

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: May 20, 2013

Subject: Proposed System Addition Discussion for the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statute 473.147

Staff Prepared/Presented: Jan Youngquist AICP, Planning Analyst (651 602-1029)
Rainry Salk PhD, Senior Parks Researcher (651 602-1669)
Arne Stefferud, Manager (651 602-1360)

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

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council add the proposed County Road 41 Regional Trail Search Corridor to the Regional Parks System as part of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

Background

Minnesota Statute 473.147, Subd. 1 requires the Metropolitan Council to prepare and adopt a long-range system policy plan for the regional recreation open space system as part of the Council's Metropolitan Development Guide. As per Statute, the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan will:

- Identify generally the areas which should be acquired to provide a system of regional recreation open space
- Estimate the costs of the recommended acquisition and development

Minnesota Statute 473.121, Subd. 14 defines regional recreation open space as "land and water areas, or interests therein, and facilities determined by the Metropolitan Council to be of regional importance in providing for a balanced system of public outdoor recreation for the metropolitan area, including but not limited to park reserves, major linear parks and trails, large recreation parks, and conservatories, zoos, and other special use facilities.

Council staff conducted one-on-one meetings with each of the regional park implementing agencies in December 2013, primarily to discuss the Thrive MSP 2040 equity directive. At these individualized meetings, Council staff asked whether the implementing agencies had any proposed additions to the Regional Parks System to be considered as part of the development of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan. The implementing agencies were notified in early April that the proposed system addition requests were due by April 30. Two agencies, Carver County and Three Rivers Park District, submitted proposals by the due date. Proposals received after the due date are not being brought forward for consideration.

Carver County has proposed that two regional trail search corridors, totaling 8.5 miles, be considered for addition to the regional parks system. The estimated cost to acquire and develop these trails is \$2,750,000 in 2014 dollars. Three Rivers Park District has proposed that 12 regional trail search corridors, totaling 145 miles, be considered for addition to the Regional Parks System. The estimated cost to acquire and develop these trails is \$80,500,000 in 2014 dollars.

Staff analysis of the Carver County proposed trail corridors is included in **Attachment A**. Staff analysis of the Three Rivers Park District proposed trail corridors will be presented at the June 3 MPOSC meeting.

Rationale

Minnesota Statute 473.147 states that the Metropolitan Council shall consult with and make maximum use of the expertise of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission in preparing the policy plan.

Funding

The addition of regional trail search corridors to the Regional Parks System as part of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan does not commit the Council to funding. In order to be eligible for regional parks funding, a master plan for each regional trail corridor must be approved by the Council. Future funding based on the approved master plan may be awarded through the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund. Council action is required to approve the CIP and to approve specific grants to the regional park implementing agencies.

Known Support / Opposition

The Carver County Board of Commissioners supported the proposal to add the County Road 41 and the County Road 61 Regional Trail Search Corridors to the Regional Parks System as part of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan at its April 20 Board work session.

Attachment A: Analysis of Proposed System Additions

As of 2013, the Regional Parks System consisted of 40 regional parks, 12 park reserves, seven special recreation features and 308 miles of regional trails that are open to the public. There are four regional parks, one park reserve and one special recreation feature that have Council-approved master plans but are not yet developed or open to the public, which include:

- Doyle Kennefick Regional Park—Scott County
- Grey Cloud Island Regional Park—Washington County
- Lake Sarah Regional Park—Three Rivers Park District
- Whitetail Woods Regional Park—Dakota County
- Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve—Scott County
- Grey Cloud Island Park Reserve—Washington County
- Kingswood Special Recreation Feature—Three Rivers Park District

The 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan also identified a regional park search area in Anoka County and two regional park search areas in Carver County which have not yet been planned. A regional park study area exists in northern Dakota County—the Council indicated that it would evaluate the feasibility of combining three local parks—Thompson County Park, Kaposia Park and Kaposia Landing into one regional park unit.

Figure 1 shows the regional trail miles open to the public in 2013 for each regional park implementing agency. The 2012 estimated population is shown for comparative purposes.

