

## Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: July 7, 2015

For the Community Development Committee meeting of July 20, 2015

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of August 12, 2015

**Subject:** Coon Creek Regional Trail Master Plan, Anoka County

**District(s), Member(s):** MPOSC District E, Michael Kopp

**Policy/Legal Reference:** MN Statute 473.313

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Michael Peterka, Intern (651-602-1361)

Jan Youngquist, Manager (651-602-1029)

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

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve the Coon Creek Regional Trail Master Plan.

### Background

Anoka County has submitted a master plan for the Coon Creek Regional Trail, which will connect Bunker Hills Regional Park with Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park and the Mississippi River. The trail will travel seven miles through the City of Coon Rapids with sections following both Sand and Coon Creeks. Along its route, the trail will provide connections to several local parks and trails and the Coon Rapids City Hall. Of the seven miles of trail, approximately six have been constructed, leaving two sections, totaling approximately one mile in length, in need of completion.

### Rationale

The Coon Creek Regional Trail Master Plan is consistent with the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and other Council policies. The master plan requirements outlined in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* have an effective date of July 1, 2015, so master plans submitted to the Council prior to July 1, 2015 will be reviewed subject to the requirements outlined in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

### Funding

The estimated cost to implement the master plan is \$1,165,000, which includes \$245,000 for right of way and easement acquisition and \$920,000 for development.

Approval of this master plan makes the acquisition and development costs eligible for regional parks funding, but does not commit the Council to any funding. Future funding based on this master plan may be awarded through the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the Acquisition Opportunity Fund. Council action is required to approve the CIP and to approve specific grants to Anoka County.

### Known Support / Opposition

Anoka County and the City of Coon Rapids have adopted resolutions of support for the trail. There is no known opposition to the master plan.

## **Analysis**

The effective date for the master plan requirements outlined in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* is July 1, 2015 in acknowledgement of master plan planning processes that were already underway when the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* was adopted, on February 11, 2015. Because the Coon Creek Regional Trail Master Plan was submitted to the Council prior to July 1, 2015, it was reviewed subject to the requirements outlined in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that regional park master plans address the items listed below.

## **Boundaries and Acquisition**

The Coon Creek Regional Trail will travel through the City of Coon Rapids along a seven mile route. The regional trail will connect Bunker Hills and Coon Rapids Dam Regional Parks and provide a link to the Central Anoka County and Bunker Chain of Lakes Regional Trails. Additionally, the regional trail will provide access to local destinations including Erlandson Park, Robinson Park, Al Flynn Park, Sand Creek Trail, and several other city trails.

The general alignment of the preferred route of the Coon Creek Regional Trail is shown in red in *Figure 1*. A majority of this planned alignment will follow Sand and Coon Creeks with some trail segments paralleling City and County roads.

Much of the trail corridor includes existing trail segments. Of the seven mile planned route, approximately six miles have been previously constructed. There are two sections of trail still requiring construction totaling approximately one mile in length.

*Figure 2* and *Figure 3* display the northernmost sections of existing trail. Here the trail leaves Bunker Hills Regional Park following Foley Boulevard. The trail then turns into the Sand Creek Trail Corridor.

*Figure 4* displays a proposed section from Northdale Boulevard to Yellow Pine Street. After the existing trail crosses Northdale Boulevard, the proposed trail will continue west along the south side of Northdale Boulevard (CR 11) and connect to the City of Coon Rapids' existing trail near Xeon Boulevard. This segment is approximately .3 miles in length. It may impact four parcels with a potential 5 to 20 foot right of way easement.

*Figure 5* and *Figure 6* display the existing trail from Creek Meadow Drive through Erlandson, Robinson, and Al Flynn Parks.

