

Business Item

Community Development Committee



Community Development Committee Meeting: December 18, 2023 Metropolitan Council: January 10, 2024

Business Item: 2023-296

Washington County, Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Long-Range Plan and St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Long-Range Plan Amendment

District(s), Member(s):	District F, Cecily Harris District 11, Gail Cederberg
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minn. Stat. § 473.313; <i>2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan</i> : Chapter 5, Planning Policy Strategy 1, Master Plans
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Tracey Kinney, Senior Planner (651-602-1029)
Division/Department:	Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Long-Range Plan.
2. Approve the St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Long-Range Plan Amendment.
3. Require Washington County, prior to initiating any construction, to send preliminary plans to the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager.
4. Request that the County send to the Council for the Council's records the Joint Powers Agreement between the County and Department of Natural Resources for use of the Brown's Creek State Trail once it has been executed.
5. Advise the County to consider implementing the recommendations for solar resources and transportation in the Advisory Comments section of the business item.

Summary of Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission Discussion/Questions

Tracey Kinney presented the staff report to the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission on December 7, 2023. Connor Schaeffer from Washington County was in attendance and helped answer questions.

Commissioner Bob Moeller asked if the trail connects to Wisconsin. Chair Yarusso responded that there is a loop trail that can be accessed by the proposed trail that connects to Wisconsin.

Council Member Sue Vento noted that the Board of the National Park Trust met in Stillwater in October 2023. She expressed their appreciation to Washington County for the work being done along the St. Croix River.

Chair Yarusso asked if the plan includes information about the St. Croix River National Wild and Scenic River Designation. Kinney responded that Washington County has been coordinating with State and Federal agencies related to the Wild and Scenic River Designation requirements. The

plan does account for the requirements. As the plan is implemented further agency coordination will occur.

Commissioner Cecily Harris noted appreciation to Washington County for the work on the trail plan. She asked if Metropolitan Council funding pays for improvements to the proposed interim trail. Chair Yarusso responded that the Council can pay for either an interim or preferred alignment; the agency can choose which one. Emmett Mullin, Parks Manager, responded that there may be a scenario where the Council helps pay for the interim alignment. Then if the time horizon is such that this alignment lives out its useful life, then the Council may be able to help pay for the preferred alignment too. Commissioner Harris asked if the proposed Council action on solar is a common advisory comment. Kinney responded that this is a new area of focus. Mullin responded that the use of solar supports reducing our carbon footprint for climate resilience.

Commissioner Anthony Taylor asked if there was consideration of the economic benefit to communities that connect with the trail. He also asked if there is consideration of support facilities for bicyclists along the proposed trail like bike shops and trailheads. Council Member Vento added that coordination with local grocer clubs or chambers of commerce could help with building investment for support facilities. Vento noted that Cub Foods originated in Stillwater and may be interested in helping. Connor Schaefer with Washington County responded that through the plan's public engagement, the County heard interest for destinations along the trail. Bike advocate groups noted the need for support facilities. Local Chambers of Commerce were enthusiastic about promoting the trail for tourism purposes. As the plan is implemented the County can work with their own Community Economic Development Authority to support small businesses, bicycle shops, and other complementary businesses. The County is also working to bring other visitors to the trail through a kayak and bicycle rental loop. Visitors will be able to kayak down the river and bike back.

Chair Yarusso asked if bathroom facilities are included in the plan. Schaeffer responded that there are a number existing and proposed trailheads including bathroom facilities along the proposed trail.

Commissioner Taylor asked about coordination with Belwin Conservatory's school programs related to biking. Schaeffer responded that the County has spoken with Belwin Conservatory about coordination with their school programs. Belwin Conservatory is supportive of the idea and sees this as an opportunity.

Council Member Vento asked if the County had worked with the Tribes through the planning process. Schaeffer responded that the County reached out to the tribes but didn't hear back. The County sees this response as a need to build a relationship with the Tribes and has submitted an Equity Grant proposal to work on this topic.

Chair Yarusso asked about the shared trail segment with the DNR's Brown's Creek State Trail. Mullin responded that a future memorandum of understanding will be developed between the County and the DNR for shared use of the trail. Yarusso asked about the status of the trail alignment through the Belwin Conservatory. Schaeffer responded that Belwin Conservatory is supportive of the idea. Washington County will continue to pursue this alignment with consideration of a creative funding strategy.

The full Commission voted unanimously to pass the proposed action.



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Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



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Background

Washington County's Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Search Corridor and the planned St. Croix Valley Regional Trail are located centrally on the eastern boundary of the Regional Parks System and Washington County (Figures 1 and 2). The Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail was designated as a search corridor in 2010, as part of the development of the Metropolitan Council's *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan (Policy Plan)* update. It was extended 6.8 miles during 2020 Policy Plan Update and System's Addition process ([Business Item 2020-326](#)). The St. Croix Valley Regional Trail has a long-range plan approved in 2005.

The 14-mile, Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail will extend north from the planned 17.4-mile St. Croix Valley Regional Trail, for a combined total of over 31 miles. The Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail begins in downtown Afton and extends northward to the St. Croix Boom Site (Figure 3). The trails will provide access to and scenic views of the St. Croix River, a federally designated National Wild and Scenic Riverway, as well as the St. Croix Savannah Scientific and Natural Area, and Bayport Wildlife Management Area.

The St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Long-Range Plan Amendment updates a 0.8-mile segment of trail in the City of Afton along County Road 21 to better connect to the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail. The two trails are envisioned to be combined as one trail when a future additional northern alignment is planned (Figure 3).

Rationale

As described in the Analysis section of this report, the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Long Range Plan and St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Long-Range Plan Amendment is consistent with the requirements of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* (RPPP) including Chapter 5, Planning Policy Strategy 1, Master Plans.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Long Range Plan and St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Long Range Plan Amendment advances the Thrive outcome of Livability by increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation, which enhances quality of life in the region.

Funding

The total cost to develop the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Long-Range Plan and St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Long-Range Plan Amendment is approximately \$13,136,350 including \$11,700,000 for development and \$1,429,250 for acquisitions.

If the preferred alignment of the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail is deemed not feasible, then the County will pursue the 5.8-mile interim alignment segment. The total cost to develop the interim alignment is approximately \$2,018,600 including \$1,623,300 for development and \$395,300 for acquisitions.

The total cost for operations and maintenance of both trails is \$89,200 annually.

The Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail includes a shared segment with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) Brown's Creek State Trail; as well as a preferred alignment through the Belwin Conservatory. The portion of trail that will share the Brown's Creek State Trail will continue to be owned, operated, and maintained by the MN DNR. Washington County will develop a formal agreement (Joint Powers Agreement), to formalize details with both entities.