Figure 1: Existing Regional Trail Miles by Regional Park Implementing Agency (2013)

Regional Park Implementing Agency	Existing Regional Trail Miles (2013)	2012 Estimated Population
Anoka County	72.5	333,426
Carver County	12.0	92,602
Dakota County	27.5	401,609
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board	21.5	373,156
Ramsey County	23.0	220,943
Scott County	8.4	132,020
St. Paul	17.5	277,734
Three Rivers Park District	116.4	780,502
Washington County	9.5	239,695
TOTAL	308.3	2,851,687

Source: Trails Miles—reported by Regional Park Implementing Agency
2012 Estimated Population—Metropolitan Council

The 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan places a strong emphasis on regional trail search corridors and ambitiously plans to expand the regional trail network from 300 miles to 1,000 miles. A map of the 2030 Regional Parks System Plan is shown in **Attachment B**. The mapping symbology has been changed from what is found in the 2030 Regional Parks System Plan to ease reading. All regional trails that are not open to the public or do not have a Metropolitan Council approved master plan are shown as orange regional trail search corridors. All regional park search areas are shown with a red circle and the regional park study area is shown with a blue circle.

In accordance with State Statute, additions of land and water areas to the Regional Parks System must be determined by the Metropolitan Council to be of regional importance in providing for a balanced system of public outdoor recreation. The Regional Parks System, together with State facilities, should reasonably meet the outdoor recreation needs of the people of the metropolitan area. Regional Parks System facilities (in accordance with its Council-approved master plan) are eligible for regional parks funding, which is comprised of State funds and Council bonds. In order for State and regional dollars to be invested in recreational facilities, they must be of regional importance as determined by the Metropolitan Council.

Carver County Proposals: Carver County has proposed two regional trail search corridors for inclusion in the Regional Parks System as part of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan: the County Road 41 Regional Trail Search Corridor and the County Road 61 Regional Trail Search Corridor. **Attachment C** shows the 2030 Regional Parks System Plan Map with the proposed regional trail search corridors. **Attachments D and E** focus the map on the proposed regional trail search corridors in Carver County.

The proposed County Road 41 Regional Trail Search Corridor is approximately 7.5 miles long and generally follows County Road 41 from the Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area and National Wildlife Refuge in Chaska to Lake Minnewashta Regional Park in Chanhassen. The proposed regional trail will facilitate connections between Scott, Carver and Hennepin Counties as it connects to the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail and Scott County Connection, the Southwest Regional Trail, the proposed Twin Cities & Western Regional Trail, and the proposed Highway 5 Regional Trail. The proposed County Road 41 Regional Trail will also connect to local parks and trails, the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, the Eastern Carver County Public School District 112 complex (Chaska Elementary School, East and West Middle Schools) and the Chaska Community Center. Approximately 4 miles of the proposed regional trail are already developed. The estimated costs to acquire and develop the remaining 3.5 miles is approximately \$2 million.

The proposed County Road 61 Regional Trail Search Corridor is approximately 1 mile long and generally follows County Road 61 from the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail in Chanhassen to the boundary between Carver and Hennepin Counties. Along its route, the proposed regional trail will connect to the proposed Highway 101 Regional Trail, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, the Seminary Fen wetlands complex (owned by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources) and the State Raguet Wildlife Management Area. Opportunities for connections to a regional trail search corridor proposed by Three Rivers Park District in Hennepin County also exist.

Additional information on these regional trail search corridors is included in Carver County's request letter, shown in **Attachment F**.

The 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan outlines the following criteria for regional trails. Staff analysis is italicized.

Siting and Acquisition Strategy 3: New trails, or trail segments, that serve a regional audience are a significant priority for the regional parks system.

To qualify for regional trail status, an existing or proposed trail must meet the following criteria:

1. **The trail should not duplicate an existing trail. The trail may include a portion of an existing county or local trail if the trail serves one of the following functions:**
 - **Destination Regional Trail.** Be a destination itself, providing a high-quality recreation experience that traverses significant natural resource areas where the trail treadway will have no adverse impact on the natural resource base;
 - **Linking Regional Trail.** Link two or more units of the regional recreation open space system.

County Road 41 Regional Trail Search Corridor: *This regional trail search corridor does not duplicate an existing trail and will serve as a linking trail. The trail will link five regional parks system facilities, including four regional trails and one regional park. The regional trail search corridor includes a 4 mile portion of an existing local trail, which serves as a linking trail.*

County Road 61 Regional Trail Search Corridor: *This regional trail search corridor does not duplicate an existing trail and will also serve as a linking trail. The trail will link two regional trails to State and Federal recreation lands, with the opportunity to link to a proposed regional trail search corridor in Hennepin County. The regional trail corridor does not include any existing local trail segments, although the 2014 Trunk Highway 101 bridge project will construct approximately .5 mile of the trail along County Road 61 in Carver County.*

2. **The trail must serve a regional audience based on visitor origin and service-area research on regional trails.**

