

# Committee Report

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



**Committee Meeting Date:** July 18, 2022

**For the Metropolitan Council:** July 27, 2022

## Business Item: 2022-189

Lake Independence, Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota River Bluffs, Cedar Lake, and North Cedar Lake Regional Trail Master Plans, Three Rivers Park District

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Lake Independence Regional Trail Master Plan.
2. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail Master Plan.
3. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail Master Plan.
4. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail Master Plan.
5. Approve Three Rivers Park District's North Cedar Lake Regional Trail Master Plan.
6. Advise Three Rivers Park District to implement advisory comments for Lake Independence Regional Trail and Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail master plans.
7. Require Three Rivers Park District, prior to initiating any construction of new or updating of existing paths, trails, bridges, or any other construction project, to send preliminary plans to the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager.

### Summary of Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Discussion/Questions

Chee Yang, Planner, and Kevin Phan, Parks Intern, presented the staff report to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission on July 7, 2022. Kelly Grissman, Three Rivers Park District Director of Planning, was in attendance and responded to questions.

Commissioner Harris asked multiple questions. First, she asked if there is any activity-specific data on Three Rivers Park District's (Park District's) trails such as bikers, hikers, and rollers. Yang responded that there were no specific data from the trail plan and asked if Grissman had additional insight. Grissman responded that approximately 80% of Park District trail users are bikers, with the remainder walking, running, or in-line skating. Harris then asked who on the regional trail has the right of way. Grissman responded that the Park District's trails are multi-use and shared. Trail users are encouraged to stay on the right side, and bicyclists are encouraged to announce their presence and slow down as they pass other users.

Commissioner Peichel expressed his appreciation for the Park District's indicating the level of public engagement per the International Association for Public Participation guidelines. Peichel asked if the Park District has an established public engagement tool to collect ongoing comments from community members. Grissman explained that they have a few different tools to collect feedback including a survey conducted every five years, a feedback email address, and a staff member dedicated to regional trail operations.

Commissioner Moeller expressed appreciation for the Park District's inclusion of multiple regional trails within a single plan. Moeller expressed a concern about sight lines at trail intersections and then asked multiple questions. First, he asked if the delay of the METRO Green Line Extension light rail construction project will have any impact on the trail alignment. Grissman responded that the Park District's maintenance crew goes out multiple times a year to clear vegetation and improve sight lines at trail intersections. Grissman added that light rail construction delays do not affect the regional trail alignment, but they do impact when the regional trail will be open for public use.

Commissioner Moeller also asked if the Park District had any ideas on how to attract and bring underrepresented communities and youth into the regional trail system. Grissman responded the Park District has been working on their outreach and programming which includes how-to-bike programs, understanding signage, and ongoing work with the trail etiquette campaign in partnership with local artists. Grissman added the Park District wants to better connect with the underserved community members and understand what their barriers are.

Commissioner Kemery asked multiple questions. First, he asked if there is access to Lake Minnetonka along the Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail segment. Grissman responded that there is an overlook in Deephaven, but there is not direct access to the lake from the trail. Kemery also asked about property ownership related to the METRO Green Line Extension project and who will be responsible for the maintenance of the adjacent regional trail. Grissman responded the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) transferred the property rights to the Metropolitan Council for the construction of the light rail. After the completion of the light rail project, the property will be conveyed back to HRCCA or the Park District. The Park District will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the regional trail and any conveyed land; however, the light rail facilities and clear zones are not the Park District's responsibility.

Kemery also sought clarification on what Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements were planned. Grissman responded that many curb and pedestrian ramps are not compliant with current ADA standards. As construction projects occur throughout the system, the Park District will update all regional trail access to meet current ADA standards and guidelines.

Chair Yarusso asked how decisions were made for paving some segments of the aggregate trails and leaving other segments as aggregate, and how it relates to the underserved communities. Grissman responded that the portions of the Lake Minnetonka and Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trails that are proposed to be paved are in more urban-like areas and have a greater percentage of use and people. Additionally, the decision was made in consultation with and support of the local communities.

Kemery asked some additional questions. First, he asked if any trail segments contain transitions from aggregate to pavement, and back to aggregate; if there are alternative paved ADA routes along aggregate trails; and if the aggregate trails are ADA compliant. Grissman replied that there are a few trail segments that transition from aggregate to pavement such as areas that lead up to and out of underpasses. Alternative paved routes don't exist along aggregate trails, however, the Park District is monitoring and maintaining the aggregate trails including partnering with Hennepin County, which owns the corridor, to ensure culverts and drainage are functioning to prevent and alleviate pooling water and other issues along the trail.

The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission voted unanimously to approve the proposed actions.

Motion by Commissioner Moeller, seconded by Commissioner Dillenburg. Motion carried.



# Business Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



**Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission:** July 7, 2022

**Community Development Committee:** July 18, 2022

**For the Metropolitan Council:** July 27, 2022

## Business Item: 2022-189

Lake Independence, Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota River Bluffs, Cedar Lake, and North Cedar Lake Regional Trail Master Plans, Three Rivers Park District

<b>District(s), Member(s):</b>	District A, Monica Dillenburg District B, Robert Moeller District C, Cana Yang District 1, Judy Johnson District 3, Vacant District 5, Molly Cummings District 6, John Pacheco Jr.
<b>Policy/Legal Reference:</b>	Minnesota Statutes § 473.313; <i>2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan: Chapter 5, Planning Strategy 1</i>
<b>Staff Prepared/Presented:</b>	Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst, 651-602-1361 Chee Yang, Planner, 651-602-1449 Kevin Phan, Parks Intern, 651-602-1345
<b>Division/Department:</b>	Community Development / Regional Planning

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Lake Independence Regional Trail Master Plan.
2. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail Master Plan.
3. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail Master Plan.
4. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail Master Plan.
5. Approve Three Rivers Park District's North Cedar Lake Regional Trail Master Plan.
6. Advise Three Rivers Park District to implement advisory comments for Lake Independence Regional Trail and Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail master plans.
7. Require Three Rivers Park District, prior to initiating any construction of new or updating of existing paths, trails, bridges, or any other construction project, to send preliminary plans to the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager.

## Background

Three Rivers Park District (Park District) submitted one regional trail plan for nine existing regional trails that currently do not have master plans. Some of the plan content is shared across all nine regional trail corridors, while other content is distinct and specific to each trail. The organization of the required plan content is discussed in the Analysis section of this report.

Council Parks staff are presenting the nine regional trail plans in two separate business items for the Council's review and approval. The first business item, [Business Item 2022-143](#), focused on the Luce Line, Medicine Lake, Shingle Creek, and Northeast Diagonal Regional Trails. That Business item was presented to Council committees in June and is currently going through the Council approval process. This business item focuses on the Lake Independence, Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota River Bluffs, Cedar Lake, and North Cedar Lake Regional Trails.

The Lake Independence Regional Trail is in the northwest portion of the Regional Parks System (Figure 1) and the western part of Hennepin County (Figure 2). The full build-out of the regional trail will be 19.3 miles. The existing paved regional trail is 17.3 miles long with the southern end of the trail being a 2-mile segment that is an undeveloped regional trail search corridor. The regional trail runs north/south from Crow-Hassan Park Reserve, Baker Park Reserve, Crow River Regional Trail, and Luce Line State Trail through the communities of Corcoran, Medina, Loretto, and Orono (Figure 3).

The Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail is in the western portion of the Regional Parks System (Figure 1) and the southwest part of Hennepin County (Figure 2). The 16.1-mile existing trail extends through Carver Park Reserve and continues east to the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail, just west of the Hopkins Depot in downtown Hopkins and the eastern terminus of the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail. It offers scenic views of Lake Minnetonka and passes through the communities of Victoria in Carver County (3.3 miles) and Shorewood, Tonka Bay, Greenwood, Deephaven, Minnetonka, and Hopkins in Hennepin County (12.8 miles). The regional trail is predominately aggregate and connects Carver Park Reserve and the Southwest Regional Trail to the west with the Cedar Lake LRT, North Cedar Lake, Nine Mile Creek, and Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trails to the east (Figure 4).

The Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail is located centrally in the Regional Parks System (Figure 1) and in the southern part of Hennepin County (Figure 2). The 10.1-mile existing trail follows an old railroad route from Hopkins through Minnetonka and Eden Prairie to the Hennepin - Carver County border and beyond to and through Chanhassen and Chaska (Figure 5). The regional trail is predominately aggregate. However, portions of the regional trail between the Hopkins Depot and 16th Avenue South in Hopkins are undergoing significant changes as part of the METRO Green Line Extension development (also known as the Southwest light rail project). This portion will be paved within the existing corridor to make room for the light rail facility. This plan covers only the portion of the trail within Hennepin County.

The Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail is located centrally in the Regional Parks System (Figure 1) and the southeast part of Hennepin County (Figure 2). The 3.9-mile existing paved trail follows the former railroad corridor of the Great Northern Railway from the cities of Hopkins, Saint Louis Park, and Minneapolis (Figure 6). The regional trail also provides access to local residential neighborhoods, local parks, as well as several regional trails: Minnesota River Bluffs LRT, Lake Minnetonka LRT, Nine Mile Creek, North Cedar Lake, and Kenilworth Regional Trails (indirectly). Additionally, the regional trail intersects with the Canadian Pacific Rail Regional Trail search corridor, an important future north-south regional trail corridor, connecting seamlessly to the Midtown Greenway in Minneapolis. The METRO Green Line Extension is currently under construction along the regional trail and will result in a realigned and reconstructed trail for its entire length.

The North Cedar Lake Regional Trail is located centrally in the Regional Parks System (Figure 1) and the southeast part of Hennepin County (Figure 2). The existing paved trail runs on a former railroad corridor from Hopkins Depot to the Cedar Lake Regional trail in Minneapolis (Figure 7). The western portion between the Hopkins Depot and east side of TH 100 is 4.2 miles long which is owned and operated by the Park District. The remaining 1.8-miles with connections to the



Kenilworth Trail and Cedar Lake Regional Trail are owned and operated by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The western terminus of North Cedar Lake Regional Trail is the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail, and it will provide users with direct access to the METRO Green Line Extension. This plan covers only the portion of the trail owned by Three Rivers Park District.

### Rationale

The Lake Independence, Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota River Bluffs, Cedar Lake, and North Cedar Lake Regional Trails are consistent with the requirements of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, particularly Planning Strategy 1 (Master plan requirements) and other Council policies.

### Thrive Lens Analysis

The Lake Independence, Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota River Bluffs, Cedar Lake, and North Cedar Lake Regional Trails advance the Thrive outcome of Livability by increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation, which enhances quality of life in the region.

### Funding

The total estimated acquisition and improvement costs for the Lake Independence, Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota River Bluffs, Cedar Lake, and North Cedar Lake Regional Trails is \$15,093,000. Estimated costs per trail are found in Table 1.