*Figure 7* displays the second proposed section of trail from Avocet Street to Egret Boulevard. The existing trail ends at the intersection of Avocet Street and Coon Rapids Boulevard. From this intersection, the proposed trail will cross Coon Rapids Boulevard and travel west along the south side of Coon Rapids Boulevard to Egret Boulevard. The proposed trail will then cross to the west side of Egret Boulevard and continue south to connect with the trail system in Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park. This segment is approximately .8 miles in length. It may impact 5 parcels with a potential 20 to 30 foot right of way easement.

Anoka County will work with the County Highway Department and the City of Coon Rapids to ensure any street reconstruction projects in the proposed trail areas and the future Port Riverwalk redevelopment include dedicated right of way for the trail or trail easements to keep acquisition costs low. The Port Riverwalk redevelopment area is located near the Coon Rapids Boulevard section of proposed trail. Although the redevelopment area has not yet been planned, it is anticipated to consist of a variety of housing types, open space, recreational facilities, and retail. Anoka County anticipates

the construction of the remaining trail segments will potentially affect a total of nine parcels. Based on the 2015 assessed value, the required right of way acquisition is anticipated to be less than \$245,000.

**Figure 1: Coon Creek Regional Trail Route Map**



**Proposed  
Coon Creek Regional Trail Corridor**

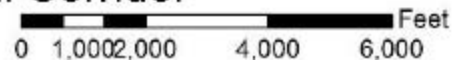


Figure 2:



### Proposed Coon Creek Regional Trail Corridor Segment 1

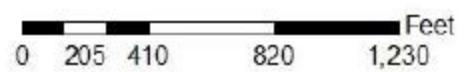
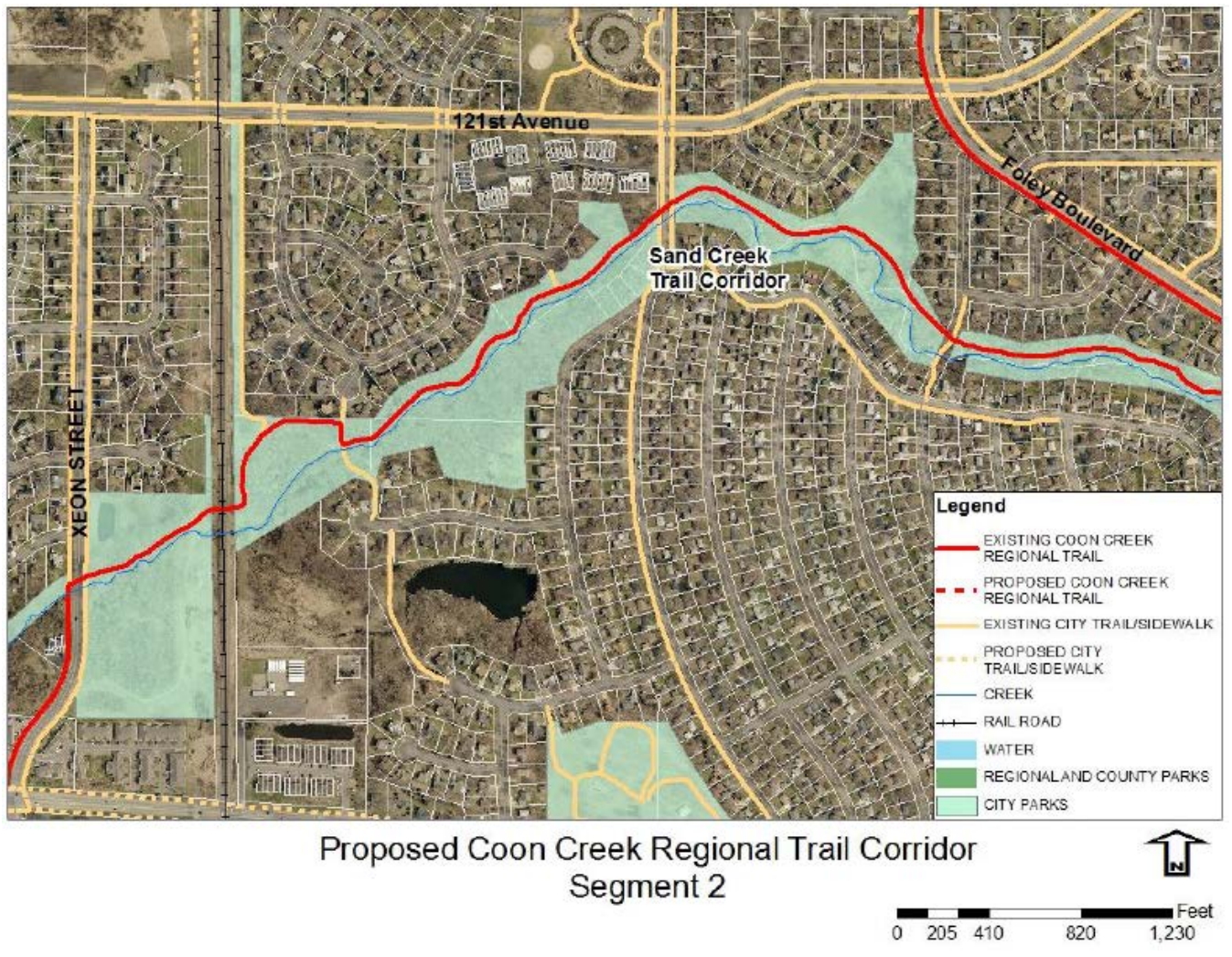
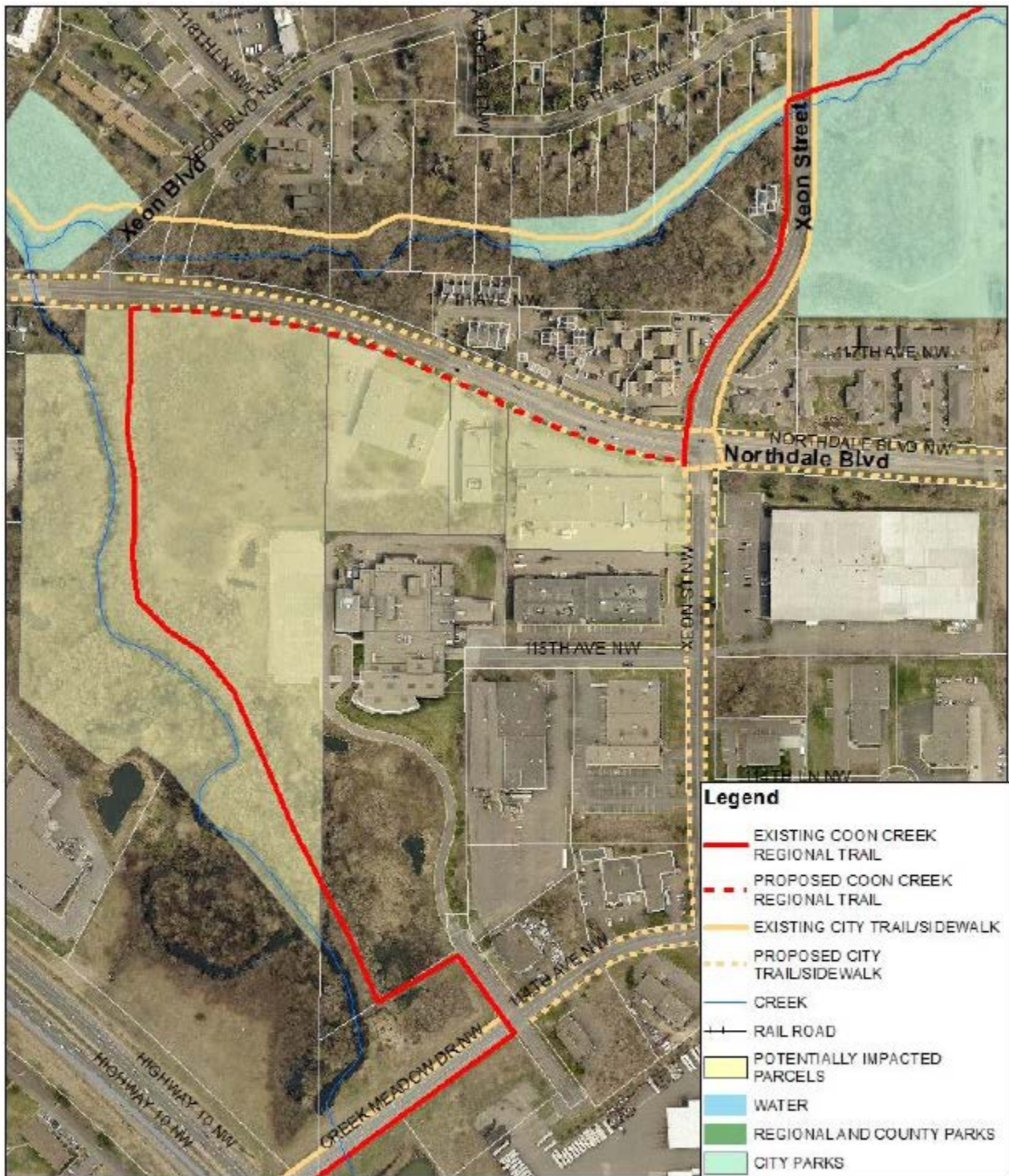