County Road 41 Regional Trail Search Corridor: *Service area research on regional trails shows that the primary service area lies within 2-3 miles on either side of a trail corridor. The proposed County Road 41 Regional Trail, along with the connections it makes to other regional parks and trails, will facilitate a connection from Carver County to both Scott and Hennepin Counties. The proposed regional trail also will make connections to State and Federal recreation lands. Therefore, the County Road 41 Regional Trail will likely serve a regional audience.*

County Road 61 Regional Trail Search Corridor: *The proposed County Road 61 Regional Trail will travel between Carver County and Hennepin County. The trail will link to the Trunk Highway 101 bridge that is being constructed over the Minnesota River between Carver and Scott Counties. Three Rivers Park District has proposed a regional trail search corridor in Hennepin County that will connect to the County Road 61 Regional Trail Search Corridor. If both of these regional trail search corridors are added to the Regional Parks System, the County Road 61 Regional Trail will likely serve a regional audience.*

- 3. New linking regional trails should be located in the developing or developed area of the region. For Linking Regional Trails, any two trails running parallel to each other and not separated by natural or human-built barriers should be at least 1.5 miles apart so as not to overlap the localized service area of those trails. For Destination Regional Trails or Greenways, there should be no spacing minimums or maximums; instead, the decision to locate a trail should be based on the availability of high quality natural resources or the opportunity for natural resources restoration, enhancement and protection.**

County Road 41 Regional Trail Search Corridor: *This linking regional trail will travel through Chaska and Chanhassen, which have been classified as a “developing” communities by the Metropolitan Council’s 2030 Regional Development Framework. The draft Thrive MSP 2040 has classified Chaska as a “Suburban Edge” community and Chanhassen as an “Emerging Suburban Edge” community. The criteria for linking trails in the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan is based on the geographic planning areas from the 2030 Regional Development Framework. As part of the development of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, the criteria will be revised to correspond to the community designations put forward in Thrive MSP 2040.*

In downtown Chaska, the proposed County Road 41 Regional Trail and the planned Southwest Regional Trail will be within .25 mile of one another. However, the County Road 41 Regional Trail will travel straight north to connect to Lake Minnewashta Regional Park, while the Southwest Regional Trail will travel northwest to connect to Carver Park Reserve. Most of the two trail corridors are not parallel to one another and are farther than 1.5 miles apart.