Figure 1. Middle Saint Croix Valley Regional Trail Search Corridor and St. Croix Valley Regional Trail location in the Regional Parks System

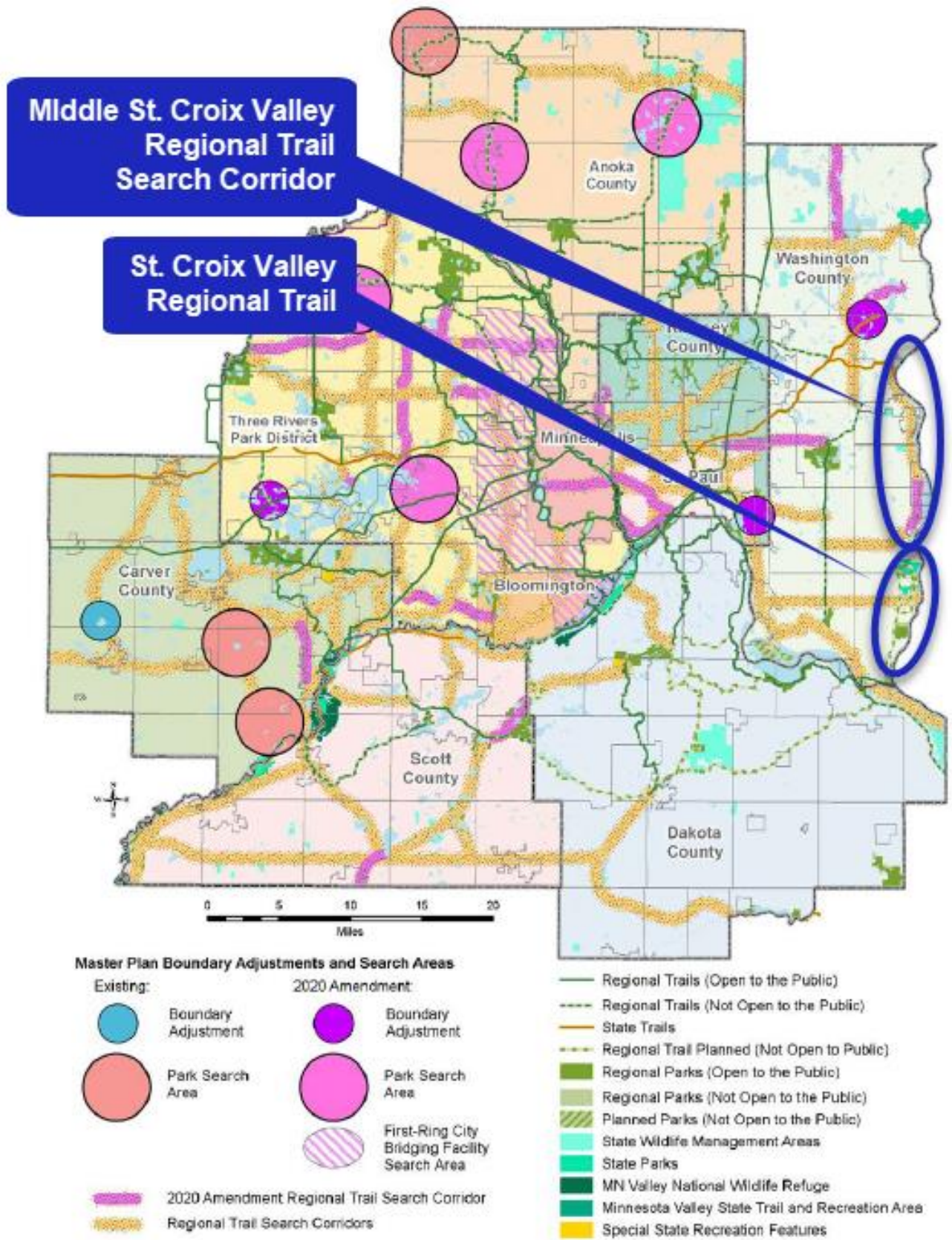
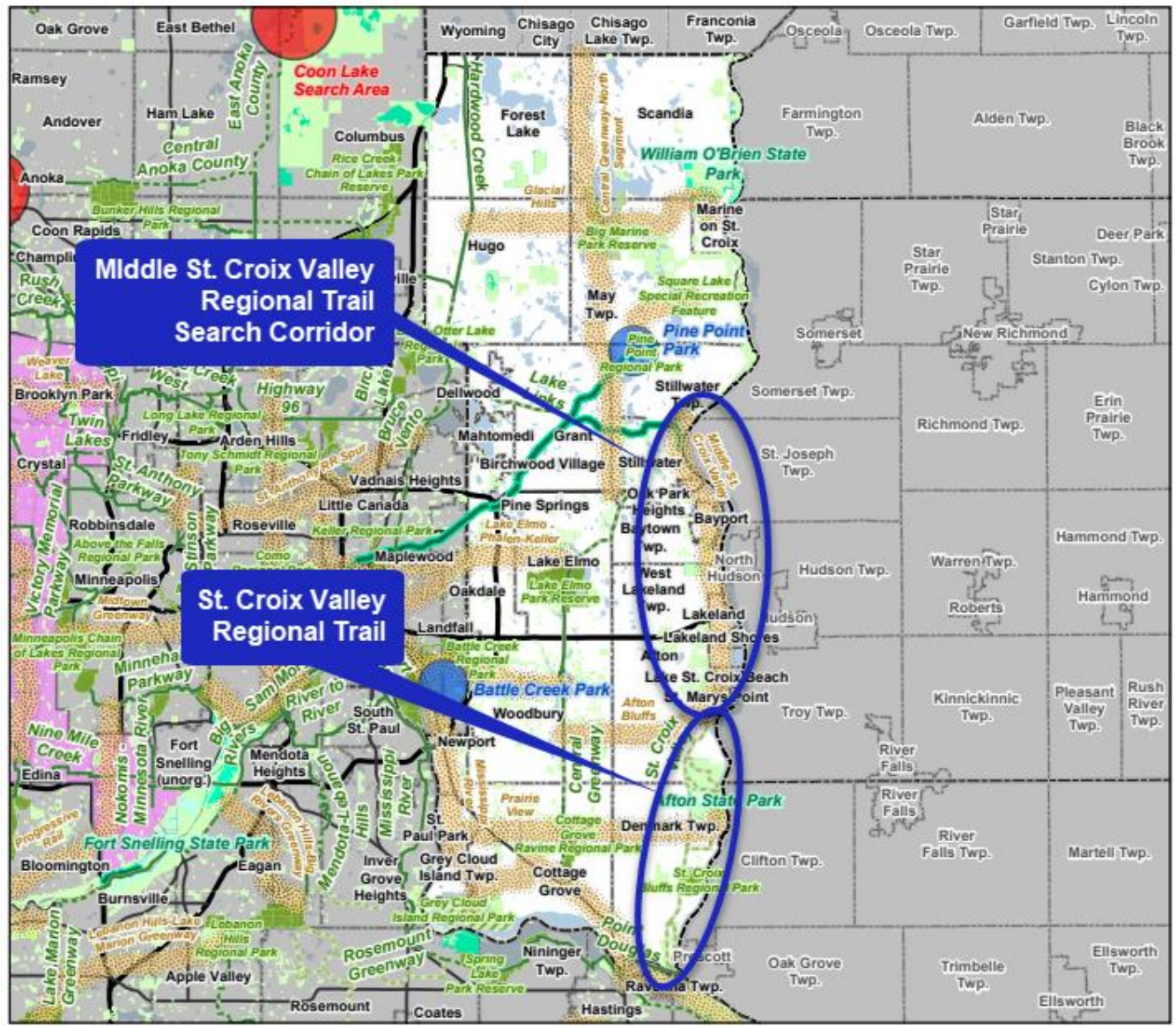


Figure 2. Middle Saint Croix Valley Regional Trail Search Corridor and St. Croix Valley Regional Trail location in relation to Washington County



Regional Parks

- Existing (Open to Public)
- In Master Plan (Not Open to Public)
- Planned Parks and Reserves

Regional Trails

- Existing (Open to Public)
- Existing (Not Open to Public)
- Planned
- Regional Trail Corridor Land

Regional Park Search Areas and Regional Trail Search Corridors

- Boundary Adjustments
- Search Areas
- Regional Trail Search Corridors
- First-Ring City Bridging Facility Search Area