Figure 3:



Proposed Coon Creek Regional Trail Corridor  
Segment 2

Figure 4:



### Proposed Coon Creek Regional Trail Corridor Segment 3

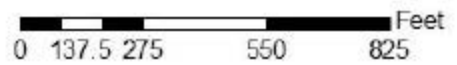


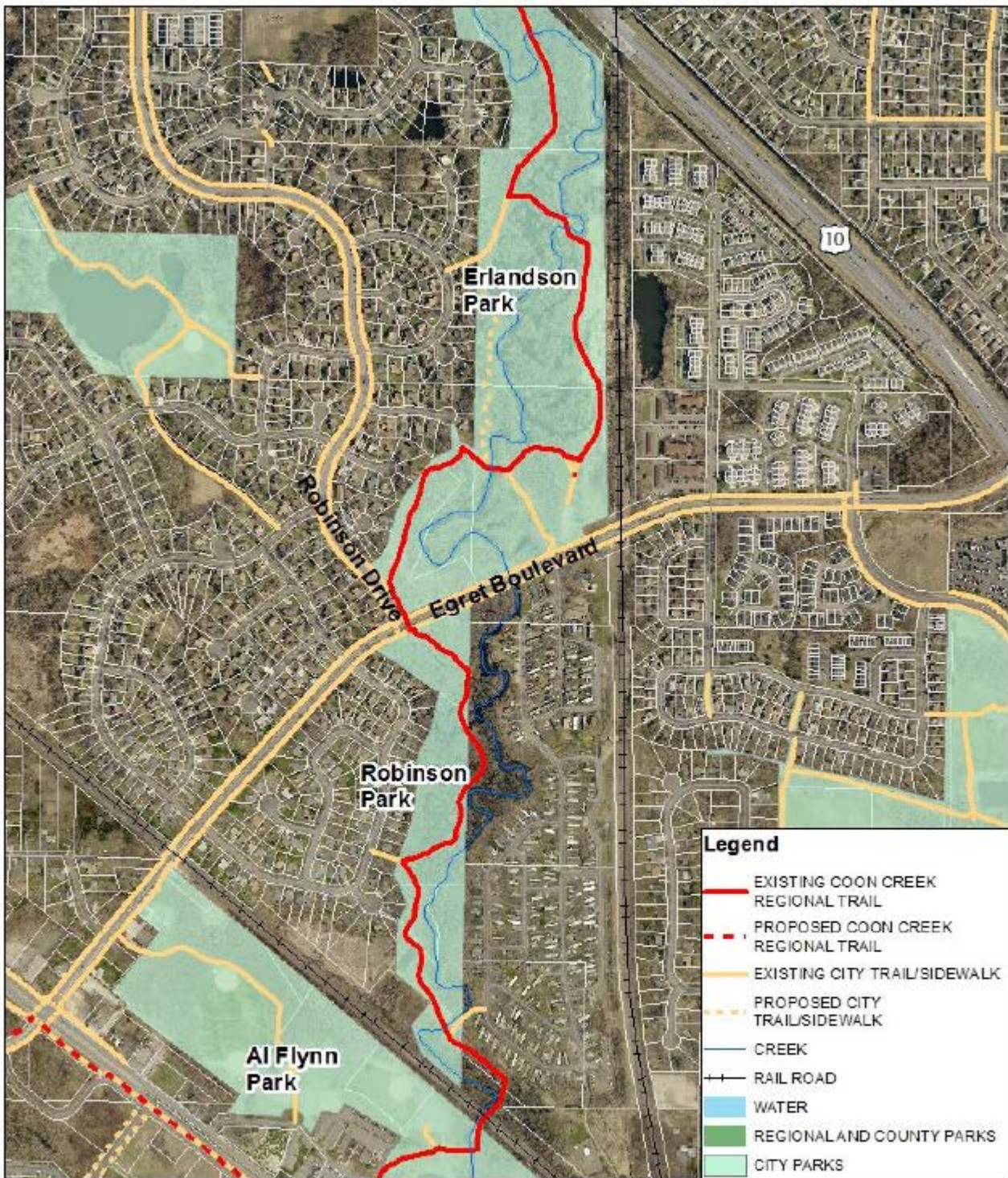
Figure 5:



Proposed Coon Creek Regional Trail Corridor  
Segment 4



Figure 6:



Proposed Coon Creek Regional Trail Corridor  
Segment 5

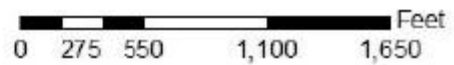
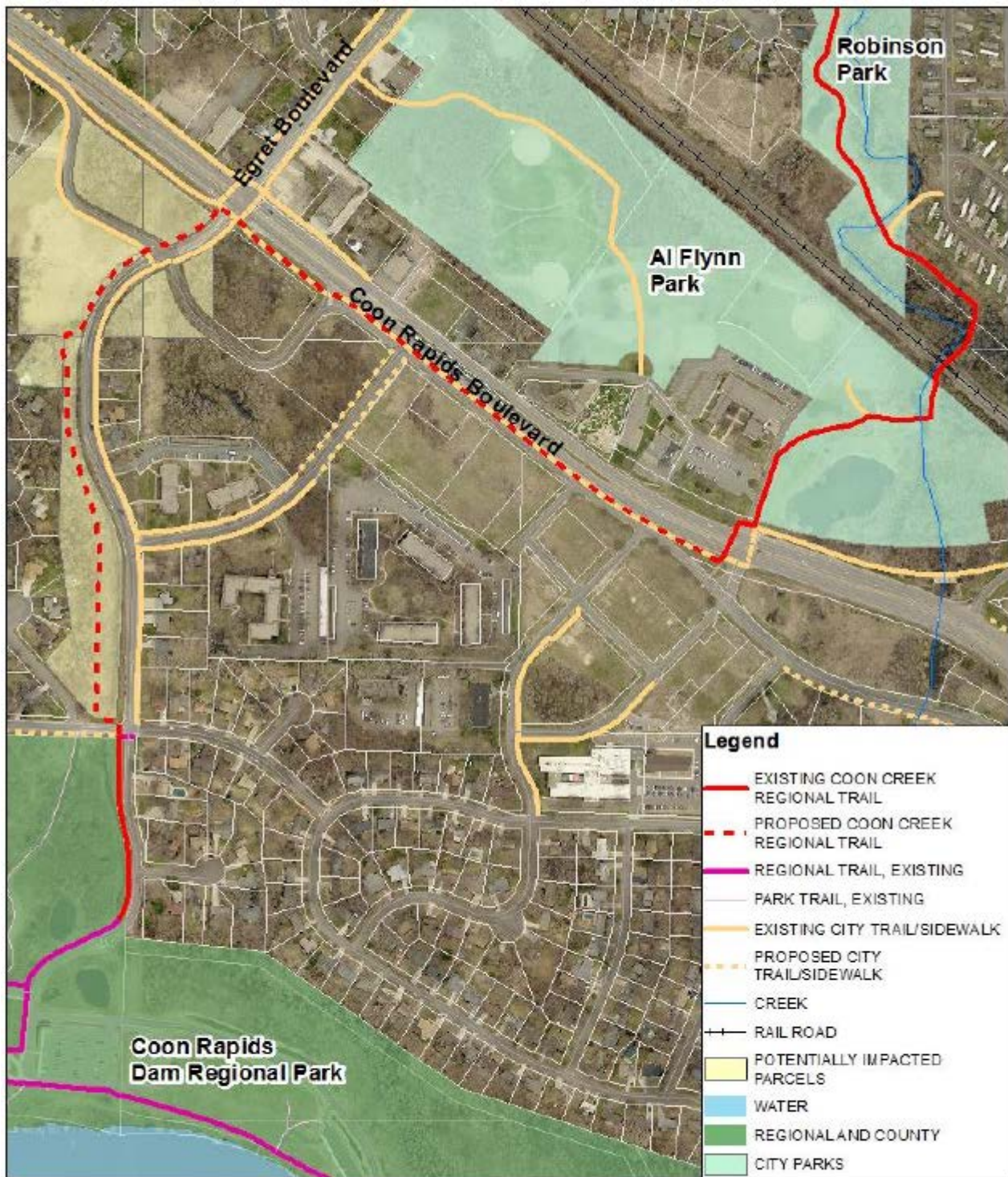
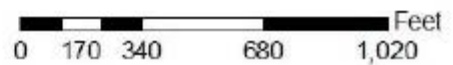




Figure 7:



### Proposed Coon Creek Regional Trail Corridor Segment 6



## Demand Forecast

Outdoor recreation patterns in the metropolitan area have been growing steadily. According to the Outdoor Foundation, nearly 143 million American, or 49.2 percent of the US population, participated in an outdoor activity at least once in 2013. In total, participants went on 12.1 billion outdoor outings in 2013. Anoka County has also experienced continued growth in visitation to regional parks and trails with 3.1 million visits in 2012 and just under 3.2 million visits in 2013. The Coon Creek Regional Trail, in its current state with missing segments, attracted over 120,000 visits in 2013. This number is expected to increase as gaps in the trail are completed.

Regional parks and trails have been increasing in popularity along with increases in population. Additionally, recreation resources and amenities must also continue to grow. As seen in *Figure 8*, the populations in communities surrounding the corridor are anticipated to grow steadily.