The total estimated operations and maintenance costs for the Lake Independence, Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota River Bluffs, Cedar Lake, and North Cedar Lake Regional Trails is \$275,000. Estimated costs per trail are found in Table 1.

The combined total estimated cost for the Lake Independence, Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota River Bluffs, Cedar Lake, and North Cedar Lake Regional Trails is \$15,368,000.

*Table 1: Total Estimated Cost for Lake Independence, Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota River Bluffs, Cedar Lake, and North Cedar Lake Regional Trails*

Regional Trail	Acquisition & Improvements	Operations & Maintenance
Lake Independence Regional Trail	\$7,456,000	\$106,000
Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail	\$4,746,000	\$67,000
Minnesota River Bluffs Reg. Trail	\$613,000	\$52,000
Cedar Lake Regional Trail	\$182,000	\$24,000
North Cedar Lake Regional Trail	\$2,096,000	\$26,000
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$15,093,000</b>	<b>\$275,000</b>



Figure 1. Regional Trail Locations within the Regional Parks System

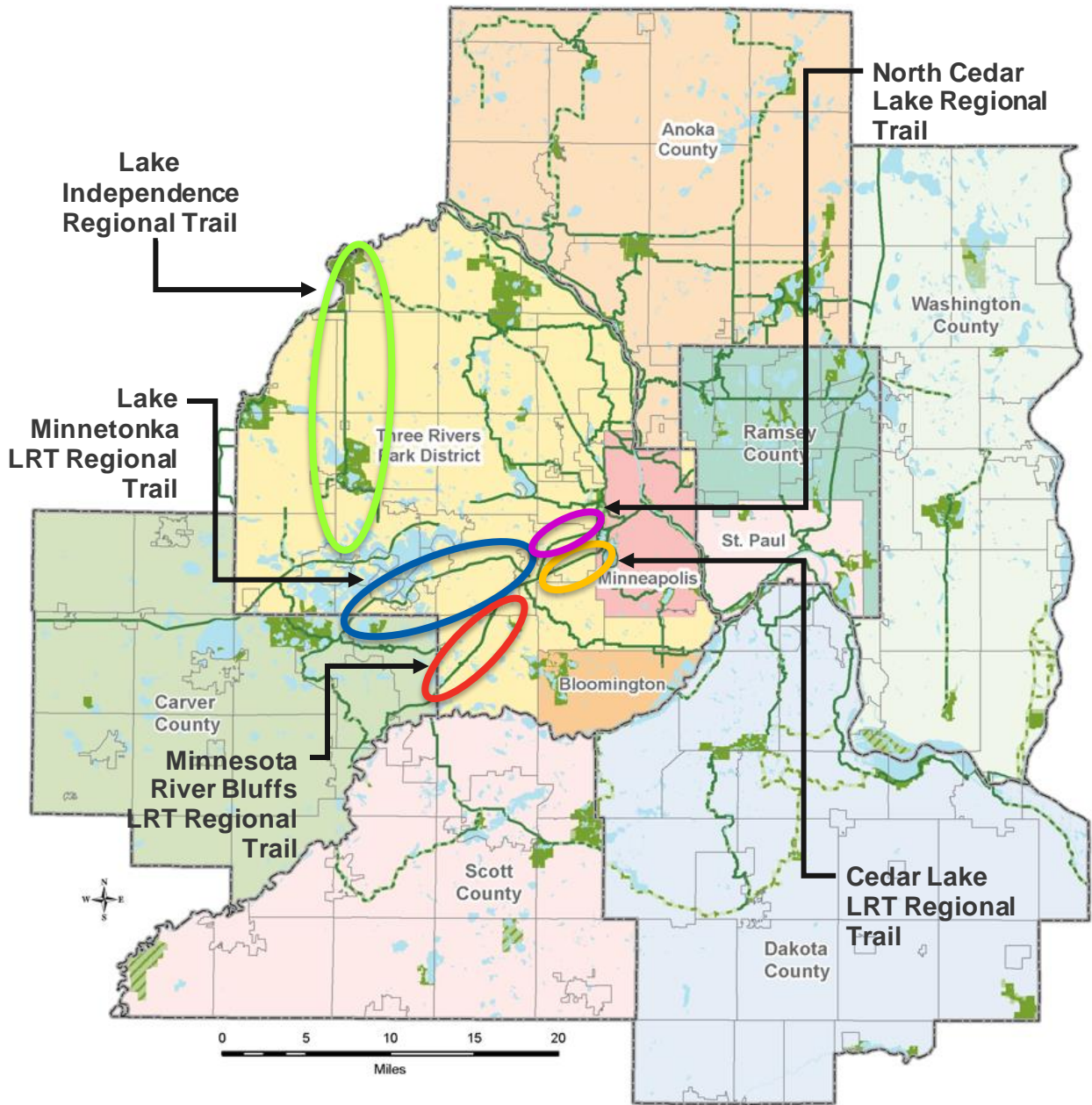


Figure 2: Regional Trails in Three Rivers Park District (MP Map 1)

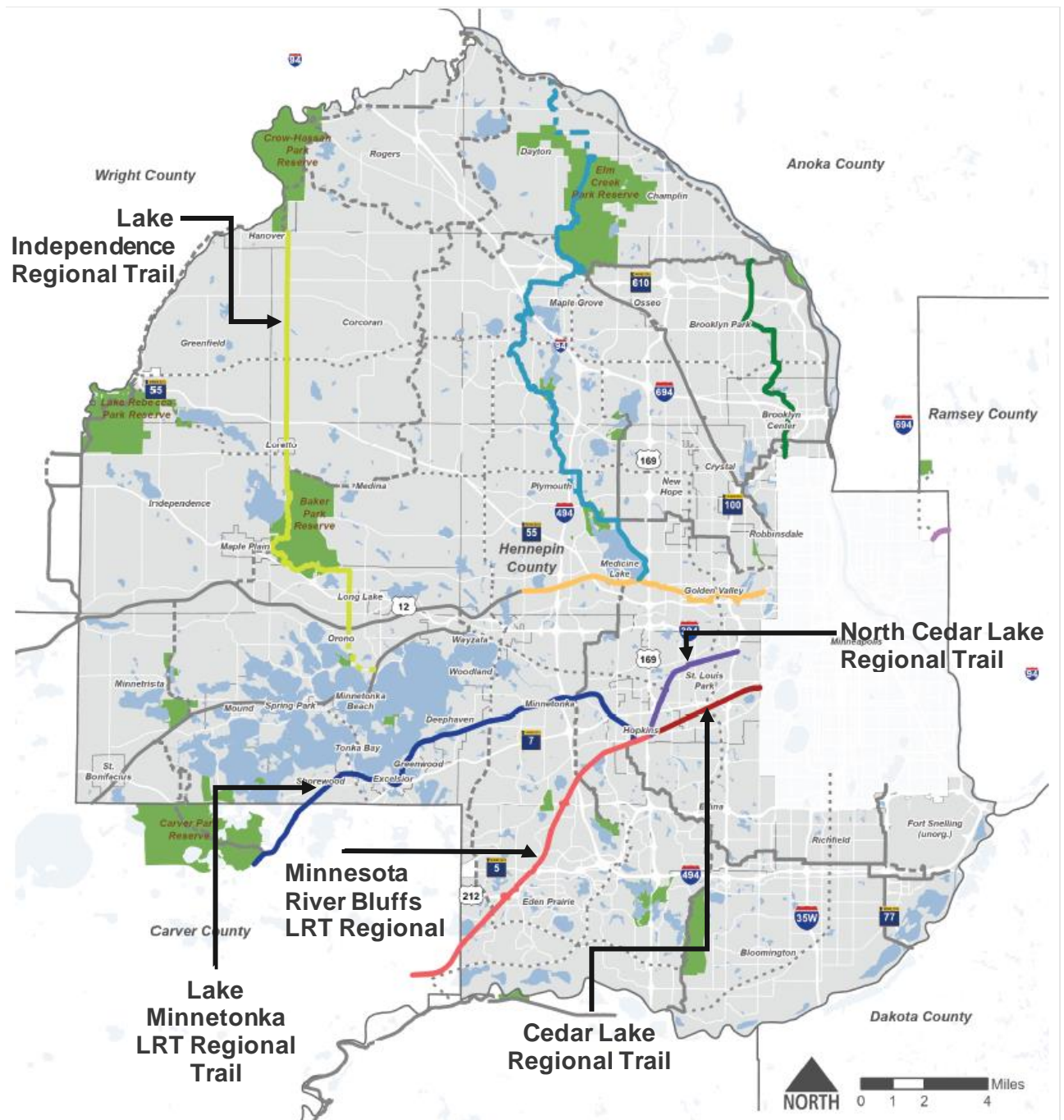


Figure 3: Lake Independence Regional Trail Context Map (MP Map 14)