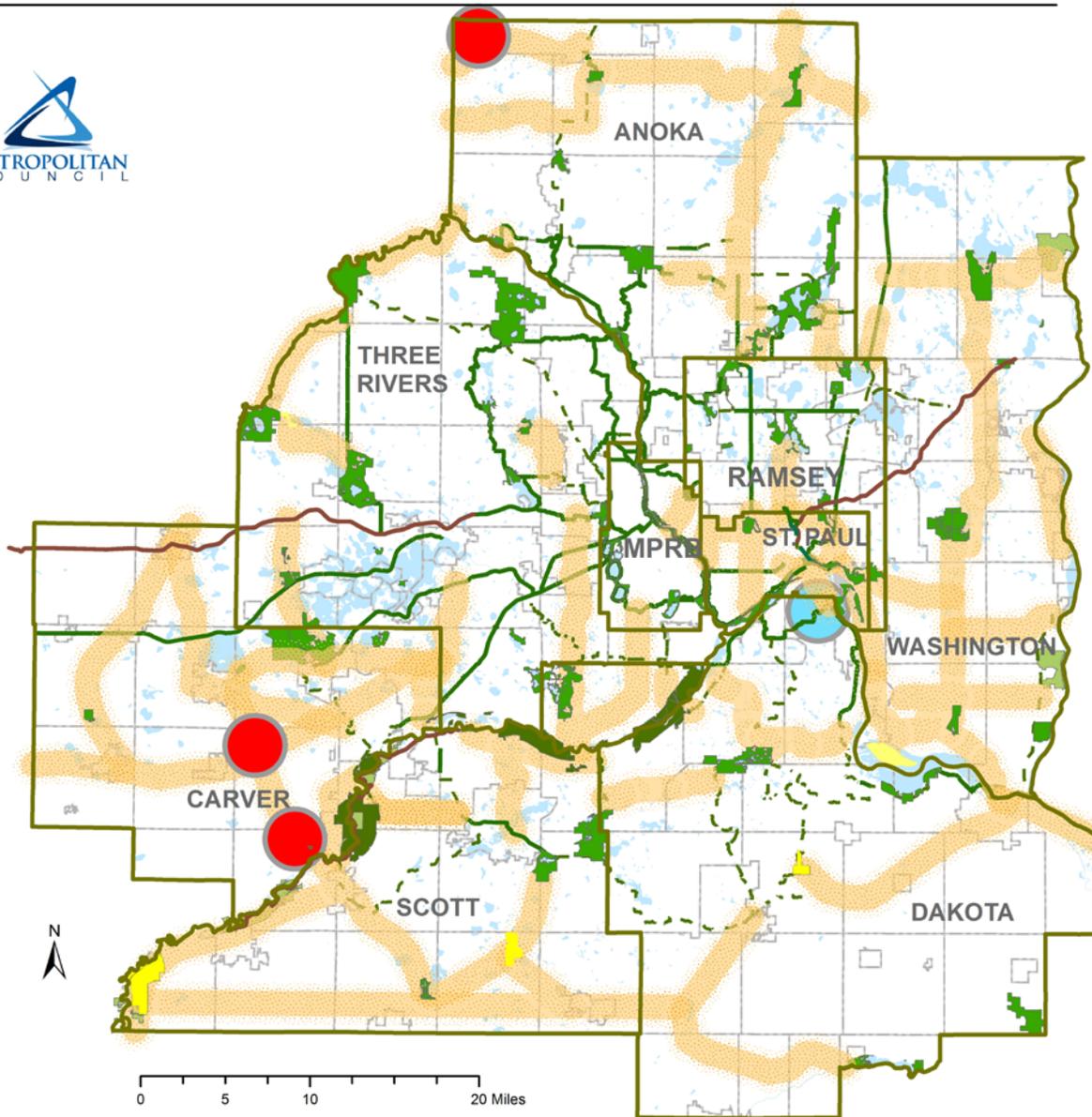
County Road 61 Regional Trail Search Corridor: *This linking regional trail will travel through Chanhassen, which has been classified as “developing” community by the Metropolitan Council’s 2030 Regional Development Framework and as an “Emerging Suburban Edge” community by Thrive MSP 2040. The proposed County Road 61 Regional Trail runs somewhat parallel to the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail; however, the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail travels northeast to Hopkins. If the connecting regional trail search corridor proposed by Three Rivers Park District in Hennepin County is approved, the proposed County Road 61 Regional Trail will travel east through Eden Prairie. Therefore, the majority of the two trail corridors are not parallel to one another and are father than 1.5 miles apart.*

Conclusion

The proposed County Road 41 Regional Trail Search Corridor meets the criteria outlined in the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan for a linking regional trail. Based on its connections to regional parks system facilities, including those in Hennepin and Scott Counties, as well as connections to State and Federal recreation lands, the proposed County Road 41 Regional Trail Search Corridor should be deemed of regional importance and included as part of the Regional Parks System in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

The proposed County Road 61 Regional Trail Search Corridor may meet the criteria outlined in the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan for a linking regional trail if the regional trail search corridor proposed by Three Rivers in Hennepin County is approved. Therefore, a staff recommendation on this proposed corridor will be made along with the analysis of the Three Rivers Park District proposals at the June 3 MPOSC meeting.

