" over "County Park" and "City Park" green areas on the figure is a little confusing. We suggest as an alternative, consideration of use of a diagonal rose stripe as opposed to a solid color that would still exhibit the background "Park" green colors.
- The Appendix D "Rare Species List" on page 75 of the Plan lists "Bald Eagle" twice. We also suggest consideration of the addition of "Rusty Patched Bumble Bee," whose habitat has already been identified in the Plan as overlying much of the Plan area. The DNR's list of Minnesota Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species contains only limited insect species, but the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee is listed as federally Endangered by the USFWS.

Community Development – Forecasts (Todd Graham 651-602-1322) – No additional comments.

Environmental Services – Sewer (Roger Janzig 651-602-1119) – There are no regional wastewater facilities in the vicinity of this proposed land acquisition; therefore, there is no impact.

Metro Transit (Steve Mahowald 612-349-7775) – No additional comments.

Transportation Planning (Steve Elmer 651-602-1756) – The following comments apply.

- Update Figure 2 to align with the recently adopted *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*. The only RBTN segments listed in Figure 2 that are still a Tier 2 Corridors are those sections of Trail segments 3A, 3B, and 4 that run adjacent to Stillwater Blvd (CSAH 14). The other segments have all been designated as Tier 2 alignments.
- The wording at the bottom of 1st para. on page 2 is misleading: “...all trails are fully eligible for transportation funding via the Reg Solicitation, unless it is entirely a loop trail within a park.: Please restate as “making it a priority for federal funds distributed via the Metropolitan Council’s Regional Solicitation.”

Local Planning Assistance – Land Use (Corrin Wendell 651-602-1566) – No additional comments.