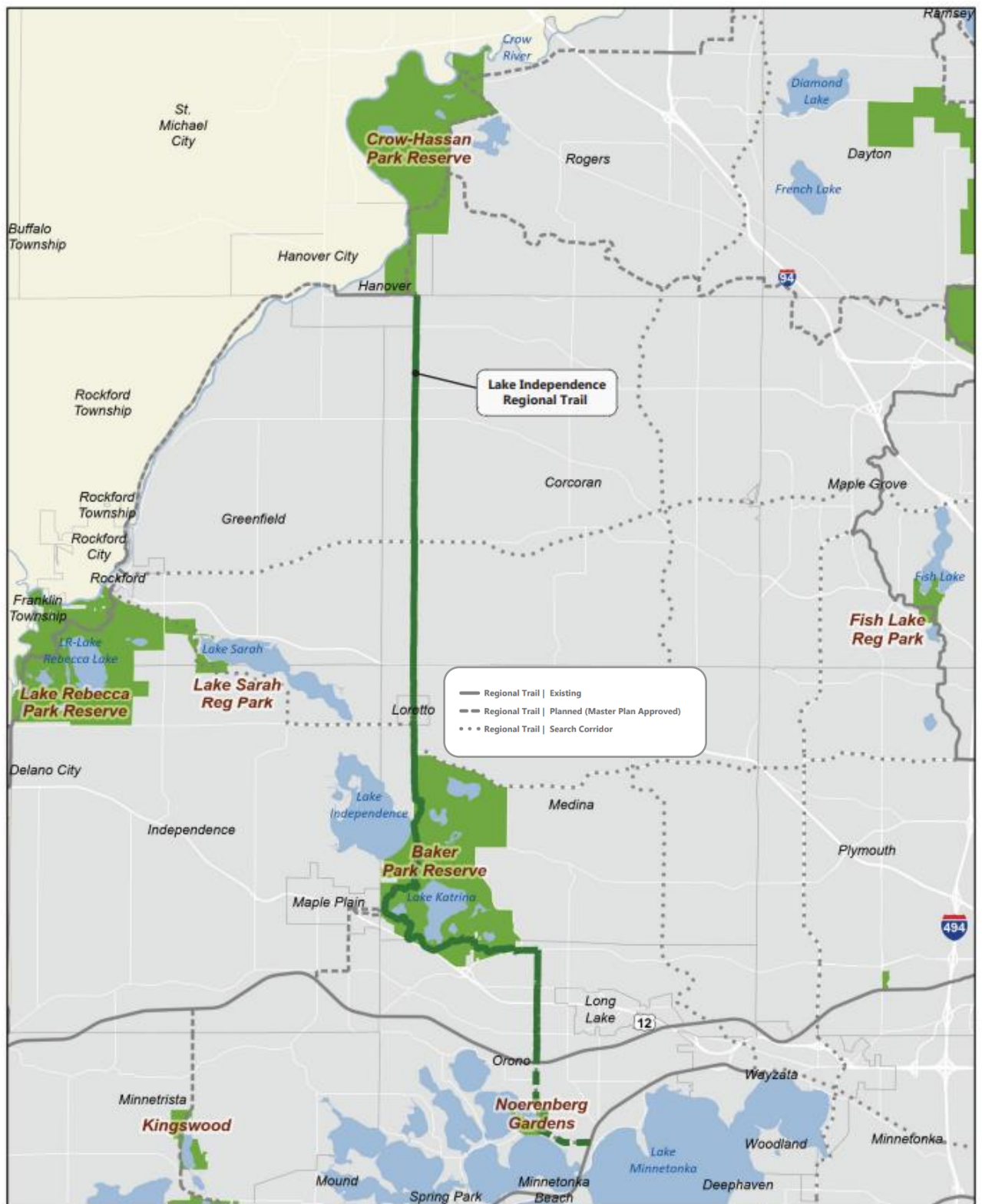




Figure 4: Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail Context Map (MP Map 47)



Figure 5: Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail Context Map (MP Map 150)



Figure 6: Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail Context Map (MP Map 3)



Figure 7: North Cedar Lake Regional Trail Context Map (MP Map 173)



## Analysis

Planning Strategy 1 of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan requires that master plans for regional linking trails address 13 items: boundaries, acquisition costs, demand forecast, development concept, conflicts, public services, operations, partner engagement, public engagement and participation, equity analysis, public awareness, accessibility, and Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (where applicable). For regional destination trails, master plans are required to address the 13 items stated above as well as stewardship plan and natural resources. The following analyzes the master plan against those requirements.

The Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota Bluffs River, Cedar Lake, and North Cedar Lake Regional Trails are considered destination trails. The Lake Independence Regional Trail is considered as a linking trail.

The Analysis is organized by shared and distinct content for each individual regional trail. Shared content consists of information that is applicable to all the regional trails. It includes partner engagement, public engagement, equity analysis, conflicts, public services, public awareness, and accessibility.

Distinct content applies specifically to the regional trail based on its geography and location. It is organized under the Development Concept section. Distinct content includes boundaries, acquisition, demand forecast, specific equity components such as demographics, trail improvements, operations and maintenance, stewardship plan (where applicable), and natural resources (where applicable).

### ***Partner Engagement***

This set of regional trail plans is unique because it was created for trails that are generally already constructed and open to the public. As a result, the engagement efforts and focus were conducted differently compared to new regional trail initiatives. They were centered around increasing the enjoyment, safety, comfort, and welcoming nature of the existing regional trails, especially for new users and those currently underrepresented throughout the regional trail system.

The Park District divided its engagement efforts into four categories: General Public, Existing Regional Trail Users, Underrepresented Community Members/Groups, and Cities & Public Agencies. This portion of the Analysis focuses on cities and public agencies.

The Park District engaged the cities that the various regional trails travel through to support the planning process and to coordinate acquisition, implementation, operations, and maintenance activities. For the purposes of this business item and the five regional trails, this analysis includes the cities of Chanhassen, Corcoran, Deephaven, Eden Prairie, Excelsior, Greenwood, Hopkins, Loretto, Medina, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Orono, Saint Louis Park, Shorewood, Tonka Bay, and Victoria.

The Park District defines public agencies as those in which the trail is proposed to impact their facilities or land and like cities, their support and coordination is desired. For the purposes of the trails included in this business item, this includes the Minnesota Department of Transportation, MnDNR, Carver County, and Hennepin County.

During the regional trail planning process, engagement efforts for cities and public agencies generally stayed at the staff level as the regional trails already exist, and trail implementation challenges and opportunities are well known to staff.

Phase 1 of the partner and public engagement process focused on working closely with local city and agency partners to better understand the performance of the existing regional trails in their communities, including their concerns, opportunities, and recommendations for them moving forward. Phase 1 worked in collaboration with the community partners to understand and consider their perspectives during the analysis and decision-making processes.

Phase 2 focused on engaging members of the public, underrepresented community members, and existing regional trail users. More information on this engagement is found in the next two sections of the Analysis: Public Engagement and Equity Analysis.



Phase 3 reengaged partners and focused on obtaining additional feedback from partners, keeping them informed of decisions and how their feedback was considered during the process. Phase 3 included sharing draft plan text and graphics with affected cities and agencies and encouraging their review and comment. This was primarily done via email. Each partner was given several weeks to review the applicable material.

The focus of Phase 4 was obtaining feedback from community members and partners and keeping them informed of decisions and how their feedback was considered during the process. As a result of this engagement, the City of Eden Prairie provided a letter of support relating to the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail (Attachment 1). The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) also provided a letter of support for the Lake Minnetonka, Cedar Lake, and Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trails (Attachment 2). Lastly, the City of Victoria provided a resolution of support (Attachment 3), and City of Greenwood provided a letter of support for the Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail (Attachment 4).

General themes of partner review included adding more local connections, adding more trailheads and amenities, and adding more wayfinding.

### ***Public Engagement***

In addition to gathering information from events and opportunities tied specifically to the regional trail planning process, relevant information from other recent planning and engagement initiatives was used to ensure the recommendations help foster more equitable access and use of the regional trails.

The goals of the public engagement were:

1. Engage all interested and affected parties.
2. Make engagement easy, convenient, interactive, thoughtful, and valuable to all parties.
3. Focus engagement on improving the safety, comfort, and use of the regional trail for all users, especially new users and groups who are currently underrepresented.
4. Develop/expand relationships and partnerships with local communities, affected public agencies and community groups.
5. Mitigate existing racial, ethnic, cultural, or linguistic barriers and include people of diverse ages, races, ethnicities, incomes, national origins, and abilities.

As referenced above, the Park District divided its engagement efforts into four categories: General Public, Existing Regional Trail Users, Underrepresented Community Members/Groups, and Cities & Public Agencies. This portion of the Analysis focuses on the general public and existing regional trail users. Underrepresented community members and groups is the focus of the next section in the Analysis.

The general public represents the full range of potential trail users – and includes people of all ages, abilities, races, ethnicity, income levels and more which generally live or spend time within the defined service area. This category includes everyone who is intended to benefit from the project. It includes both existing and non-trail users as well as property owners, renters, and visitors.

Engagement efforts with this group focus on increasing awareness, understanding barriers, and obtaining more broad, general feedback on preferences and recommendations.

Existing regional trail users tend to skew toward adults over 35 years of age, community members from households with an annual income of \$75,000 or greater, and White adults. Typically, this group has a higher level of comfort on the trails than non-trail users; greater trail awareness; access to gear and equipment; knowledge of the wayfinding system; and knowledge of locations of parking, drinking water, bathrooms, and rest areas. Taking this into consideration, engagement efforts with this group often focus on identifying specific locations for improvements (i.e., specific trail crossings, missing wayfinding signage or desired local connection) and expansion.

As referenced above, Phase 2 of the engagement process focused on engaging members of the



public, underrepresented community members, and existing regional trail users. This phase used several engagement strategies to ensure all three targeted groups were easily reached and provided an opportunity to participate. General public engagement opportunities most relevant to the five regional trails included a wiki map and several events in local communities including Nite to Unite (Corcoran), Community Picnic (Maple Plain), Tour de Tonka (Minnetonka), and AARP Senior Bike Ride (Hopkins). Approximately 122 people were engaged through these methods.

As a result of feedback received during these events, several improvements were incorporated into the regional trail plans including trail realignments, enhanced crossings, reconstruction, paving, and enhanced wayfinding.

Existing regional trail user engagement opportunities most relevant to the four regional trails included pop up “tabling” events on the Lake Minnetonka, Cedar Lake, North Cedar Lake, and Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trails. About 232 people were engaged via these pop-up events.

As a result of feedback received during these events, several improvements were incorporated into the regional trail plans including enhanced wayfinding and the addition of trailside amenities, like benches, garbage cans, and bike repair stations.

The general public, regional trail users, underrepresented community members, and partners were welcome to review and provide comments on the draft regional trail plan over a 30-day comment period from February 23 to March 25, 2022. The Park District shared this opportunity through several methods including a press release, social media posts, Park District list serves, and a news item on the Park District website. The plan was available online, at local public venues (i.e., libraries, city halls, and nearby Park District facilities) and shared via email to identified partners and others upon request.

The Park District identified general themes that emerged during the 30-day comment period. Some of those themes included design standards, wayfinding, amenities, local connections, intersection improvements, map accessibility, trail etiquette, sustainability, drainage, and winter maintenance.

## ***Equity Analysis***

### **Project Data**

The engagement efforts were geographically focused on those areas that would be most likely to benefit the regional trail(s). In accordance with the Park District’s research findings and its 2040 System Plan, 50% of visits are anticipated to originate from 1.5 miles of a regional trail (a.k.a. core service area) and 75% of visits are anticipated to originate from within 3 miles of a regional trail (a.k.a. primary service area). Therefore, the Park District’s engagement efforts are generally focused on reaching and engaging community members that live or spend time within these service areas.

Underrepresented community members or groups are those who are not using the regional trails to the extent which is expected given their percentage of the overall population, and those who were historically left out of park and trail planning processes. Since this varies from one regional trail to another, underrepresented community groups for the regional trails in this plan were considered throughout engagement efforts. Demographic information and engagement specific to individual trail corridors may be found in the Development Concept section of the Analysis.

The Park District identified the following groups as underrepresented on at least one of the regional trails included in the plan: Elementary school-aged youth and younger, Seniors over 75 years old, Black adults, Latinx persons, Women, and Households with an annual income under \$75,000.

The scope of the regional trail plans focused on identifying infrastructure investments that would increase the safety and inclusion of underrepresented community groups since the regional trails are already in place. Significant trail reroutes or expansions were generally outside the scope of the regional trail plans.

The engagement efforts for this group focused primarily on building awareness, understanding barriers, and identifying infrastructure improvements that help create a more inviting and



comfortable user experience.