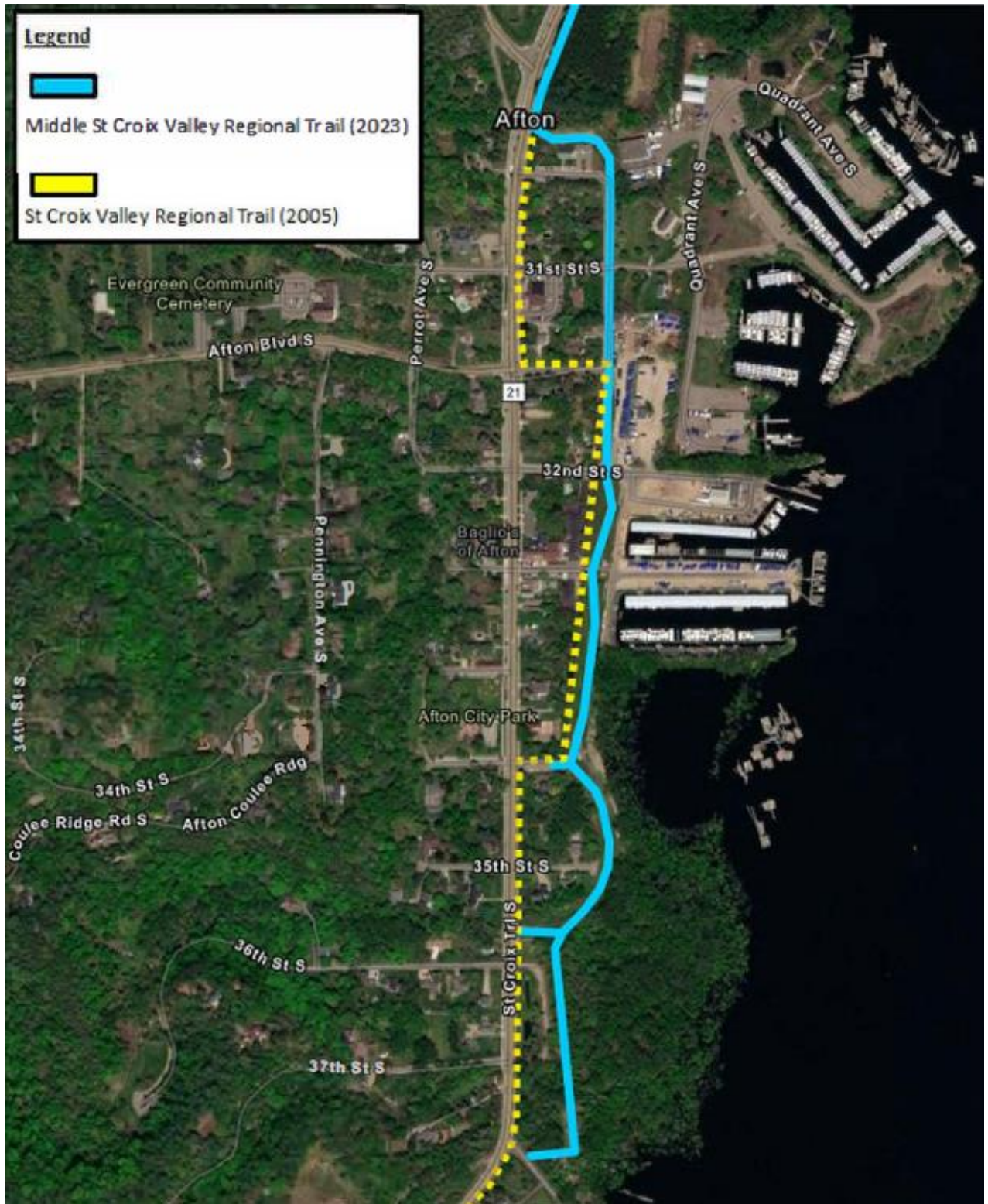
State Parks

- State Parks
- State Wildlife Management Areas (Publicly Accessible)
- Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA)
- Special State Recreation Features
- Other Parks, Preserves, Refuges and Natural Areas
- Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
- MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge
- Minnesota Valley State Trail and Recreation Area

Figure 3: Middle Saint Croix Valley Regional Trail and St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Amendment location



Figure 4: St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Realignment



Analysis

Planning Strategy 1 of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that long range 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). The following analyzes the long-range plan against those requirements.

Boundaries

The 14-mile Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail will expand the planned regional trail network extending north to the St. Croix Boom Site and south to downtown Afton (Figure 3). The County proposes a joint segment with the Brown's Creek State Trail, as well as a preferred alignment through the Belwin Conservatory. The designated 5.8-mile interim route will be only eligible if the preferred route is deemed no longer feasible and options to develop the long-range route have been exhausted.

The realignment of the St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Trail, spanning a length of 0.8 miles, updates the segment 0.8-mile realignment of the St. Croix Valley Regional Trail updates the segment along the levee from County Road 21 and County Road 18, before connecting back with County Road 21, and using the existing Afton-Lakeland Local Trail (Figure 4).

Acquisition Costs

The total cost of acquisitions for both the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Long-Range Plan and the St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Amendment is \$1,430,000 for privately-owned acquisitions for the preferred trail and approximately \$400,000 of publicly owned acquisitions for the interim trail (Table 3). Figure 5 identifies parcels that may be impacted by future regional trail development, and graphically highlights the entire parcel; however, that new regional trail infrastructure is planned to be within the road right-of-way.

The portion of trail that will share the Brown's Creek State Trail will continue to be owned, operated, and maintained by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Washington County will develop a formal agreement (Joint Powers Agreement), to formalize details with both the DNR and the Belwin Conservatory.

Demand Forecast

The Metropolitan Council's 2021 Annual Use Estimate shows that Lake Elmo Park Reserve, Hardwood Creek Regional Trail, and Square Lake Special Recreation Feature are the top three highest used regional parks and trails in the County. According to the Council's Regional Parks and Trails Equity Tool using the 2020 American Community Survey Data, the projected population growth of the Middle Saint Croix Valley Regional Trail will likely lead to increased trail use over time. If the Middle Saint Croix Regional Trail existed in 2021, it would have served approximately 62,413 residents within a 5-mile or less trail service area. In 2027, the trail is projected to serve approximately 65,208 or 5% more residents and visitation is projected to increase by 10% by 2030, according to the most recent *Thrive MSP 2040* forecasts. The trail visitation growth mirrors Washington County's population growth of 5% from approximately 274,675 people in 2021 to 285,700 residents in 2027.

Development Concept

The trail is planned to be developed as a two-way trail within one side of the road right-of-way with wayfinding at key places along the alignment (Figure 6). The trail is described as three segments in the plan (Figures 6 through 9). The plan will be implemented over the next ten years and beyond. Portions of Segments 2 and 3 are prioritized to be implemented within the next 10-15 years.

Segment 1: Segment 1 includes a new trail from the St. Croix Boom Site to the Browns Creek State Trail, along Highway 95. The trail will link to the existing St. Croix Crossing Loop Trail in downtown Stillwater. A crossing is needed on the west side of Highway 95 to connect to the existing Beach Road Local Trail and bridge over Highway 36. An interim route uses the St. Croix Crossing Loop Trail crossing underneath Highway 36 until the Beach Road connection is constructed.



Segment 2: South of Highway 36 the trail uses an existing trail along County Rd. 23 (60th St. South Frontage Rd) then transitions to a new trail at County Rd 21 (Stagecoach Trail North). The new trail then continues south along County Rd 21 until it uses a bridge crossing at Interstate Highway 94. Local spur trails are planned for this segment to connect to local destinations.

Segment 3: This proposed segment of the trail traverses through the Belwin Conservancy natural areas to provide a unique experience for trail users, as it creates a loop with the existing trail along County Rd 18. An interim trail uses the existing Afton-Lakeland Trail along County Rd 18, connecting several communities within the St Croix Valley (Lakeland, Lakeland Shore, Lake St Croix Beach, St Mary's Point). The trail uses an existing trail through downtown Afton to Steamboat Park.