2030 Metropolitan Regional Parks System Plan + Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridors



Regional Parks

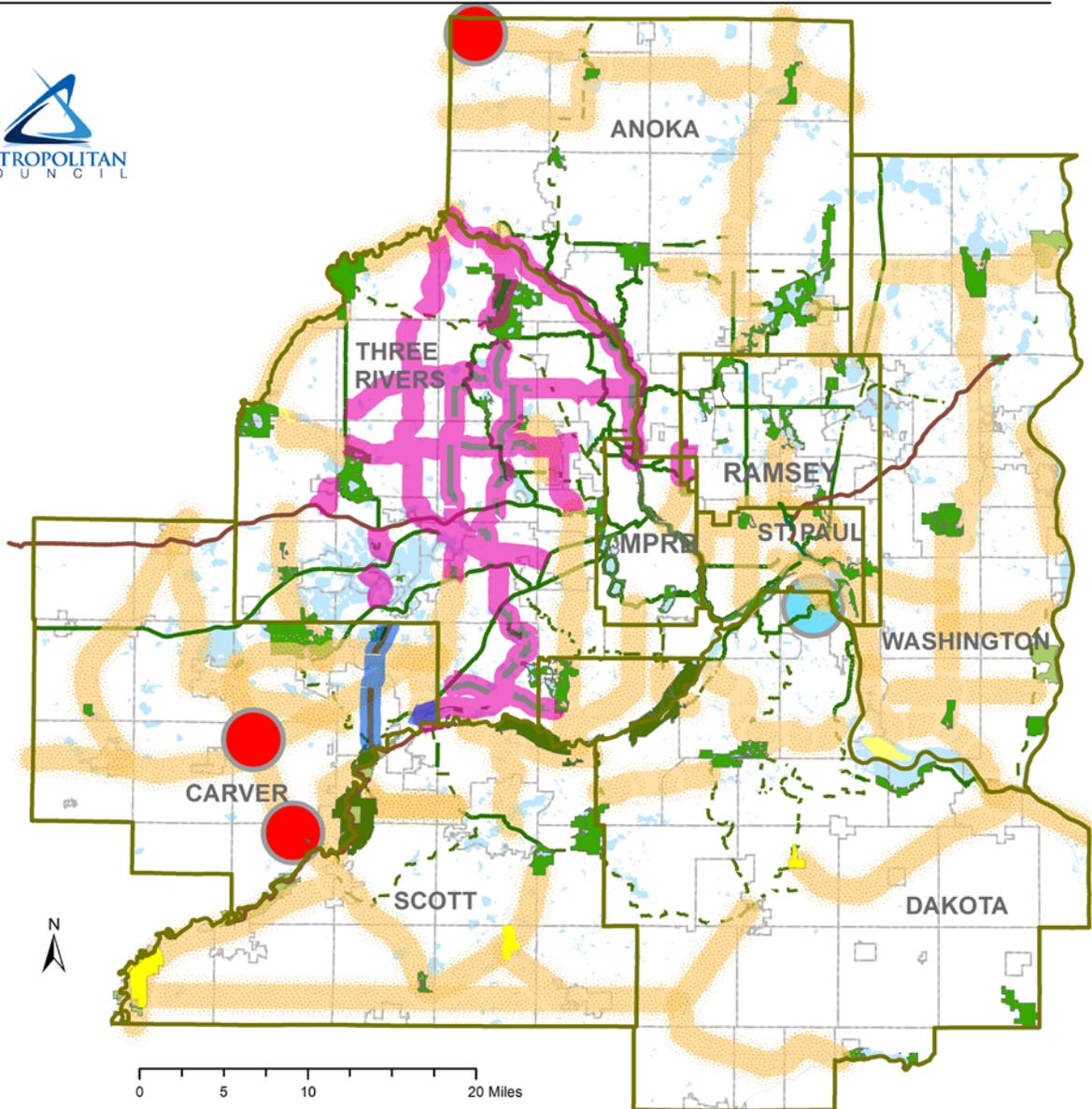
- Existing, Open to the Public
- Planned
- Regional Park Search Area
- Regional Park Study Area

Regional Trails

- Existing
- Planned (Council-approved master plan)
- Regional Trail Search Corridors (no Council-approved master plan)
- State Parks
- Federal Parklands
- Minnesota State Trails

May 2014

2030 Metropolitan Regional Parks System Plan + Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridors



Regional Parks

- Existing, Open to the Public
- Planned
- Regional Park Search Area
- Regional Park Study Area