### Public Engagement

As referenced above, Phase 2 of the engagement process focused on engaging members of the public, underrepresented community members, and existing regional trail users. This phase utilized several engagement strategies to ensure all three targeted groups were easily reached and provided an opportunity to participate. In addition, other recent engagement and research work focusing on better understanding regional trail use, preferences, barriers, and recommendations were used when their findings were directly relevant.

In addition to tabling at events in local communities (e.g., Earle Brown Days, Tater Daze), the Park District drew on feedback shared through other planning and research efforts including a virtual listening session with senior women's Nordic walking groups, bike tours at the Hispanic Heritage Celebration, and a resident meeting at the Dayton Mobile Park. Senior and low-income residents of the Boardwalk Apartments in Wayzata were also sent a mailing inviting them to provide feedback at the project website and complete a questionnaire regarding trails. Over 140 people were engaged through these methods.

The Park District noted that the engagement occurring in Phases 2, 3, and 4 of this regional trail planning process aligned with the "Consult" level of public participation, as defined by the International Association for Public Participation. The Consult level means "to obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions."

Participants shared that they prefer trails that accommodate physical needs (i.e., smooth pavement, wide boulevards, access to restrooms) and appreciate park-like settings along the route. Some people requested more-user friendly wayfinding, to include QR code signs, loops, and accessible maps. Other participants noted they would prefer additional facilities such as bathrooms and water fountains along the way. Virtually all respondents noted that safety is a top priority.

### Evaluation Summary

Many of the improvements included in the regional trail plans reflect the values and needs of the underrepresented community members who participated in Park District planning processes. Examples include Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements, trail surface maintenance and reconstruction (where needed), pedestrian bridge improvements, and providing additional rest stops and wayfinding. The plans also note the Park District is very supportive of local trail connections and that it works closely with local communities to connect their local trails to the regional system.

The Park District recognizes that many of these regional trails were planned and implemented as opportunities presented themselves (i.e., abandoned rail corridors) and did not always include extensive public engagement or connections to communities that may face significant barriers to participation. Further, many of the communities that these trail corridors intersect are becoming more racially, ethnically, and economically diverse and, in several cases, older (or younger).

With that in mind, the Park District will remain open to additional recommendations to better integrate the regional trails directly into the communities they are intended to serve, which includes but is not limited to:

1. Improving safety and providing more direct routes, where possible
2. Better connecting with nature, parks, and other destinations
3. Developing more operational/programming solutions to increase awareness, comfort and ability and remove barriers such as lack of equipment

Put simply, the regional trail plans are intended to be a starting point for improvements and the Park District will continue to be inclusive and responsive to changing needs and priorities.



## ***Conflicts***

Safety for all regional trail users is a top priority. Regional trails are a shared public space which serve a variety of people and user groups. However, from time to time, trail users may find themselves in conflict with other users. Everyone benefits when people respect each other's mode of travel. The Park District encourages users to respect each other through a "Share the Trail" safety campaign.

The most common conflicts involve cyclists and pedestrians as they move at very different speeds and take up different spaces. Cyclists often do not alert pedestrians when passing at high speeds, which can cause sudden and startled responses from those on foot. Sometimes groups of walkers can take up both lanes, which leaves cyclists nowhere to pass as they move through. Both users have a responsibility to share the trail.

Another common safety concern revolves around obeying traffic signs. Trail users are sometimes required to stop at roadway crossings and there is often confusion between motorists and trail users regarding right of way. Overall, trail users need to obey all traffic signs to stay safe.

## ***Public Services***

All existing roadway configuration, infrastructure elements, vegetation, and other potential visual obstructions will be evaluated so sight lines can be maintained within regional trail corridors. Special provisions, such as mirrors, may be added to improve trail visibility from driveways if deemed appropriate. As vehicular traffic fluctuates, there may be a need for additional traffic signals or modifications to existing signalized intersections. These type of design considerations and trail enhancements will be addressed during the trail design phase and as necessary to address safety concerns.

The Park District is committed to work closely with local agencies and communities to route the trail with the greatest public benefit and least amount of private property impacts.

## ***Public Awareness***

The Marketing and Community Engagement Department manages a centralized marketing communications function that oversees the Park District's website, public relations, marketing, media relations, social media, brand management, event planning, and promotion. Several marketing and outreach tools are used to promote the Park District, including but not limited to events calendars, maps, digital and social media, direct mail, press releases, a centralized reservation system, brochures, advertising, and on-site promotion.

The Park District collaborates with a wide array of community, business, and government organizations to promote its facilities, programs, and services, and to educate the public about its resources. The Park District also works with the Metropolitan Council Regional Parks System, the State Office of Tourism, and other partners to leverage shared opportunities for creating awareness and visibility. Additionally, a focus is placed on developing partnerships and programming opportunities that allow the Park District to better serve all residents of Suburban Hennepin County, especially those with less access to its facilities and programs.

Overall themes from partner agencies and communities support an increase in trail amenities, wayfinding, and safety. The plan identifies the need for trail amenities and features that would increase accessibility, awareness, safety, and natural resources management along the existing regional trail corridors.

## ***Accessibility***

The Park District is committed to providing access and recreational and transportation opportunities to all people, including persons with disabilities; Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) community members; and other special-population groups. The Park District meets this commitment through appropriate facility design, programming considerations and by actively addressing potential barriers to participation.

All regional trail facilities, including associated trailheads and trail amenities, will be designed to accommodate individuals with disabilities and developed in accordance with ADA standards and



guidelines.

In respect to programming opportunities, the Park District offers its own adaptive recreation offerings and works with not-for-profit organizations such as the Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute and Wilderness Inquiry to encourage participation in regional trail activities by persons with special needs. If arrangements are made in advance, interpreters and alternative forms of printed material are available at programmed events.

In addition to supporting individuals with disabilities, these trails span nearly all of Hennepin County, providing access to people from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds and connecting community members with local community destinations such as parks, trails, commercial areas, community facilities, cultural destinations, and transit facilities.

On a broader scale, communities adjacent to the trails will not only have access to regional trails but also gain direct and indirect access to the regional park and trail system, as well as state trails. To improve local access, neighborhood trail connections are encouraged at regular intervals.

The Park District does not charge entrance fees for its regional trails; therefore, the regional trails are available for all users to enjoy regardless of financial status.

### ***Development Concept***

Typically, this section of the Analysis focuses on the implementing agency's plan for development of the regional trail including a map, section graphic(s), and wayfinding signage plan. Unlike the previous sections of the Analysis, which summarizes content that is shared across all the subject regional trails, each of the trail master plans submitted by the Park District includes other required plan content that is distinct due to each trail's unique geography and location (e.g., Boundaries, Acquisition Costs, Demand Forecast, etc.). Therefore, the Development Concept section of the Analysis will be expanded in this business item to highlight other required plan content for each regional trail corridor (*to aid the reader, these requirements are highlighted in italics*).

### **Lake Independence Regional Trail**

The 17.3-mile Lake Independence Regional Trail extends along County Road 19 (CR 19) right-of-way, through Crow-Hassan and Baker Park Reserves, which are owned by the Park District, along the rights-of-way of County Road 6 (CR 6) and Old Crystal Bay Road to the Luce Line State Trail. From the Luce Line State Trail south to the Dakota Rail Regional Trail, about 2 miles, the Lake Independence Regional Trail is still considered a search corridor, until additional engagement and analysis is complete.

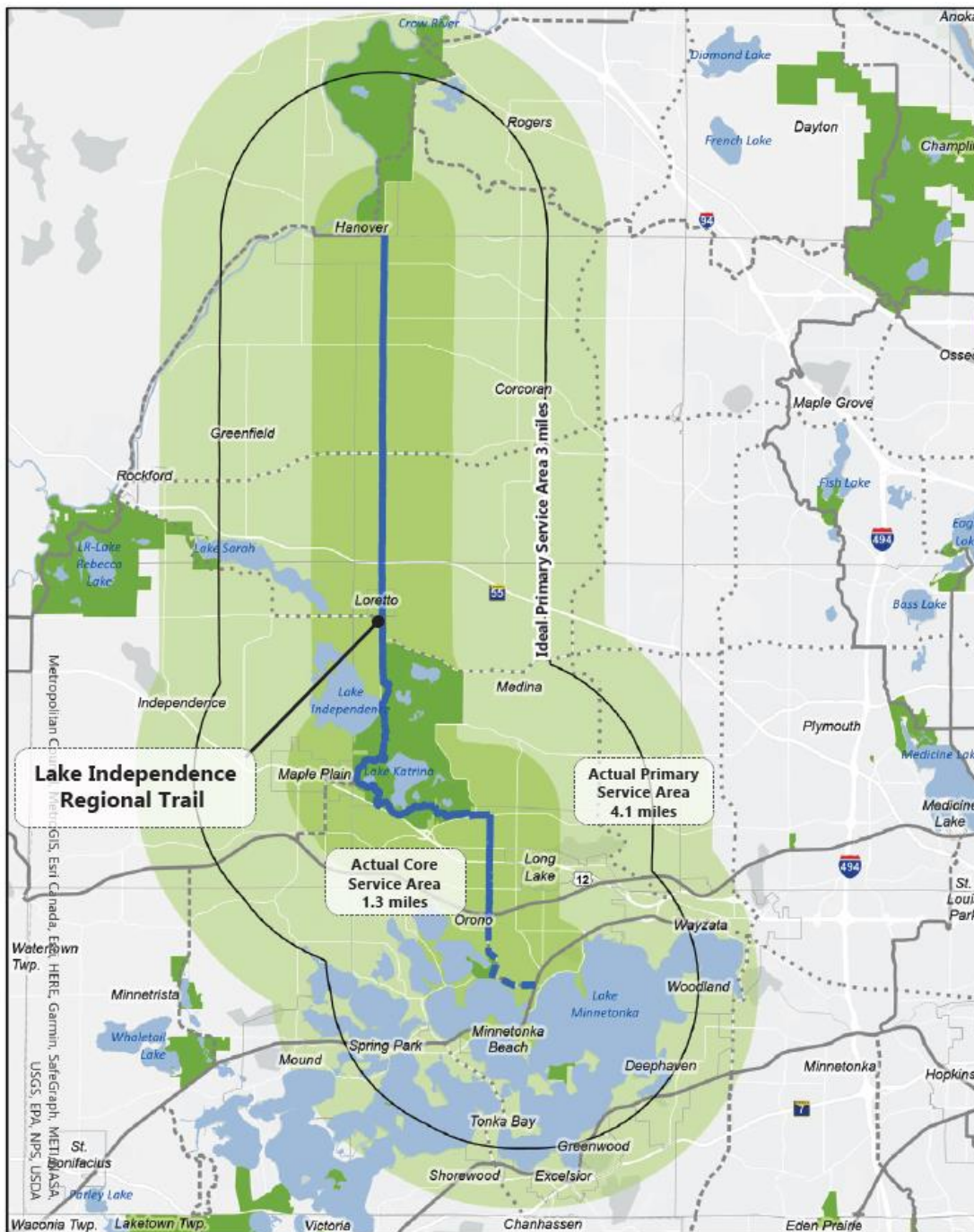
The primary use of the regional trail is recreation. The regional trail provides a safe, offroad trail option for residents in this predominantly rural part of Hennepin County. Walking, jogging, hiking, dog walking, in-line skating, and bicycling are all supported on the paved 10-foot-wide, multi-use regional trail.