Conflicts

No major land use conflicts are anticipated with the regional trail alignment. Trail crossing solutions will be developed as the plan is implemented including the crossings of the Browns Creek State Trail over Trunk Highway 95, Beach Road over Trunk Highway 36, and Stagecoach Trail North over Interstate Highway 94. Washington County will coordinate with state and local agencies for other at-grade crossings as part of the future regional trail or with trails providing local connections.

Public Services

There are buried utilities, including gas and sanitary sewer, in the right-of-way along portions of the proposed regional trail. Overhead powerlines are also located along County Road 21. Coordination with utilities will be required during design development to ensure that the trail is constructed without impacting the utility easement or corridors.

Operations

The annual cost for Washington County to operate and maintain both trail improvements is approximately \$89,200. For the portion of trail within the Belwin Conservatory, Washington County will determine the operation and maintenance details during future project phases. The portion of trail that will share the Brown's Creek State Trail will continue to be owned, operated, and maintained by the DNR.

Partner Engagement

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was created for inter-agency collaboration throughout the planning process. The TAC was integral in establishing project priorities and providing feedback on project options and alternatives. Advice heard from the TAC shaped the plan and contributed to the public engagement themes. The agencies and organizations engaged in the plan included: Stillwater Township, City of Afton, City of Stillwater, Belwin Conservancy, City of Oak Park Heights, Washington Conservation District, City of Bayport, Middle St. Croix Watershed, Bayport Township Management Organization, West Lakeland Township, Metropolitan Council, City of Lakeland, National Park Service (NPS), City of Lakeland Shores, MN Department of Transportation, City of Lake St. Croix Beach, MN DNR, City of St. Marys Point, and St. Croix County, WI.

Public Engagement and Participation

Washington County involved the public throughout the development of the plan. The project team engaged the public through community surveys, open houses, pop-up events, and listening sessions. Key themes are described in the following list.

- Highlight local parks and destinations.
- Make connections between communities.
- Explore trail "loop" opportunities/connections.
- Provide views of the river where feasible.
- Foster stewardship of area natural resources.
- Widen the trail to accommodate range of users.
- Provide clear wayfinding and high quality/more frequent amenities.

Equity Analysis



Washington County conducted an equity analysis as part of the long-range plan. The advice heard during the planning process shaped the long-range plan.

Project Data

Washington County focused on engaging existing and potential trail users within roughly 3 miles of the regional trail search corridor. In general, future stakeholders will be comprised of individuals who are slightly older, more racially diverse, and from households with slightly higher median household income. (Tables 1 and 2; 2010 US Census; and 2021 and 2026 ESRI Forecasts).

Historically and today, local, state, and federal governments in the United States regulated land-use and environmental policies that increased park and trail access for some, while significantly limiting it for others, especially by income, education, race, and ethnicity. In addition to intentional policy decision and exclusionary practices, violence and discrimination throughout history have discouraged and made it difficult for some to use parks/trails and engage in recreational activities. Washington County seeks to end these discriminatory practices and create systems where all residents feel a sense of belonging.

Table 1. Demographic Forecasts 2021 and 2026

Population Characteristics	2021 Census Forecast	2026 Census Forecast
Total population	62,413	65,208
Total households/household size	24,259 / 2.46	25,431 / 2.6
Race, non-white	8.4%	9.6%
Median household income	\$96,994	\$106,144
Households below poverty level (below \$25,000)	10.2%	8.4%
Renter households	18.7%	17.6%
Age, under 18	20.5%	19.5%
Age, over 65	18.5%	21.7%
Median Age	42.8	43.2

Table 2. Demographic Forecasts 2021 and 2026 – Race and Ethnicity

Population by Race / Ethnicity	2021 Census Forecast	2026 Census Forecast
White Alone	91.6%	90.4%
Black Alone	2.8%	3.1%
American Indian Alone	0.7%	0.7%
Asian Alone	1.9%	2.1%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.1%	0.1%
Some Other Race Alone	0.8%	0.9%
Two or More Races	2.2%	2.6%
Hispanic Origin	2.9%	3.4%

Public Engagement

Past planning processes have demonstrated a need to supplement engagement strategies for the public with additional outreach specifically tailored to underrepresented groups. Washington



County staff conducted engagement events to reach the youth and women .

Youth (from communities with a higher concentration of low-income families): Washington County hosted two Learn to Ride events, which provided an opportunity to engage with kids and parents who have barriers to owning bicycles and building skills. At these events, staff connected with parents (with help from a translator) regarding walking/biking in their neighborhood. The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum engagement type was 'Consult'.

Women - She Ascends Hiking Group: Washington County hosted an event and listening session for in-depth, one-on-one conversations and specific recommendations related to how women experience and use trails. Feedback received included: key destinations to connect to, wayfinding, and improved safety/comfort (lighting, visibility, restroom/water access, accessibility). The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum engagement type was 'Involve'.

Engagement Themes:

- Safety, Accessibility and Comfort Improvements:
 - She Ascends listening session - Provide high quality trail amenities, clear and consistent wayfinding, integrate ADA accessibility; and minimize conflict between trail users.
 - Learn to Ride event - Minimize conflict between trail users, connect to transit, and minimize exposure to vehicular traffic.
- Connectivity (She Ascends listening session and Learn to Ride event): Provide tie-ins to regional/local trails and paths; as well as parks/open spaces, historically, culturally and naturally significant sites, education centers and population centers
- Natural Resources (She Ascends listening session): Provide river views and experiences through multiple habitats.
- Equity (She Ascends listening session and Learn to Ride event): Provide a welcoming trail experience for underserved populations and connections to underserved communities.
- Implementation (She Ascends listening session and Learn to Ride event): Develop a publicly supported plan.

Evaluation Summary

Transparency: The advice received at the various engagement efforts resulted in a list of key findings that guided development of the plan:

- Connect local and regional visitors to the trail's natural, recreational, and cultural resources.
- Protect and enhance opportunities to experience the St. Croix River.
- Improve/widen existing pedestrian trails in the corridor for a wider range of users and abilities.
- Proposed acquisitions would add value to the trail corridor and the region through the conservation of natural resources and low-impact improvements.
- Build more awareness regarding the regional trail system.
- Additional regional trail programming would be welcomed.
- Safety and comfort for trail users varies. Deference should be given to those most vulnerable.
- Trail user separation from vehicle traffic is important.

Accountability: The key engagement findings shaped the trail plan. This targeted engagement led to a better and more inclusive long-range plan, and through this process Washington County was able to create relationships and build trust with community stakeholders. For example, participation at the 'Learn to Ride Events' completed with the Landfall and Cimarron Mobile Home Communities helped establish relationships with underrepresented groups in the search corridor, improved understandings of trail use barriers, and revealed future trail amenity desires.



Washington County followed-up with the engagement groups as final long-range plan drafts were sent out for public comment to solicit their feedback on the plan and will continue to engage the community on the future development and implementation of the long-range plan.

Public Awareness

Washington County oversees communications and outreach of services and programs using a variety of platforms including email blasts, project webpage notifications and several forms of printed and social media. Washington County collaborates with a wide range of partners to assist in delivering updates on projects including local city and township leaders, local businesses, non-profit groups and regulatory agencies. The County also collaborates with the Metropolitan Council's Metro Transit and Metropolitan Transportation Services to create awareness and visibility for projects and to assist in identifying opportunities where this system can provide access to the regional trail.

Accessibility

Washington County is committed to providing access and recreational opportunities to all people, including those with disabilities, communities of color, and special population groups. The County will work with project partners to ensure this commitment is incorporated through later phases of the project and in programming considerations by addressing barriers to participation. All regional trail facilities, including trail heads and amenities, will be designed to accommodate individuals with disabilities and developed in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADMG) standards. Local trail connections are anticipated at regular intervals to provide access to neighborhoods and communities within the search corridor.

Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area and Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA): The Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail search area is not located within the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area. The planning, design, and implementation requirements of the MRCCA will not apply to this recommended portion of the Regional Trail System.

Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (LSCR): The LSCR was added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers program in 1972 and spans 52-miles from Taylors Falls, Minnesota, to the confluence with the Mississippi River and the St. Croix River in Prescott, Wisconsin. The riverway is managed by the DNR in several districts south of Stillwater and is managed by the NPS north of Stillwater.

There are portions of the trail corridor that reside within LSCR. Within these areas, regulations vary throughout the corridor regarding building and development (i.e. lot size, structure height, landscaping, etc.). Prior to implementation, the County will coordinate with the National Park Service, the DNR, and the appropriate local governments to ensure compliance with LSCR regulations.

Other Council Policies and Systems – Advisory Comments

MN Department of Natural Resources - Division of Parks and Trails (Nathan Moe, 651-259-5601) The proposed Middle St. Croix Regional Trail includes a segment that shares the Brown's Creek State Trail. The Brown's Creek State Trail should continue to be recognized as a State Trail when the new trail is constructed. Ideally mapping and signage will support and enhance the identity of both trails. As Washington County develops more focused plans for this area, we stress continued coordination with the DNR to ensure that the appropriate agreements are in place. This would include, but is not limited to, agreements for physical connections to the State trail, trail amenities proposed for State owned property, and maintenance proposals/activities.

Community Development – Solar Resources and Access Protection – (MacKenzie Young-Walters, 651-602-1373) Council staff encourage consideration of stand-alone solar and battery storage lighting installations for planned lighting. This may be especially desirable in areas without proximity to electrical service where lighting is desired.



Environmental Services – Wastewater Services (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 and/or Facilities 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.

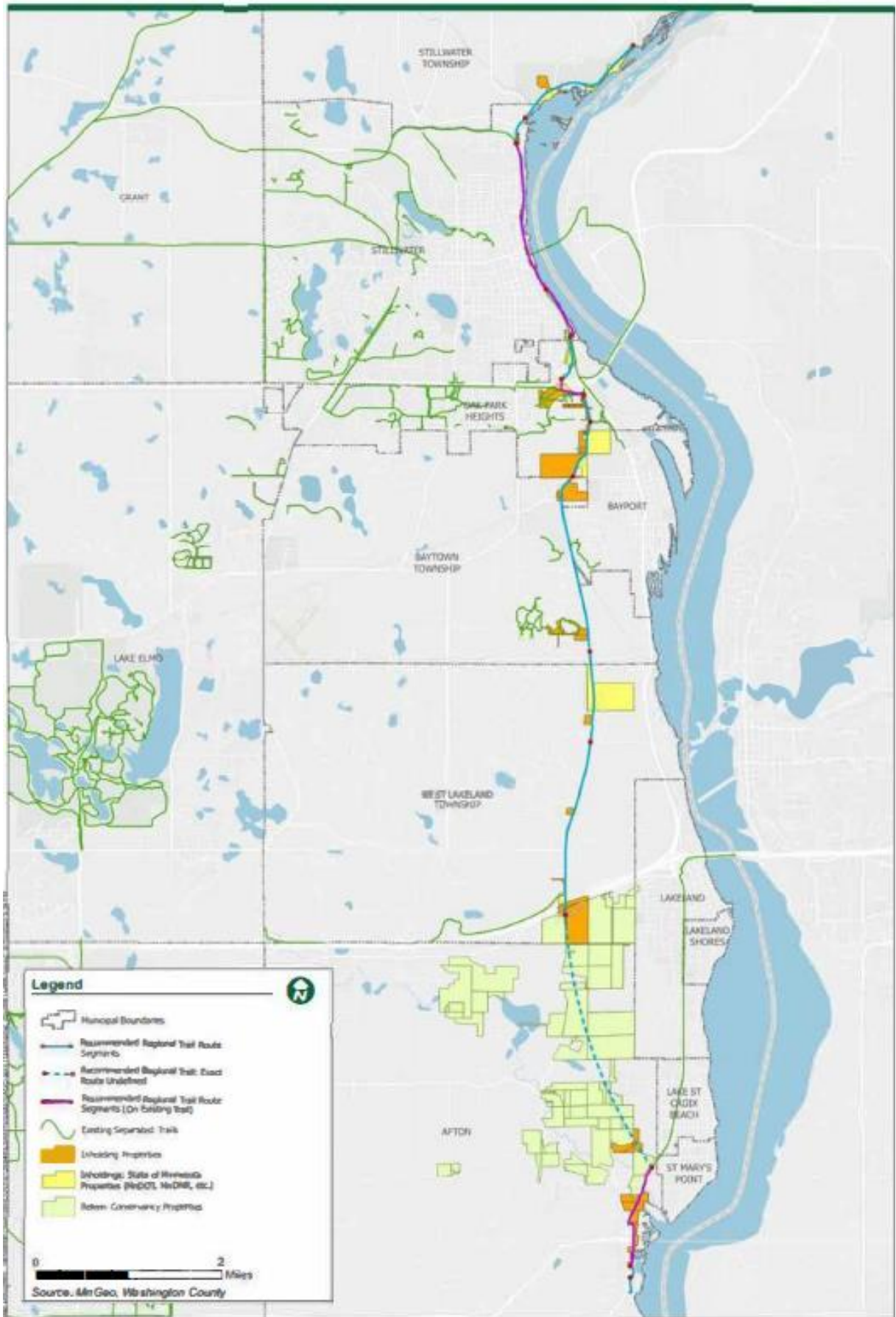
Metropolitan Transit (Stephen Baisden, 651-349-7361) Metro Transit is not planning additional expansion of the fixed route transit network given the current transit investments and surrounding development patterns. Increasing the availability of existing (non-fixed route) public transportation services within Washington County may be an option. Similarly, Micro Transit may be another option connecting trails with adjacent communities.

Metropolitan Transportation Services (Joe Widing, 651-602-1822) The preferred alignment is rerouted around certain pinch points along Trunk Highway 95. It should be noted that Trunk Highway 95 is identified on the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) as a Tier 2 alignment and even though this regional trail will not follow Trunk Highway 95 through certain sections, Council staff would advise to continue to coordinate with MnDOT to consider some type of bicycle accommodation along Trunk Highway 95 in those sections where a regional trail will not be constructed, or conversely, as Washington County mentions, to amend the RBTN network to follow the new preferred alternative. Contact Steve Elmer in Metropolitan Transportation Services (651-602-1756) in relation to the RBTN.

Additionally, in areas where the regional trail will be diverting around local activity centers (Bayport, Lakeland, St Croix Beach) local connections should be planned to connect the regional trail to the amenities and destinations at these locations.