Regional Trails

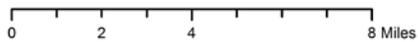
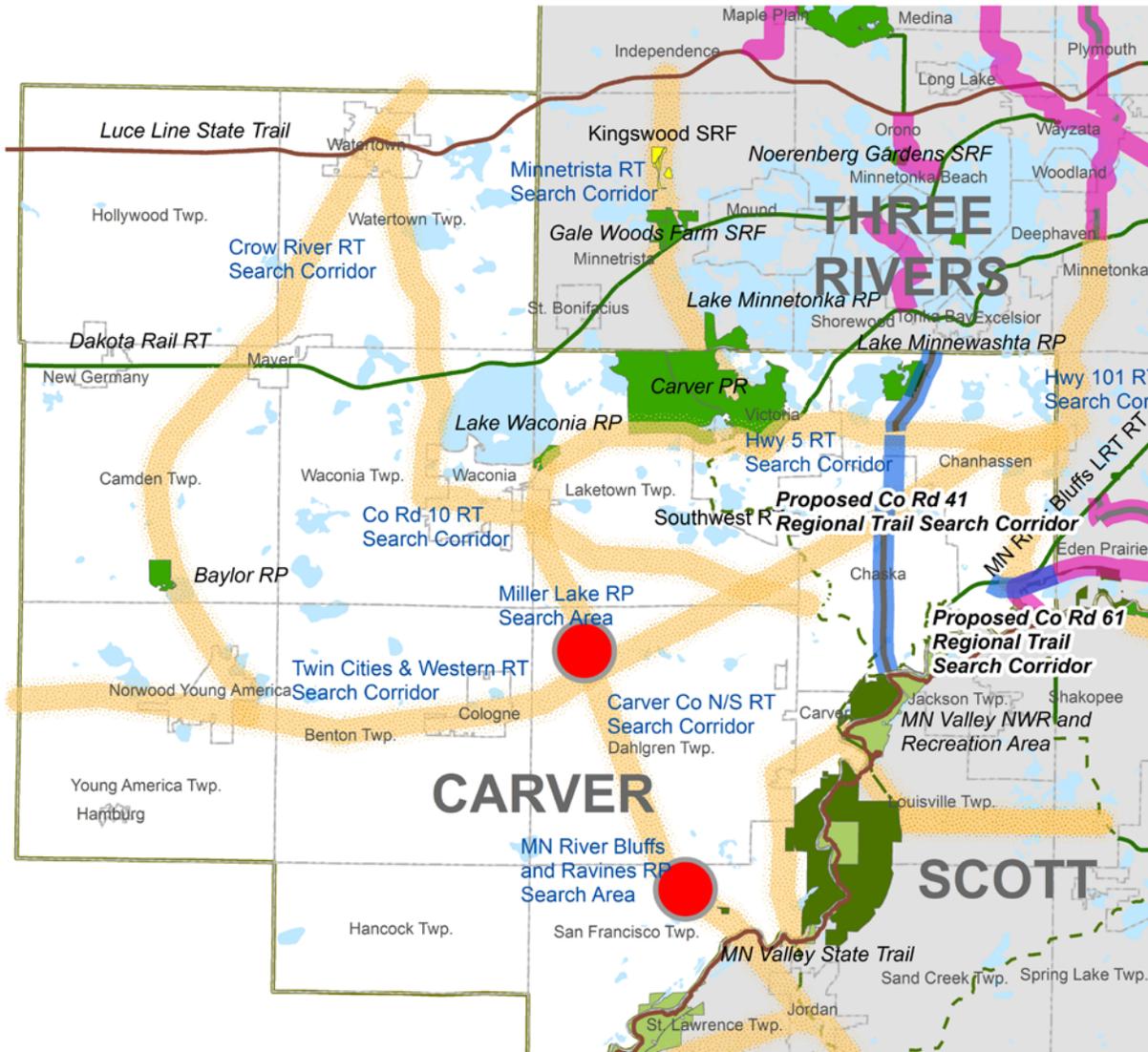
- Existing
- Planned (Council-approved master plan)
- Regional Trail Search Corridors (no Council-approved master plan)
- State Parks
- Federal Parklands
- Minnesota State Trails

Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridors

- Carver County Status**
- Existing Local Segment
 - Proposed Trail Segment
- Three Rivers**
- Existing Local Segment
 - Proposed Trail Segment
- Regional Parks by Type**
- Regional Parks by Type