The majority of the existing regional trail is within road right-of-way via a limited use permit or cooperative agreement, portions of the regional trail are also located within private property via easement or within property owned by the Park District. There are segments of the regional trail where property rights are likely missing, and the Park District intends to actively research and address as needed. Additionally, it is assumed that property rights via permit for areas within the right of way and via easement for areas across private property will be required for the regional trail search corridor (*Boundaries*). The total acquisition cost estimate is \$326,450 (*Acquisition costs*).

The regional trail currently receives an estimated 95,000 annual visits. By 2040, assuming similar use patterns, visitation is projected to increase by 24,000 annual visits to 114,000 visits (Figure 8) (*Demand forecast*).



Figure 8: Lake Independence Regional Trail Service Area (MP Map 15)



Underrepresented community groups are people or groups that are not participating on regional trails to the extent they are expected given their proportionate share of the overall population within its service area. These are the groups the Park District would like to better serve (Table 2). The Lake Independence Regional Trail is on target for all monitored demographic categories. The only underrepresented group is people from households with an annual income less than \$50,000.

Table 2: Lake Independence Regional Trail Demographics (MP Table 20)

AGE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
< 5 years		✓	
5–9 years		✓	
10–17 years		✓	
18–24 years		✓	
25–34 years		✓	
35–44 years		✓	
45–59 years		✓	
60–74 years		✓	
75+ years		✓	

RACE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
White		✓	
Black		✓	
American Indian		✓	
Asian		✓	
Other		✓	

ETHNICITY	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
Not Hispanic		✓	
Hispanic		✓	

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
<\$50,000	✓ <sup>1</sup>		
\$50,000 - \$75,000		✓	
>\$75,000		✓	

GENDER	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
Female		✓	
Male		✓	

While it is not known exactly why these community members are underrepresented, it is assumed that several barriers exist that prohibit their participation or frequency of participation. This may include the lack of available free time, lack of equipment (e.g. bike), lack of transportation, and inconvenient access. While the Park District cannot easily address lack of free time, it has recently been partnering and actively working with local communities to help provide gear and equipment to those in need. Additionally, planning will help overcome access issues and developing local trail, sidewalk, and bikeway systems to better connect community members and local neighbors to the regional trail corridor.

The trail plan recognizes the benefits of extending the Lake Independence Regional Trail south from its current terminus at the Luce Line State Trail to Noerenberg Memorial Gardens Special Recreation Feature and then to the Dakota Rail Regional Trail. The total distance of the proposed extension is about 2 miles, increasing the total trail mileage from 17.3 miles to 19.3 miles. Completion of this proposed extension would increase north/south options and create desirable loop opportunities.

The proposed extension is consistent with the City of Orono's 2040 Comprehensive Plan and is a priority for the city. There are several challenges given available right-of-way, topography, adjacent wetlands, and driveway and roadway crossings. It requires additional analysis and public engagement coordination to ensure the route and design minimizes potential impacts to private properties and natural resources, and best meet the overall community needs. In addition to the public engagement, the Park District plans to partner and coordinate with the City of Orono, Hennepin County, and adjacent property owners to include their recommendations.

There are several proposed improvements to the existing Lake Independence Regional Trail, including the construction of the proposed extension of the trail, that the Park District is responsible for. The total estimated improvement cost is \$7,130,000. Trail improvements include:

1. Widening portions of the trails and trail realignment
2. Parking lot improvement
3. Reconstruction of bridge deck
4. Installation of Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB)
5. Relocation of site features (signs, retaining wall, fence)
6. Improving ADA crossings

7. Improving clear zone
8. Wayfinding and other signage
9. Construction of new trail & boardwalk

The estimated cost for operations and maintenance for the Lake Independence Regional Trail is estimated to be \$106,000/year (*Operations*). The regional trail is nearly complete and open to the public. Only minor operation and maintenance expenses or staff adjustments are foreseen at this time to account for the future trail extension.

From a natural resource perspective, the Lake Independence Regional Trail extends along a variety of landscapes. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Minnesota Land Cover Classification System defines the area immediately adjacent to regional trail as: planted or cultivated vegetation, woodlands, and pockets of artificial/impervious surfaces. Lake Independence, Lake Katrina, Lake Minnetonka, and Lake Sarah are the predominate adjacent water features (*Natural resources*).

As linear facilities, the trail corridors typically do not extend wider than 100 feet in right-of-way and do not require substantial resource management on an annual basis. To account for minimal resource management along these trail corridors, the Park District utilizes seasonal or contract staffing, such as Conservation Corps of Minnesota to assist in maintenance. No regular staff are proposed for resource management purposes along this regional trail (*Stewardship Plan*).

#### Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail

The 16.1-mile Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail is a predominately aggregate trail. It offers scenic views of Lake Minnetonka and passes through several communities from Victoria in Carver County to Hopkins in Hennepin County. However, there are three segments of the trail that are paved or are planned to be paved. This is in response to local municipal request, connectivity of adjacent local trail/sidewalk networks, adjacent development patterns/density, overall trail use and congestion, and public sentiment. The public is generally split on paving the entire trail or leaving it as aggregate. Currently, the plan is to keep the trail primarily aggregate as it provides a diversity of opportunities within the greater regional trail system.

The regional trail is primarily owned and operated by the Park District except for a 0.1-mile segment at its western terminus which is owned by Carver County but operated by the Park District and the 0.4-mile cycle track segment along 8th Avenue, known as The Artery, which is owned and operated by City of Hopkins. The long-term plan is for Carver County to own and operate the portion of the regional trail within Carver County (3.3 miles) and for Hopkins to continue ownership and operation of the 8th Avenue segment. Additionally, the most westerly 0.1-mile trail segment that intersects Victoria's Kirkelachen Park to west of TH 5 is owned by the City of Victoria.

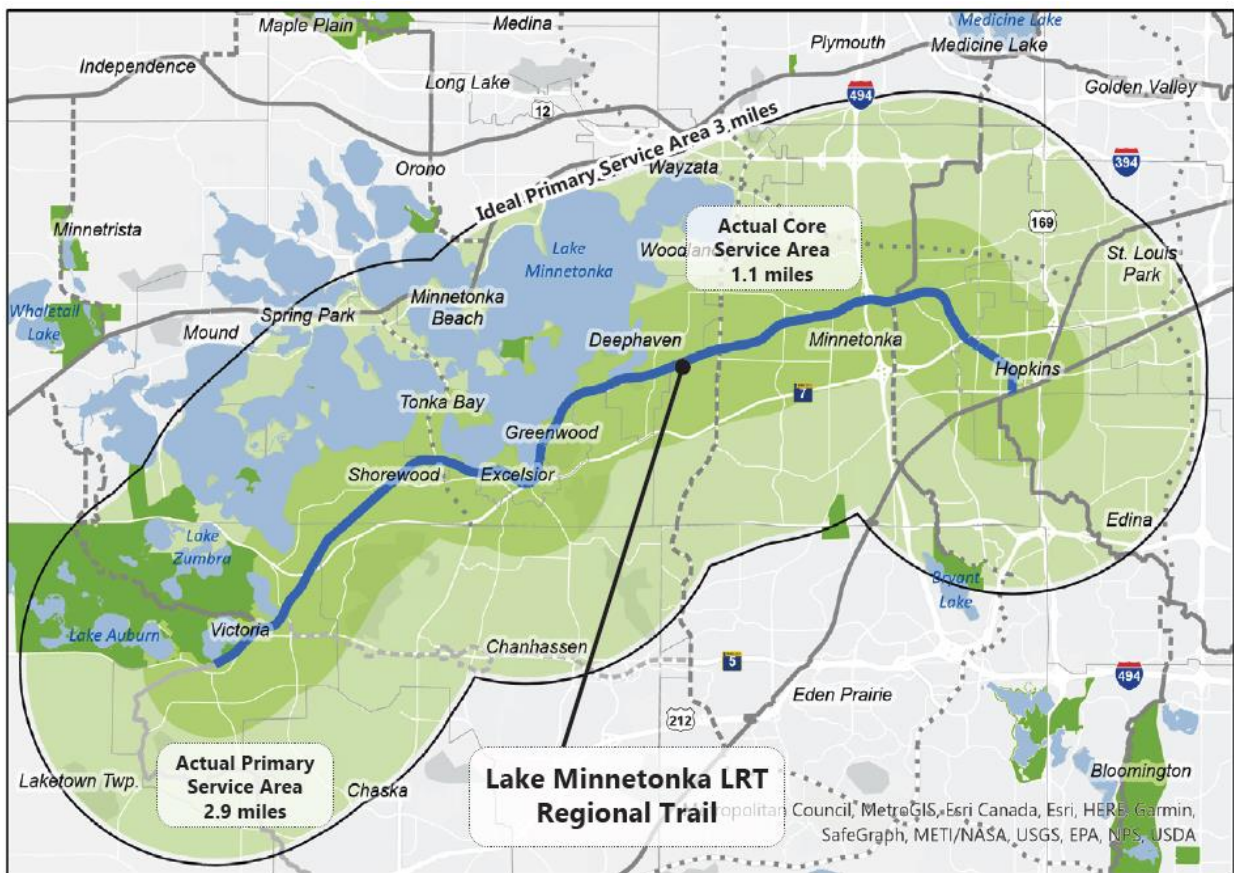
The segment between TH 5 (Victoria) to 8th Avenue (Hopkins) is primarily located within property owned by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) with a few short segments within other public property/right-of way or private easement. HCRRA acquired and preserved this former railroad property for future light rail transit, however, the corridor is anticipated not to be utilized for LRT purposes for the next 50+ years. Therefore, HCRRA has allowed and is supportive of the continuation of the corridor as an interim regional trail via permit. The current permit allows a 16-foot wide corridor in which the Park District is responsible to operate and maintain (*Boundaries*).

The total acquisition cost estimate is \$805,000, the majority of which would be fee title (*Acquisition costs*).

The regional trail currently receives an estimated 640,000 annual visits. By 2040, assuming similar use patterns, trail visitation is projected to increase by 143,000 annual visits to 783,000 visits (Figure 9) (*Demand forecast*).