Figure 5. Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail Boundary and Acquisitions



Metropolitan Council

Table 3. Acquisition Locations and Costs

Potential Acquisitions	Parcels	Acreage	Interim Trail (Publicly Owned Parcels)	Preferred Trail (Privately Owned Parcels)
Boom Site to Fairy Falls Rd N	7	5.00	\$184,771.10	\$11,793.90
Fairy Falls Rd N to Brown's Creek State Trail, Brown's Creek State Trail to near Oasis Café, Near Oasis Café to Main St S	30	3.28	\$34,202.31	\$94,744.33
TH 95 Crossing to Beach Rd N, Beach Rd N to Stagecoach Trl N, Stagecoach Trl N to 56th St N	38	4.33	\$295,432.48	\$220,383.10
Main St S to CR 36, CR 36 to King Plant Rd, 56th St N from TH 95 to Pickett Ave N, 56th St N from Pickett Ave N to Stagecoach Trl N	7	0.24	\$28,141.13	\$0.00
Stagecoach Trl N from 56th St N to 50th St N	2	2.00	\$78,626.00	\$0.00
Stagecoach Trl N from 50th St N to 30th St N, Stagecoach Trl N from 30th St N to 22nd St N, Stagecoach Trl N from 22nd St N to Hudson Rd S	14	4.23	\$110,469.53	\$55,824.46
Hudson Road from Stagecoach Trl N to Quinlan Ave N, Afton- Lakeland Trail from 8th St N to St Marys Dr S	21	4.18	\$367,163.67	\$0.00
Afton-Lakeland Trail from St Marys Dr S to Upper 34th St S, Upper 34th St S to River Rd S along levee	22	4.69	\$0.00	\$538,182.19
Belwin Conservancy	19	12.93	\$0.00	\$508,317.09
Totals:	160	40.87	\$395,304.81	\$1,429,245.07



Figure 5. Trail location within the road right-of-way

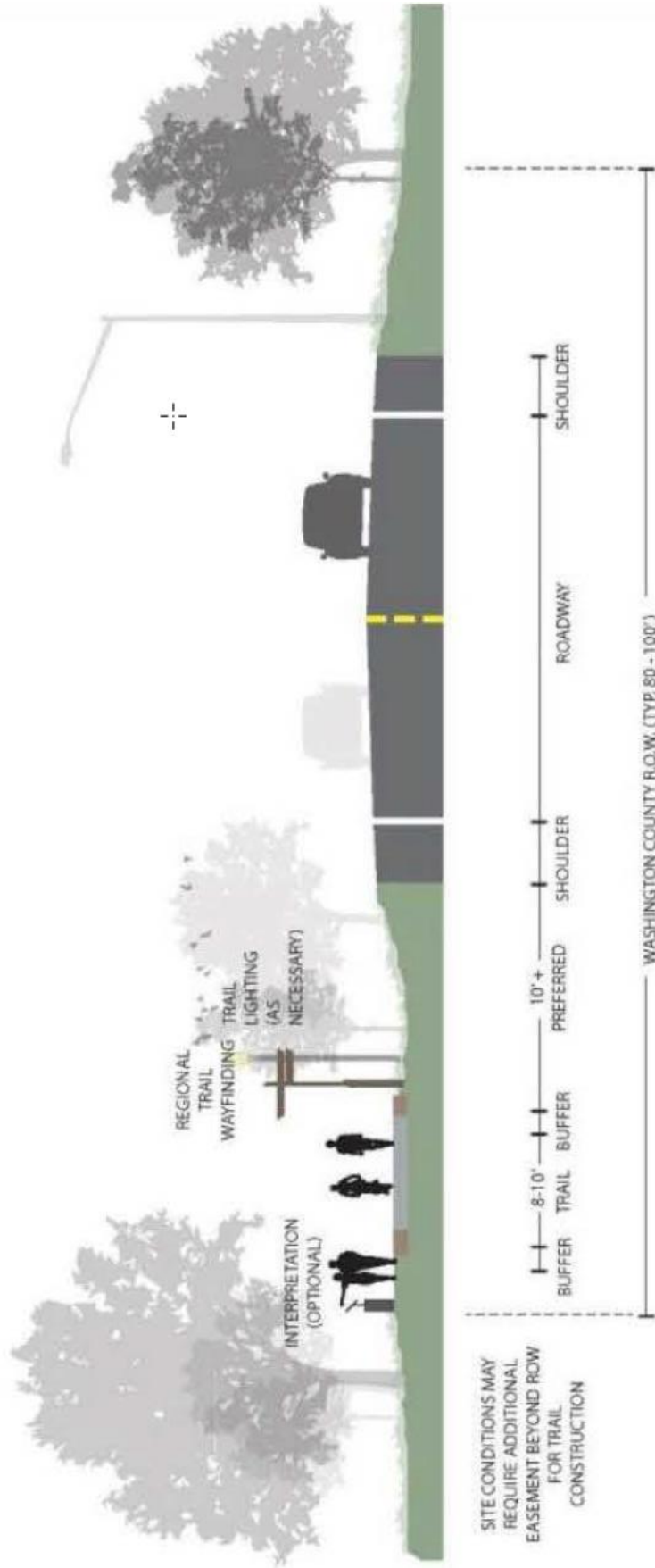
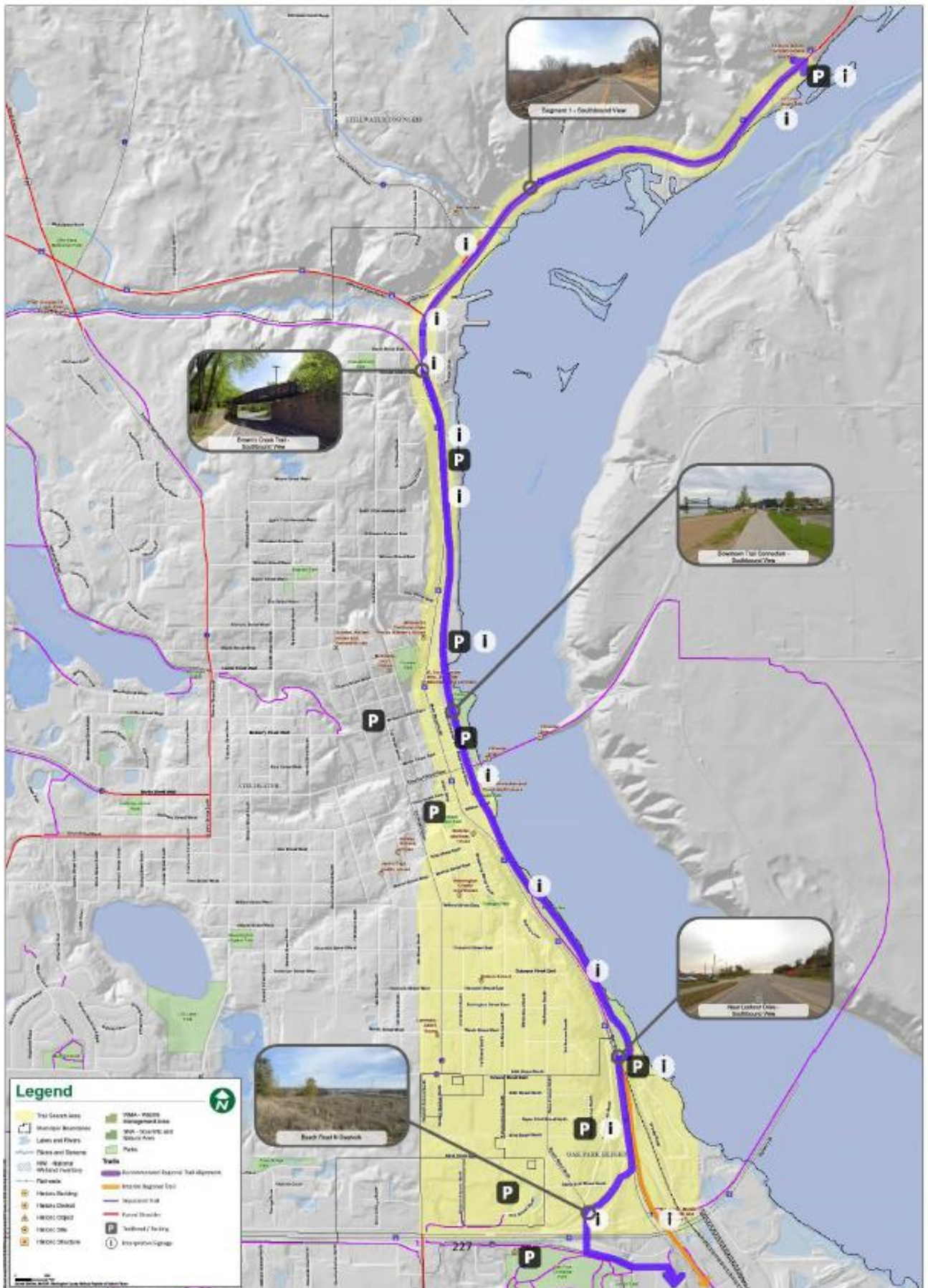
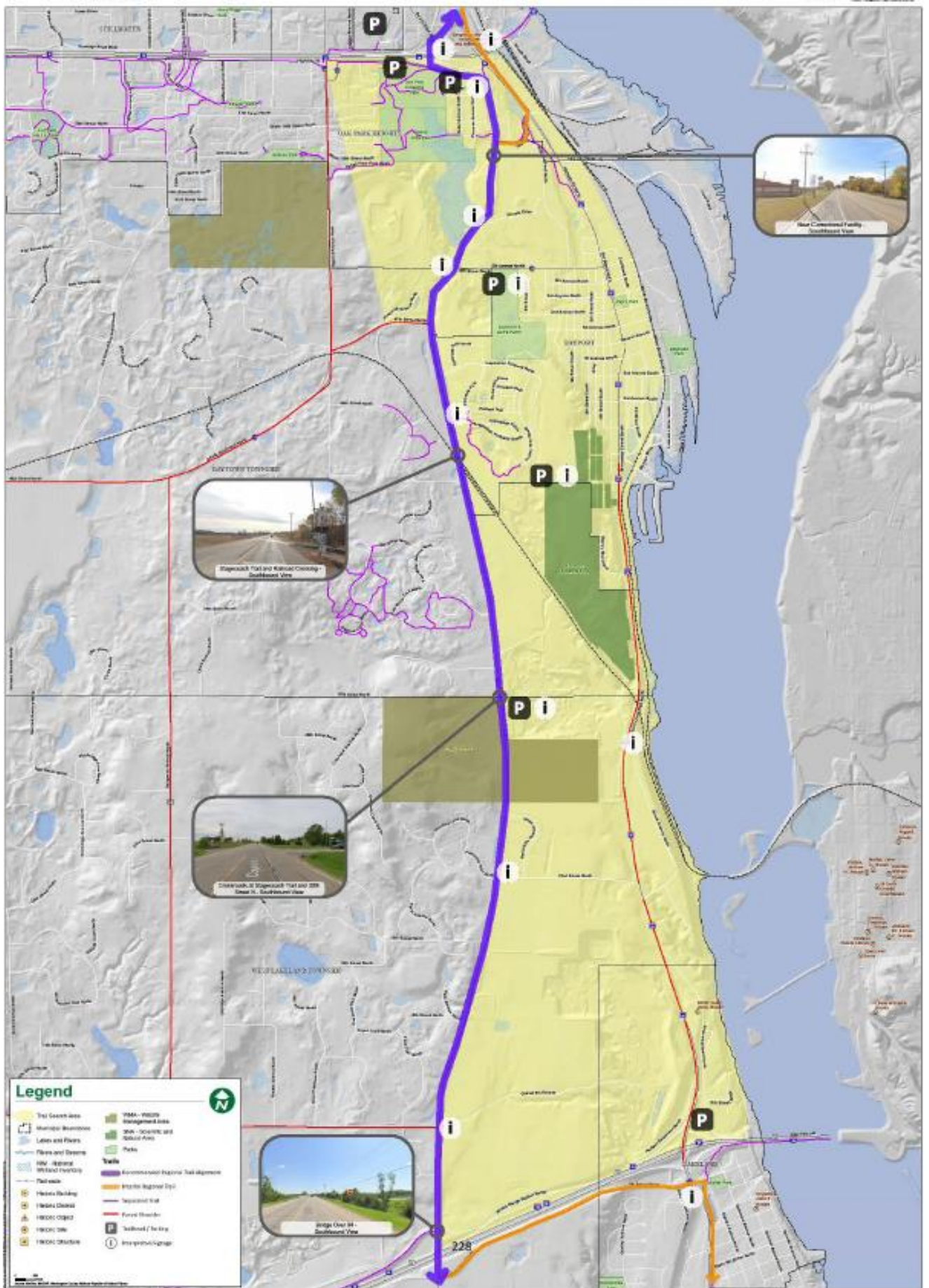