May 2014

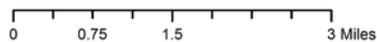
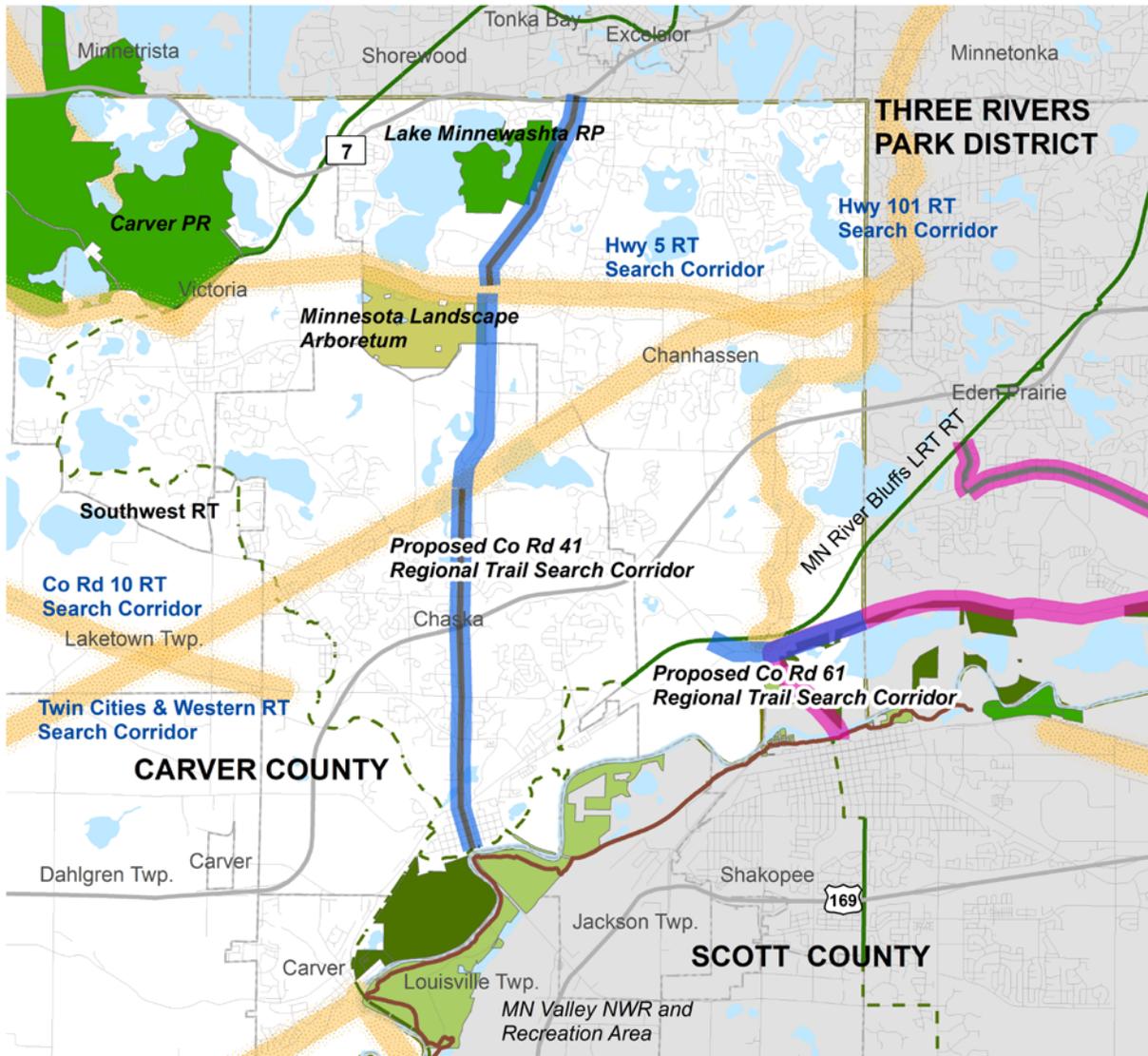
Carver County 2030 Regional Parks System Plan + Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridors



Regional Parks		Regional Trails		Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridors	
	Existing, Open to the Public		Existing		Existing Local Segment
	Planned		Planned (Council-approved master plan)		Proposed Trail Segment
	Regional Park Search Area		Regional Trail Search Corridors (no Council-approved master plan)	Carver County Status	
	Regional Park Study Area		State Parks	Three Rivers	
			Federal Parklands		Existing Local Segment
			Minnesota State Trails		Proposed Trail Segment

May 2014

Carver County Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridors



Regional Parks

- Existing, Open to the Public
- Planned
- Regional Park Search Area
- Regional Park Study Area

Regional Trails

- Existing
- Planned (Council-approved master plan)
- Regional Trail Search Corridors (no Council-approved master plan)
- State Parks
- Federal Parklands
- Minnesota State Trails

Proposed Regional Trail Search Corridors

- Carver County**
- Status**
- Existing Local Segment
 - Proposed Trail Segment
- Three Rivers**
- Existing Local Segment
 - Proposed Trail Segment
 - Parks_09-2005

May 2014

Attachment F: Request Letter from Carver County



Carver County Parks

Department of Public Works

11360 Highway 212
Suite 2
Cologne, MN 55322
Phone (952) 466-5250 Fax (952) 466-5223
www.co.carver.mn.us/parks

11360 Hwy. 212, Suite 1
Cologne, Minnesota 55322
Phone (952) 466-5200
Fax (952) 466-5223

April 30, 2014

Jan Youngquist
Planning Analyst
Metropolitan Council
390 North Robert St.
St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: System Additions-2040 Regional Park Policy Plan

Dear Ms. Youngquist,

Carver County requests consideration for adding two trail segments of the TH 41 corridor and the Co. Rd. 61 corridor. Please see the below and attached information.

TH 41 Corridor

General location and description of the proposed trail plus a map – Location is central Carver County and follows the existing roadway corridor of TH 41.