Figure 9: Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail Service Area (MP Map 48)



For the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail, underrepresented groups include (Table 3):

1. People under 35 years old or over 75 years old
2. Black adults
3. People from households with an annual income of \$75,000 or less

The underrepresented community groups are generally consistent with district-wide regional trail trends. The Park District seeks to better serve these groups through a commitment to future conversations and relationship building.



Table 3: Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail Demographics (MP Table 26)

AGE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
<5 years	✓ <sup>1</sup>		
5-9 years	✓ <sup>2</sup>		
10-17 years	✓ <sup>3</sup>		
18-24 years	✓ <sup>4</sup>		
25-34 years	✓ <sup>5</sup>		
35-44 years		✓	
45-59 years			✓
60-74 years			✓
75+ years	✓ <sup>6</sup>		

RACE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
White			✓
Black	✓ <sup>7</sup>		
American Indian		✓	
Asian		✓	
Other		✓	

ETHNICITY	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
Not Hispanic		✓	
Hispanic		✓	

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
<\$50,000	✓ <sup>8</sup>		
\$50,000 - \$75,000	✓ <sup>9</sup>		
>\$75,000			✓

GENDER	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
Female		✓	
Male		✓	

One explanation for the underrepresented groups offered in the trail plan for the Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail is it has one of the higher percentages of transportation related visits (30%) and these visits tend to be from adults. Similarly, this regional trail attracts a lot of fitness bicyclists. As a result, visitor age does not mirror the service area (it is skewed toward adults ages 45-74) and is generally an acceptable finding. However, what is not acceptable is when one use or user group displaces or prohibits another user or user group from participating or having a positive experience. This may explain why youth who are old enough to walk, bike, run, or otherwise recreate independently are not visiting this trail as expected.

For this regional trail, both commuters and fitness bicycle user groups tend to be more experienced, and generally faster than more casual, recreational, or less experienced users which can cause conflicts and lead to a negative trail experience for both groups. These negative trail experiences often discourage more casual, recreational, and less experienced users from using this and other regional trails. Likewise, BIPOC community members and community members from lower income households tend to be primarily casual, recreational-type trail users. As such, they may be more likely to have negative trail experiences or feel intimidated when encountering faster cyclists.

The Park District is committed to reducing trail user conflicts, making the regional trails more inclusive, welcoming, and safe to all user groups, especially for trail users that may be new to the regional trail system.

There are several proposed improvements to the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail. The total estimated improvement cost is \$3,941,000. Trail improvements include:

1. Upgrading trails from aggregate to pavement
2. Development of new a trailhead and small parking lot
3. Installation of grade-separated crossings
4. Installation of site amenities and features (bike repair station, bench, trash receptacle, rest stop, fishing pier)
5. Improve trail sight lines
6. Improving ADA crossings and trail crossing realignment



7. Wayfinding and other signage
8. Erosion, drainage repair

The estimated cost for operations and maintenance for the Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail is estimated to be \$88,000/year (*Operations*). Beyond the improvements listed, the regional trail is generally considered complete. When segments of the regional trail are upgraded from aggregate to pavement, additional maintenance costs will be incurred.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Minnesota Land Cover Classification System defines the area immediately adjacent to Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail as: artificial/impervious surfaces, forests, and water land cover throughout the segment, with pockets of planted or cultivated vegetation, woodlands, shrublands, and herbaceous land cover. Lake Minnetonka is the predominate water feature (*Natural resources*).

If the Park District acquires additional property along the regional trail which includes significant natural or cultural resources, the Park District will develop a stewardship plan specific to that resource and in accordance with other Park District natural and cultural resource management plans.

As a linear facility, the trail corridor typically does not extend wider than 100 feet in right-of-way and does not require substantial resource management on an annual basis. To account for minimal resource management along these trail corridors, the Park District utilizes seasonal or contract staffing, such as Conservation Corps of Minnesota to assist in maintenance. No regular staff are proposed for resource management purposes along this regional trail. (*Stewardship Plan*)

#### Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail

The 10.1-mile Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail is predominately an aggregate trail. The trail begins at the Hopkins Depot in Hopkins and connects with the Cedar Lake LRT, Nine Mile Creek, Lake Minnetonka LRT and North Cedar Lake Regional Trails. As it runs south-west, it offers views of Shady Oak Lake, Miller Park, Riley Lake Park, and the forested hills around the Minnesota River Valley before entering Carver County just south of Pioneer Trail/CR 1. Its primary function is recreation although 15% of visits support transportation purposes.

The Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail is part of the METRO Green Line Extension LRT development where several bridges and underpasses and connections to light rail stations will be developed. Additionally, the regional trail along the METRO Green Line Extension LRT will be relocated and paved within the existing corridor.

The Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail is primarily located within a former railroad property acquired by Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) for future light rail transit. Much of the corridor will likely not be utilized for LRT purposes for the next 50+ years – if at all. Therefore, HCRRA allowed and is supportive of the corridor being used as an interim regional trail via a permit. The current permit allows a 16-foot wide corridor in which the Park District is responsible to operate and maintain (*Boundaries*).

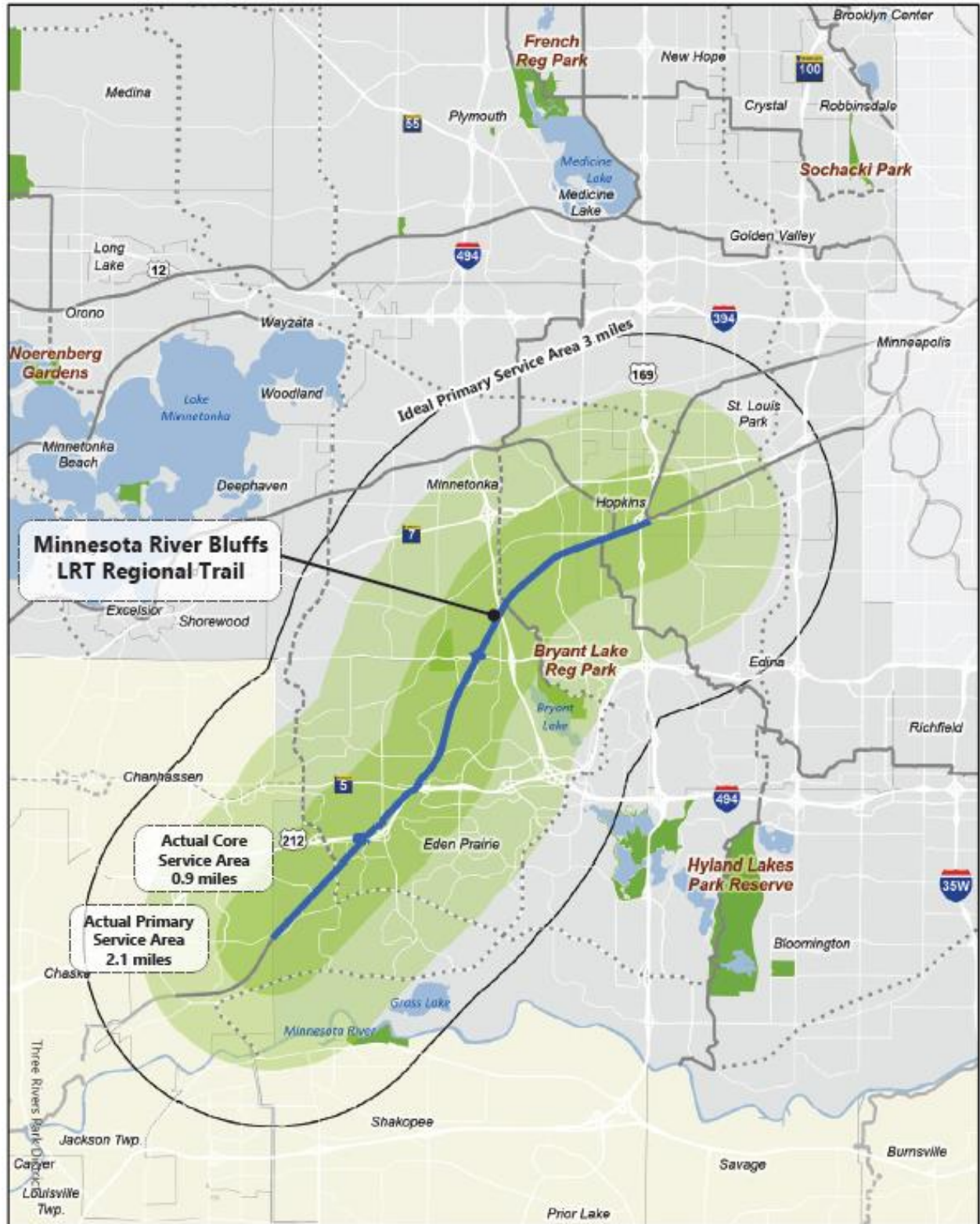
The total acquisition cost estimate is \$23,797, which is mainly limited use permits and easements (*Acquisition costs*).

The regional trail currently receives an estimated 300,000 annual visits. By 2040, assuming similar use patterns, visitation is projected to increase by 74,000 annual visits to 374,000 visits (Figure 10) (*Demand forecast*).





Figure 10: Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail Service Area (MP Map 151)



Underrepresented community groups for the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail includes (Table 4):

1. People under 18, people ages 25-34, or over 75 years old
2. Black adults

3. Hispanic adults
4. People from annual household income less than \$75,000

Table 4: Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail Demographics (MP Table 41)

AGE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
<5 years	✓ <sup>1</sup>		
5-9 years	✓ <sup>2</sup>		
10-17 years	✓ <sup>3</sup>		
18-24 years		✓	
25-34 years	✓ <sup>4</sup>		
35-44 years		✓	
45-59 years			✓
60-74 years			✓
75+ years	✓ <sup>5</sup>		

RACE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
White			✓
Black	✓ <sup>6</sup>		
American Indian		✓	
Asian		✓	
Other		✓	

ETHNICITY	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
Not Hispanic			✓
Hispanic	✓ <sup>7</sup>		

GENDER	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
Female		✓	
Male		✓	

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
<\$50,000	✓ <sup>8</sup>		
\$50,000 - \$75,000	✓ <sup>9</sup>		
>\$75,000		✓	

The underrepresented community groups are generally consistent with district-wide regional trail trends and are not satisfactory. However, there may be some explanation to why visitation does not mirror service area demographics. The regional trail has few road crossings and offers a linear park or greenway experience which it is not as easily accessible or connected to the local trail and sidewalk network. As such, access and proximity are likely a significant barrier to youth who participate for shorter distances and times or any community group with limited time, awareness, or live further from the regional trail.

Additionally, areas with affordable housing options are located farther from the regional trail corridor, which tend to serve higher percentages of Black, Hispanic, and seniors. The result is that the community groups which already face additional barriers to participation in respect to time, ability, equipment, and awareness also have a greater physical access barrier.