Figure 6. Segment 1 Development Concept



Metropolitan Council

Figure 7. Segment 2 Development Concept



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-083

DATE August 1, 2023 DEPARTMENT Public Works
MOTION BY COMMISSIONER Clasen SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER Bigham

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING SUBMITTAL OF THE MIDDLE ST. CROIX VALLEY REGIONAL TRAIL MASTER PLAN TO METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

WHEREAS, a regional trail master plan is required to address the criteria set forth in the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Regional Park Policy Plan to become eligible for Metropolitan Council regional park system designation and funding; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan provides planning and implementation guidance for the improvements, acquisitions, and management needed to develop a regional trail that meets the needs of the public; and

WHEREAS, the planning process for the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan included public engagement events and meetings that provided the opportunity for input from partner agencies and public stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, the draft Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan was reviewed and supported by the Washington County Park and Open Space Commission on May 18, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the Washington County Board of Commissioners heard a staff presentation on the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan on July 18, 2023.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Washington County Board of Commissioners supports the proposed Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan be submitted to the Metropolitan Council for review and approval.

ATTEST:

Kevin Corbid

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Gary Kriesel

COUNTY BOARD CHAIR

YES NO

ABSENT

MIRON		
KARWOSKI	X	___
KRIESEL	X	___
BIGHAM	X	___
CLASEN	X	___



City of Stillwater
Washington County, Minnesota

RESOLUTION 2023-068

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE WASHINGTON COUNTY
MIDDLE ST CROIX REGIONAL TRAIL MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, the City of Stillwater recognizes the Middle St Croix Valley Regional Trail as an important component of the regional park and trail system, providing recreational and non-motorized transportation opportunities to the residents of the City and region; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Middle St Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan provides planning and implementation guidance for the improvements, acquisitions, and management needed to develop a regional trail that meets the needs of the public; and

WHEREAS, the planning process for the Middle St Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan included public engagement events and meetings that provided the opportunity for input from partner agencies and public stakeholders; and

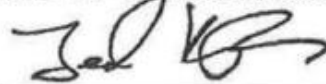
WHEREAS, City of Stillwater representatives participated in the Middle St Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan Technical Advisory Committee; and

WHEREAS, the City of Stillwater supports the acquisition, design, implementation, and operation of the Middle St Croix Valley Regional Trail pursuant to the master plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Stillwater supports the proposed Middle St Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan.

Adopted by the Stillwater City Council this 2nd day of April, 2023

CITY OF STILLWATER,



Ted Kozlowski, Mayor

ATTEST:


Beth Wolf, City Clerk

RESOLUTION 23-06-22

**CITY OF OAK PARK HEIGHTS
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE CITY POSITION ON THE
WASHINGTON COUNTY MIDDLE ST. CROIX VALLEY REGIONAL TRAIL
MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, Washington County has launched a master planning process for the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail, a multi-use trail that would run through eastern Washington County from downtown Afton to the St. Croix Boom Site in Stillwater; and

WHEREAS, Washington County has assembled a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to help guide the plan. The TAC includes representatives from communities within the corridor, including City of Oak Park Heights; and

WHEREAS, as part of the planning process, Washington County held various community engagement events as well as an elected officials work session and distributed an online survey and sought City Staff input; and,

WHEREAS, four possible route alternatives through the City of Oak Park Heights were presented to the TAC; and

WHEREAS, Washington County's cost-share policy seeks an initial implementation share of 50% by the County with Cities contributing the other 50%, and a 100% County contribution for replacement and repaving. Under that policy, operations, such as plowing, and maintenance would be the responsibility of the City.