Whether it will be a linking or destination trail-This is a proposed linking trail.

How it will serve a regional audience-The proposed TH 41 Regional Trail will connect to regional destinations of Lake Minnewashta Regional Park near its northern terminus and at its southern terminus would connect to the Minnesota River Valley State Recreation Area and the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. This proposed regional trail provides a key north south route connecting Scott, Carver and Hennepin Counties. Additionally, the trail directly connects the communities of Shorewood, Chanhassen and Chaska, indirectly connecting to nearby communities of Carver and Shakopee. In Chanhassen the trail would connect to the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. The TH 41 corridor would also connect to State and Regional Trails of the Minnesota Valley State Trail, Southwest Regional Trail, Minnesota River Bluff Extension and Scott County Connection Regional Trail, County Road 10 Regional Trail corridor, and the TH 5 Regional Trail corridor. The TH 41 corridor also connects to employment centers of the downtown Chaska, transit station at Hwy 41 and Hwy 212, shopping and business center at the intersection of Pioneer Trail and Hwy 41, and numerous office and industrial businesses.

Regional parks system units that the trail will connect– Connections are made to Lake Minnewashta Regional Park, TH 5 Regional Trail corridor, County Road 10 Trail corridor, the Southwest Regional Trail corridor, and the Minnesota River Bluff Extension and Scott County Connection Regional Trail.

Opportunities for other connections -The proposed TH 41 Trail corridor makes many local trail

connections. Further the trail would connect directly to the Eastern Carver County Public School District 112 complex (Chaska Elementary School, East and West Middle Schools) Chaska Community Center, Fireman's Park and City Square Park.

Affected local communities and whether you've had conversations with them about the proposed trail- Affected communities include the City of Chaska and Chanhassen both of which have indicated support for the trail and is currently identified on their local trail system plans.

Estimated costs for acquisition/development of the trail -The TH 41 corridor is approximately 7.5 miles in length. There are approximately 4 miles of trail that exist in the corridor. It is estimated that the cost to construct and additional 3.5 miles is \$1 million dollars plus another \$1 million for ROW acquisition and retrofitting structures to accommodate the trail. The estimated total additional cost is \$2 million.

Please indicate whether or not you have County Board support for the proposals -The County Board supported the inclusion of the TH 41 Trail corridor in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan at its April 20th, 2014 workshop session.

County Road 61 Corridor

General location and description of the proposed trail plus a map - Location is southeast Carver County near Hennepin and Scott Counties and is the existing roadway corridor of County Road 61.

Whether it will be a linking or destination trail –This is a proposed linking trail.

How it will serve a regional audience -The proposed Co. Rd 61 trail in Carver County will connect to a Co. Rd 61/Flying Cloud trail in Hennepin County. The trail will connect to the MN Valley National Wildlife refuge property. Further the trail connects to the TH 101 Regional Trail corridor in Carver and Scott Counties. The proposed Trail makes a connection to State Raguet Wildlife Management Area. The trail will connect to the MN River Bluffs Regional Trail and to the Seminary Fen SNA which are in close proximity.

Regional parks system units that the trail will connect - Connections are made to Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail and to the TH 101 Regional Trail corridor. Additionally, the trail segment is consistent with work scheduled to construct a trail along County Road 61 in Hennepin County. Longer term the trail would provide a regional trail connection to Hyland Bush Anderson Lakes Regional Park.

Opportunities for other connections – The proposed Co. Rd. 61 trail will connect with the planned local trail along Bluff Creek Drive in Chanhassen. The trail segment will also connect to Richard T. Anderson Park in Eden Prairie.

Affected local communities and whether you've had conversations with them about the proposed trail - The City of Chanhassen is supportive. Trail is also supported by other agencies as trail construction is eminent along a portion of Co. Rd. 61 in Carver and Hennepin counties as a part of Co. Rd. 61 reconstruction project and Hwy 101 bridge construction project.

Estimated costs for acquisition/development of the trail -It is estimated that the additional cost to make a connection to the MN River Bluffs Regional Trail from Co. Rd. 61 and to construct one mile of the trail along Co. Rd. 61 is \$750,000. The 2014 TH 101 bridge project will construct approximately ½ mile of trail along Co. Rd. 61 in Carver County.

Please indicate whether or not you have County Board support for the proposals - The County Board supported inclusion of the Co. Rd. 61 corridor in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan at its April 20th, 2014 workshop session.

Sincerely,



Marty Walsh
Parks Director