Rerouting the trail or altering the demographics of the subdivisions immediately adjacent to the trail is not realistic or easily feasible. As such, the Park District will continue to work with its local community partners to allow and encourage local access and support local pedestrian and bicycle networks to improve access and connectivity across and between communities and better serve underrepresented community groups.

There are several proposed improvements to the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail. The total estimated improvement cost is \$589,000. Trail improvements include:

1. Improving ADA crossings
2. Development of a small parking lot
3. Installation of site amenities and features (bike repair station, bench, fence)
4. Wayfinding

The estimated cost for operations and maintenance for the Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail is estimated to be \$52,000/year (*Operations*). Beyond the improvements listed, the regional trail is considered complete.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Minnesota Land Cover Classification System defines the area immediately adjacent to MN River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail as:



artificial/impervious surfaces, planted or cultivated vegetation throughout the segment, with pockets of forests, woodlands, shrublands, and herbaceous land cover that increase as the regional trail moves southwest. Several lakes on either side of the regional trail make up the predominate water land cover (*Natural resources*).

As a linear facility, the trail corridor typically does not extend wider than 100 feet in right-of-way and does not require substantial resource management on an annual basis. To account for minimal resource management along these trail corridors, the Park District utilizes seasonal or contract staffing, such as Conservation Corps of Minnesota to assist in maintenance. No regular staff are proposed for resource management purposes along this regional trail (*Stewardship Plan*).

### Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail

The 3.9-mile paved Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail follows the former railroad corridor of the Great Northern Railway and the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railway. The trail runs through Hopkins, Saint Louis Park, and Minneapolis. The regional trail provides access to residential neighborhoods, local parks, and other regional trails. The trail is primarily intended for recreational use. Approximately 34% of all visits have a transportation related purpose.

The METRO Green Line Extension (Southwest light rail transit extension) is currently under construction along Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail and will result in a realigned and reconstructed regional trail for its entire length as well as new at grade separated crossings of Blake Road, Wooddale Avenue, and Beltline Boulevard. The METRO Green Line Extension includes seven stations along the corridor, creating connections to the broader LRT system and likely increasing the trail's transportation function.

The entire trail will be paved, and its updated termini following the realignment will be the Hopkins Depot trailhead on the west end and the Kenilworth Regional Trail to the east.

The Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail is entirely situated along property formerly owned and preserved by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) for future light rail transit. Currently, the Metropolitan Council owns the property to effectively construct the METRO Green Line Extension, but the corridor will be conveyed back to the HCRRA once construction is completed. The corridor could also be permanently conveyed to the Park District in the future (*Boundaries*).

There are no anticipated acquisition costs (*Acquisition costs*).

The trail currently sees an estimated 584,000 annual visitors. By 2040, assuming similar user patterns, the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail visitation will increase by about 89,000 annual visits to a total of around 673,000 visits (Figure 11) (*Demand Forecast*).



Figure 11: Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail Service Area (MP Map 4)



The underrepresented groups for Cedar Lake Regional Trail include (Table 5):

1. People under 35 years old or over 75 years old
2. Black adults
3. Hispanic adults
4. Females
5. People from households with an annual income of less than \$50,000

Table 5: Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail Demographic Table (MP Table 15)

AGE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
<5 years	✓ <sup>1</sup>		
5–9 years	✓ <sup>2</sup>		
10–17 years	✓ <sup>3</sup>		
18–24 years	✓ <sup>4</sup>		
25–34 years	✓ <sup>5</sup>		
35–44 years		✓	
45–59 years			✓
60–74 years			✓
75+ years	✓ <sup>6</sup>		

RACE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
White			✓
Black	✓ <sup>8</sup>		
American Indian		✓	
Asian		✓	
Other		✓	

ETHNICITY	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
Not Hispanic			✓
Hispanic	✓ <sup>9</sup>		

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
<\$50,000	✓ <sup>10</sup>		
\$50,000 - \$75,000		✓	
>\$75,000			✓

GENDER	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
Female	✓ <sup>7</sup>		
Male			✓

The underrepresented community groups are generally consistent with district-wide regional trail trends and are not satisfactory. However, there may be acceptable rationale as to why visitation does not mirror service area demographics.

One example is that the trail has one of the highest percentages of transportation related visits (34%) and the trail attracts many fitness bicyclists. These two groups tend to be adults, explaining the underrepresentation for younger age groups. These groups also tend to ride at higher speeds, which may intimidate the underrepresented groups on the trail. Underrepresented groups may brake often, be unaware of trail etiquette, or prefer a slower and more recreational trail experience. These conditions may create conflicts between trail users and ultimately discourage the underrepresented groups from visiting the regional trail.

The Park District is working to make the Cedar Lake Regional Trail more inclusive for these underrepresented groups by increasing awareness of trail etiquette. Signage will be updated to describe trail rules and the trail will employ a volunteer patrol who will educate new users. Additionally, there will be efforts to reduce barriers to trail access by educating community members and working to provide bikes to those in need.

There are several proposed improvements to the 3.9 miles of the Cedar Lakes LRT Regional Trail that the Park District is responsible for. The total estimated cost is \$181,500. Trail improvements include:

1. Modification of bike crossings
2. Relocation of a signal box
3. Installation of a bike repair station
4. Upgrading wayfinding

The estimated cost for operations and maintenance for the trail is estimated to be \$24,000/year (*Operations*). Beyond the improvements listed, the regional trail is generally considered complete, and no additional operation and maintenance costs are foreseen.

The DNR's Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS) defines the area immediately adjacent to the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail as artificial/impervious surfaces and planted or cultivated vegetation with pockets of woodlands, shrublands and herbaceous land cover. Cedar



Lake, Minnehaha Creek, and Bde Maka Ska are the predominate water features (*Natural Resources*).

As a linear facility, the trail corridor typically does not extend wider than 100 feet in right-of-way and does not require substantial resource management on an annual basis. To account for minimal resource management along these trail corridors, the Park District utilizes seasonal or contract staffing, such as Conservation Corps of Minnesota to assist in maintenance. No regular staff are proposed for resource management purposes along this regional trail (*Stewardship Plan*).

### North Cedar Lake Regional Trail

The 4.2-mile North Cedar Lake Regional Trail runs from the Hopkins Depot to the Cedar Lake Regional Trail in Minneapolis. The western portion between the Hopkins Depot and east side of TH 100 is 4.2 miles long and owned and operated by the Park District, while the remaining 1.8-miles of trail are owned and operated by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. This plan will only be discussing the portion of the regional trail owned by the Park District.

The regional trail is located on a former railroad corridor forming an independent trail corridor through Hopkins and St. Louis Park. It has limited road crossings and provides trail users with a linear park-like experience. This trail provides access to the Cedar Lake LRT, Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota River Bluffs, and Nine Mile Creek Regional Trails. Additionally, the western terminus of the trail will provide access to the METRO Green Line Extension. The primary intended use of the trail is recreation, but approximately 40% of visitors utilize the trail for transportation functions.

North Cedar Lake Regional Trail is primarily on property that is owned by the cities of Hopkins and St. Louis Park, and BNSF Railroad. The Park District operates the trail under agreements with Hopkins and St. Louis Park as well as a lease with BNSF for the portion of trail between West 27<sup>th</sup> Street and TH 100. The BNSF lease currently requires an annual \$12,000 payment, plus an annual 3% increase thereafter (2021 dollars). While there is no current discussion of conveying the land to the Park District, the Park District remains open to the idea (*Boundaries*).

The anticipated acquisition costs are \$123,944 and are primarily for limited use permits and easements (*Acquisition Costs*).

The North Cedar Lake Regional Trail currently receives an estimated 493,000 annual visits (Figure 12). Visitation is projected to increase by 93,000 (18.7%) annual visits by 2040, increasing the total visitors to 586,000 (*Demand Forecast*).

Figure 12: North Cedar Lake Regional Trail Service Area (MP Map 174)



The trail meets or exceeds visitation expectations for people ages 35-74, males, White/American Indian/Asian adults, non-Hispanic adults, and people from households with an annual income of \$50,000 or more. Despite this, the Park District recognizes that some groups are underrepresented on the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail (Table 6). These groups include:

1. People under 35 years old or over 75 years old
2. Females
3. Black adults
4. Hispanic adults
5. People from households with an annual income of less than \$50,000

Table 6: North Cedar Lake Regional Trail Demographics (MP Table 46)

AGE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
<5 years	✓ <sup>1</sup>		
5-9 years	✓ <sup>2</sup>		
10-17 years	✓ <sup>3</sup>		
18-24 years	✓ <sup>4</sup>		
25-34 years	✓ <sup>5</sup>		
35-44 years		✓	
45-59 years			✓
60-74 years			✓
75+ years		✓	

RACE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
White			✓
Black	✓ <sup>7</sup>		
American Indian		✓	
Asian		✓	
Other		✓	

ETHNICITY	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
Not Hispanic		✓	
Hispanic		✓	

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
<\$50,000	✓ <sup>8</sup>		
\$50,000 - \$75,000		✓	
>\$75,000			✓

GENDER	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
Female	✓ <sup>6</sup>		
Male			✓

The underrepresented community groups are generally consistent with district-wide regional trail trends and are not satisfactory. However, there may be acceptable rationale as to why visitation does not mirror service area demographics.

One example is that the trail has one of the highest percentages of transportation related visits (42%) and the trail attracts many fitness bicyclists. These two groups tend to be adults, explaining the underrepresentation for younger age groups. These groups also tend to ride at higher speeds, which may intimidate the underrepresented groups on the trail. Underrepresented groups may brake often, be unaware of trail etiquette, or prefer a slower and more recreational trail experience. These conditions may create conflicts between trail users and ultimately discourage the underrepresented groups from visiting the trail.

The Park District is working to make the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail more inclusive for these underrepresented groups by increasing awareness of trail etiquette. Signage will be updated to describe trail rules and the trail will employ a volunteer patrol who will educate new users. There will also be efforts to reduce barriers to trail access by educating community members and working to provide bikes to those in need.

There are several proposed improvements to the 4.2-mile North Cedar Lake Regional Trail that the Park District is responsible for. The total estimated cost is \$1,972,000. Trail improvements include:

1. Trail Realignment



2. Widening the trail
3. Installation of site amenity (benches)
4. Improving ADA crossings

Since the trail is complete and open to the public, operation and maintenance staff costs are anticipated to remain the same. The current cost of operations and maintenance are estimated to be \$26,000/year (*Operations*).

The DNR's Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS) defines the area immediately adjacent to North Cedar Lake Regional Trail as artificial/impervious surfaces and planted or cultivated vegetation throughout the segment with pockets of woodlands, shrublands and herbaceous land cover. Minnehaha Creek and smaller pockets of small lakes are the predominate water features (*Natural Resources*).