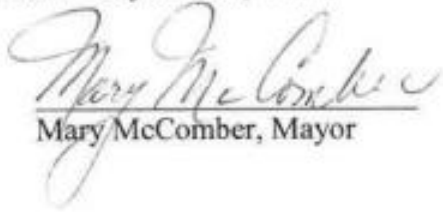
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the City of Oak Park Heights generally supports the concept of a regional trail system providing a link between eleven St. Croix River Valley towns and cities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council directs staff to inform the County that such local cost share expectations – which could be substantial - are inconsistent with what is expected to be a County/Regionally funded Project and that the City of Oak Park Heights does not offer any funding commitments at this time or in conjunction with its participation in such discussions or City positions on the Regional Trail Master Plan.

Passed by the City Council of Oak Park Heights this 27th day of June, 2023.

ATTEST:


Eric A. Johnson, City Administrator


Mary McComber, Mayor

RESOLUTION

**TOWN OF WEST LAKELAND
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE WASHINGTON COUNTY MIDDLE ST CROIX VALLEY REGIONAL
TRAIL MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, West Lakeland Township recognizes the Middle St Croix Valley Regional Trail as an important component of the regional park and trail system, providing recreational and non-motorized transportation opportunities to the residents of the Township and region; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Middle St Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan provides planning and implementation guidance for the improvements, acquisitions, and management needed to develop a regional trail that meets the needs of the public; and

WHEREAS, the planning process for the Middle St Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan included public engagement events and meetings that provided the opportunity for input from partner agencies and public stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, West Lakeland Township supports the acquisition, design, implementation, and operation of the Middle St Croix Valley Regional Trail pursuant to the master plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that West Lakeland Township supports the proposed Middle St Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan.

Adopted by the Town Board of the Town of West Lakeland this 10TH day of July, 2023.



David Schultz, Chairman

ATTEST:



Carrie Seifert, Town Clerk





MIDDLE ST. CROIX
WATERSHED MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

455 Hayward Ave N
Oakdale, MN 55128
651-796-2227
www.mscwmo.org

May 23, 2023

Metropolitan Council Chair and Parks and Open Space Commission
390 North Robert Street
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Hello Chair and Commission Members,

Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization (MSCWMO) is pleased to provide this letter of acknowledgement for the Middle St Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan. The future trail will be a 14-mile north-south multiuse trail in eastern Washington County. Once fully developed, the trail will link 11 river towns and connect trail users to regional destinations and resources. Informed by the interagency and public engagement process, this master plan provides the vision and direction for the future development of this trail.

MSCWMO has been involved in the planning process and supports the improvements proposed in the Middle St Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan. This plan provides long-term planning and implementation guidance for route alignment, trail uses and facilities, and corridor natural resource management. Existing and future generations of trail users will benefit from additional transportation and recreational opportunities.

Thank you for the opportunity to send our support. We look forward to working with all agency partners on the implementation of the Middle St Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan.

Please contact me at 651-796-2227 or mdowning@mnwcd.org if you have any questions or comments regarding this correspondence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Downing".

Matt Downing | Administrator
Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization

MSCWMO Member Communities

Afton • Bayport • Baytown • Lakeland • Lakeland Shores • Lake St. Croix Beach • Oak Park Heights
St. Mary's Point • Stillwater • West Lakeland





Baytown Township

4020 McDonald Drive North, Stillwater, MN 55082

Website: baytownmn.org

Township Clerk: 651-430-4992 or clerk@baytownmn.org

DATE: July 10, 2023

Metropolitan Council Chair and Parks and Open Space Commission
390 North Robert Street
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Hello Chair and Commission Members,

Baytown Township Board of Supervisors is pleased to provide this letter of support for the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan. The future trail will be a 14-mile north-south multiuse trail in eastern Washington County. Once fully developed, the trail will link 11 river towns and connect trail users to regional destinations and resources. Informed by the interagency and public engagement process, this master plan provides the vision and direction for the future development of this trail.

Baytown Township Board of Supervisor, Aaron Bye has been involved in the planning process and supports the improvements proposed in the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan. The Baytown Board agrees with his recommendation of support. This plan provides long-term planning and implementation guidance for route alignment, trail uses and facilities, and corridor natural resource management. Existing and future generations of trail users will benefit from additional transportation and recreational opportunities.

Thank you for the opportunity to send our support. We look forward to working with all agency partners on the implementation of the Middle St Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Hall".

John Hall, Board Chair

RESOLUTION NO. 23-09A

**EXTRACT OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF THE CITY OF BAYPORT,
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA HELD MAY 1, 2023**

Pursuant to due call and notice therefore, a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Bayport, Minnesota was duly held at Bayport City Hall in said municipality on May 1, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mayor Michele Hanson and Councilmembers Connie Carlson, Ethan Gilmore, John Dahl, and Katie Hill

Councilmember Carlson introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE WASHINGTON COUNTY
MIDDLE ST. CROIX VALLEY REGIONAL TRAIL MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, the City of Bayport recognizes the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail as an important component of the regional park and trail system, providing recreational and non-motorized transportation opportunities to the residents of the city and region; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan provides planning and implementation guidance for the improvements, acquisitions, and management needed to develop a regional trail that meets the needs of the public; and

WHEREAS, the planning process for the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan included public engagement events and meetings that provided the opportunity for input from partner agencies and public stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, City of Bayport representatives participated in the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan Technical Advisory Committee; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bayport supports the acquisition, design, implementation, and operation of the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail pursuant to the master plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Bayport supports the proposed Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan.

The motion for adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Councilmember Dahl and upon roll call being taken thereon, the following vote via voice:

Michele Hanson - aye	Connie Carlson - aye	Ethan Gilmore - aye
John Dahl - aye	Katie Hill - aye	

WHEREUPON, said Resolution was declared duly passed and adopted and signed by the Mayor and attested by the City Administrator. Passed by the City Council, City of Bayport, Washington County, Minnesota, this 1st day of May, 2023.

ATTEST:



Matt Kline, City Administrator



Michele Hanson, Mayor

...





BELWIN

August 30th, 2023

Metropolitan Council Chair and Parks and Open Space Commission
390 North Robert Street
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Hello Chair and Commission Members,

I am writing to provide this letter of support for the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan. At Belwin Conservancy we focus on inspiring connection and engagement with nature through conservation, education, and immersive experiences. We support the future 14-mile north-south, multi-use trail in eastern Washington County. This trail will link 11 river towns and provide trail users regional access to destinations, resources, and wild spaces. Informed by the interagency and public engagement process, this master plan provides the vision and direction for the future development of this trail while still preserving habitat diversity.

Belwin Conservancy has been involved in the planning process and supports the improvements proposed in the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan. This plan provides long-term planning and implementation guidance for route alignment, trail uses and facilities, and corridor natural resource management. Existing and future generations of trail users will benefit from additional transportation and opportunities to engage with the natural spaces that exist on its route. Although Belwin is not able to commit to a route through our land at this time, we support the direction of the overall plan and are committed to more exploratory conversations to determine whether it would be a good fit to have a Regional Trail come through Belwin land.

Thank you for the opportunity to send our support. We look forward to more conversations with all agency partners on the implementation of the Middle St. Croix Valley Regional Trail master plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katie Bloome". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Katie Bloome (she/her)
Executive Director
Belwin Conservancy
katie.bloome@belwin.org
(651) 435-0848