As a linear facility, the trail corridor typically does not extend wider than 100 feet in right-of-way and does not require substantial resource management on an annual basis. To account for minimal resource management along these trail corridors, the Park District utilizes seasonal or contract staffing, such as Conservation Corps of Minnesota to assist in maintenance. No regular staff are proposed for resource management purposes along this regional trail (*Stewardship Plan*).

### **Consistency with Other Council Policies and Systems**

Council staff have reviewed and found the proposed master plans to be consistent with the other plans and policies of the Council, including *Thrive MSP 2040*, the *Water Resources Policy Plan*, the *Transportation Policy Plan*, and the *Housing Policy Plan*. Additional review comments are included below.

#### ***Lake Independence Regional Trail***

Community Development – Forecasts (Todd Graham, 651-602-1322) – The Park District considers 2010-2040 local population growth and recent park visitation estimates. Those are combined into a park visitation projection (table 19). Further, the Park District discusses expected changing trail user needs. Council staff concur with this demand assessment.

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig, 651-602-1119) – The construction of any new or updating of existing paths, trails, bridges, or any other construction project 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 project, preliminary plans should be sent to Tim Wedin, Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager (651-602-4571) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services.

A portion of the proposed trail coincides with the general alignment for a future regional interceptor facility. When the preliminary design is initiated, Three Rivers Park District shall contact Tim Wedin, Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager (651-602-4571) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services to coordinate the two alignments.

Environmental Services – Water Resources (Maureen Hoffman, 651-602-1279) – Trail segments 28 and 29 have identified areas for potential wetland impacts. Council staff encourages the Park District to limit impacts and pretreat stormwater before entering the wetland. Additionally, when the Park District is deciding where to place the trail extension, Council staff recommend ranking minimal impact on wetlands as high ranking criteria.

#### ***Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail***

Community Development – Forecasts (Todd Graham, 651-602-1322) – The Park District considers 2010-2040 local population growth and recent park visitation estimates. Those are combined into a park visitation projection (table 25). Further, the Park District discusses expected changing trail user needs. Council staff concur with this demand assessment.

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig, 651-602-1119) – The construction of any new or updating of existing paths, trails, bridges, or any other construction project 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 project, preliminary plans should be sent to Tim Wedin, Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager (651-602-4571) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services.

### ***Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail***

Community Development – Forecasts (Todd Graham, 651-602-1322) – The Park District considers 2010-2040 local population growth and recent park visitation estimates. Those are combined into a park visitation projection (table 40). Further, the Park District discusses expected changing trail user needs. Council staff concur with this demand assessment.

Community Development – Land Use (Michael Larson, 651-602-1407) – The Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail Master Plan appears complete and support a number of *Thrive MSP 2040* Land Use Policies.

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig, 651-602-1119) – The construction of any new or updating of existing paths, trails, bridges, or any other construction project 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 project, preliminary plans should be sent to Tim Wedin, Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager (651-602-4571) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services.

### ***Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail***

Community Development – Forecasts (Todd Graham, 651-602-1322) – The Park District considers 2010-2040 local population growth and recent park visitation estimates. Those are combined into a park visitation projection (table 14). Further, the Park District discusses expected changing trail user needs. Council staff concur with this demand assessment.

Community Development – Land Use (Michael Larson, 651-602-1407) – The Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail Master Plan appears complete and support a number of *Thrive MSP 2040* Land Use Policies.

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig, 651-602-1119) – The construction of any new or updating of existing paths, trails, bridges, or any other construction project 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 project, preliminary plans should be sent to Tim Wedin, Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager (651-602-4571) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services.

Metro Transit (Patrick Haney, 612-349-7451) – Council staff recommends amending language on Map 9, page 42 of the master plan from “Improve trail connections to Louisiana Avenue S. old Sam’s Club site. Cost borne by METRO Green Line Extension project” to “Improve trail connections to Louisiana Avenue S. old Sam’s Club site. Trail access improvements within rail corridor included in Green Line Extension project.”

### ***North Cedar Lake Regional Trail***

Community Development – Forecasts (Todd Graham, 651-602-1322) – The Park District considers 2010-2040 local population growth and recent park visitation estimates. Those are combined into a park visitation projection (table 45). Further, the Park District discusses expected changing trail user needs. Council staff concur with this demand assessment.

Community Development – Land Use (Michael Larson, 651-602-1407) – The North Cedar Lake Regional Trail Master Plan appears complete and support a number of *Thrive MSP 2040* Land Use Policies.

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig, 651-602-1119) – The construction of any new or updating of existing paths, trails, bridges, or any other construction project 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 project, preliminary plans should be sent to Tim Wedin, Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager (651-602-4571) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services.





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55344-4485

[edenprairie.org](http://edenprairie.org)

March 25, 2022

Ms. Kelly Grissman  
Director of Planning  
Three Rivers Park District  
3000 Xenium Avenue North  
Plymouth, MN 55441

Dear Ms. Grissman,

The City of Eden Prairie supports the efforts of Three Rivers Park District to develop a master plan for nine existing regional trails, which includes the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail located within Eden Prairie, to meet the requirements of the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

These trails are fully developed existing facilities that have operated for many years without a master plan and serve as the backbone to our local community's trail network. The City supports the Nine Regional Trails Master Plan's envisioned improvements that will ultimately increase the safety, usability, connectivity, and quality of the nine regional trails, including the regional trail segments located within our community.

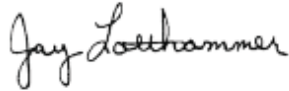
The regional trails and envisioned improvements are consistent with the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Parks and Trail Plan. As such, the City looks forward to working collaboratively with Three Rivers to implement the envisioned improvements and further enhance regional recreation and non-motorized amenities located within our community and directly serving our residents. Below are comments on behalf of the City of Eden Prairie.

1. Add a ramp on the south side of Valley View from our trail to the bridge.
2. To the extent possible, use native pollinator plantings for trailside vegetation.
3. Based on community feedback, there is a preference for a paved trail. Page 25 of the Operations and Maintenance section alludes to an added average annual cost of 60% for a paved trail over an aggregate trail. This seems high compared to EPA and other transportation agency reports on the O&M cost differential between paved and unpaved road surfaces. We believe the standard is closer to 20-25% premiums for paved. Also, there is little discussion about the negative aspects to aggregate (fugitive dust control, traction control/skid control/stopping distance, TSS loading in runoff, dirty shoes and clothing, damage to bike gears, etc.).
4. In case you aren't aware, Hennepin County is soliciting for federal funds to replace the CSAH 1 (Pioneer Trail) bridge over the HCRRRA trail in 2026.



5. For clarification, the two bridges in Bearpath are on the city's bridge inspection program.
6. We would appreciate a discussion of about Three Rivers Park District cost sharing responsibilities for any maintenance or repairs on the bridge over TH 212.

Sincerely,



Jay Lotthammer  
Parks and Recreation Director



HENNEPIN COUNTY  
REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY

March 21, 2022

Ms. Kelly Grissman  
Director of Planning  
Three Rivers Park District  
3000 Xenium Avenue North  
Plymouth, MN 55441

Dear Ms. Grissman,

The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) supports the efforts of Three Rivers Park District to develop a master plan for nine existing regional trails, which includes Cedar Lake, Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota River Bluffs, and Northeast Diagonal Regional Trails located within HCRRA corridors, to meet the requirements of the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

These trails are fully developed existing facilities that have operated for many years without a master plan and serve as the backbone to our region's trail network. HCRRA supports the Nine Regional Trails Master Plan's envisioned improvements that will ultimately increase the safety, usability, connectivity, and quality of the nine regional trails, including the regional trail segments located on HCRRA corridors.

HCRRA looks forward to working collaboratively with Three Rivers to implement the envisioned improvements and further enhance regional recreation and non-motorized amenities located on HCRRA corridors and directly serving our residents.

Sincerely,



Lisa Cerney  
HCRRA Deputy Director

Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority  
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400, Minneapolis, MN 55415  
[hennepin.us/hcrra](http://hennepin.us/hcrra)





## Resolution No. 2022-18

*Moved by Gunderson  
Seconded by Roberts*

### A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE NINE REGIONAL TRAILS MASTER PLAN

**WHEREAS,** The City of Victoria recognizes the Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail included in the Nine Regional Trails Master Plan, as an important component of the regional parks system providing a desirable recreational and non-motorized transportation amenity to the residents of the City and the region; and

**WHEREAS,** The Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail will continue to provide safe, off-street non-motorized access to existing regional amenities; and

**WHEREAS,** The City of Victoria recognizes that Three Rivers Park District and the directly effected cities, have gathered public input in the development of the Nine Regional Trails Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS,** The City recognizes that the Park District has drafted the Nine Mile Regional Trails Master Plan and accepted and responded to public comment appropriately, and

**WHEREAS,** The Nine Regional Trails Master Plan is consistent with other approved local and regional plans, and

**WHEREAS,** The City supports the acquisition, design, implementation, and operations of the Nine Regional Trails pursuant to the Master Plan; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City of Victoria supports the Nine Regional Trails Master Plan.

This Resolution is adopted by the City of Victoria and approved by the Mayor this 28 day of March 2022

Debra McMillan, Mayor

ATTEST:

Cindy Patnode, City Clerk



May 5, 2022

Three Rivers Park District  
Attn: Kelly Grissman, Director of Planning  
3000 Xenium Avenue North  
Plymouth, MN 55441

SENT VIA EMAIL  
Kelly.Grissman@threerivers.org

**Re: Support for LMRT Master Plan**

Dear Ms. Grissman,

The city of Greenwood supports the efforts of Three Rivers Park District to develop a Master Plan for nine existing regional trails, which includes the Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail located within Greenwood, to meet the requirements of the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

These trails are fully developed existing facilities that have operated for many years without a Master Plan and serve as the backbone to our local community's trail network. Greenwood supports the Nine Regional Trails Master Plan's envisioned improvements that will ultimately increase the safety, usability, connectivity, and quality of the nine regional trails, including the regional trail segments located within our city.

The regional trails and potential improvements are consistent with the Greenwood's 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Park Plan. However, due to an oversight by Three Rivers staff to include the Greenwood city council in the Master Plan planning process, the city council still needs to survey our residents and businesses regarding the preferred surface of the trail. Once we have the results of the survey, we will contact you and request an amendment to the Master Plan.

The city of Greenwood looks forward to working collaboratively with Three Rivers to implement the improvements and further enhance regional recreation and non-motorized amenities located within our city for the benefit our residents and businesses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debra J. Kind".

Debra J. Kind  
Mayor, City of Greenwood  
on behalf of the Greenwood City Council

*CC: Three Rivers Staff (Jonathan Vlaming, Stephen Shurson, Danny McCullough),  
Greenwood City Council, Greenwood Zoning Administrator Scott Richards,  
Greenwood Assistant Administrator Shanda Whilhelmy*

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