**Figure 8: Projected Population of Communities near the Regional Trail**

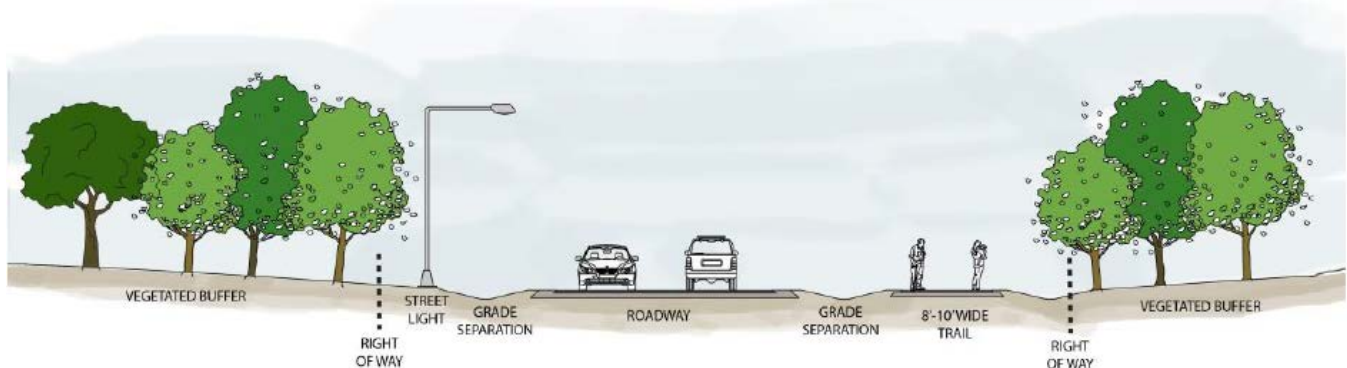
Year	Andover	Blaine	Coon Rapids	Ham Lake	Anoka County
2010	30,598	57,186	61,476	15,296	330,844
2040	40,700	86,000	72,500	17,300	426,080
Increase	33%	50%	18%	13%	29%

The historical increase in recreational visits to regional parks and trails, coupled with the projected population growth of Anoka County and its communities, indicates an increase in demand for recreation facilities in the future. This justifies the need for the completion of the Coon Creek Regional Trail.

## Development Concept

For the two trail sections still to be constructed, the development concept may be similar to the cross-section displayed in *Figure 9*. This consists of a grade separated, ten foot wide, paved trail. If the trail cannot be located away from the road, it may run adjacent to the road, separated by a curb. In the unlikely event a grade separated trail is not possible, the trail may be located on-street with a striped bicycle lane and appropriate signage.

**Figure 9: Typical Cross-Section for Future Sections of Coon Creek Regional Trail**



Regional trailhead facilities are located at Bunker Hills and Coon Rapids Dam Regional Parks. These locations provide parking, restrooms, and additional recreation amenities within the parks. The City of Coon Rapids also owns trailhead facilities at local parks along the trail. Parking and portable toilets are available at Erlandson, Robinson, and Al Flynn Parks.

Prior to trail development archaeological, geotechnical, wetland, and natural heritage information reviews and surveys will be conducted to determine impacts on natural or cultural resources. This will allow Anoka County to avoid and minimize impacts through mitigation techniques. These may include stormwater management facilities and wildlife friendly erosion control materials being incorporated into the trail design.

Trail lighting will be limited to main intersections and road crossings. Traffic signals will be reviewed to ensure timing allows trail users to safely pass through intersections. Trailhead signs are proposed at major intersections along the trail with smaller trail identification signs to help users navigate the trail.

The estimated development costs for trail construction and supporting elements is approximately \$920,000 as shown in *Figure 10*.

**Figure 10: Coon Creek Regional Trail Estimated Development Costs**

Description	Estimate
Design/Engineering	\$120,000
Archaeological Survey	\$15,000
Wetland Delineation/Mitigation	\$25,000
Topographic Survey/Construction Staking	\$50,000
Geotechnical Survey	\$10,000
Bituminous Trail Construction	\$600,000
Contingency	\$100,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$920,000</b>

The Coon Creek Regional Trail alignment, along its entire length and as proposed in this master plan, has been designated in the Met Council's *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* as a Tier 2 alignment on the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network. This designation gives it a regional level of importance to serve regional transportation travel by bicycle and will be appropriately emphasized in regional planning and investment decisions for transportation.

**Conflicts**

Through the use of proper planning and community involvement, conflicts related to the Coon Creek Regional Trail will be minimal. Primary concerns involve increased criminal activity in the area, which is not expected to be an issue due to County Park Ranger Patrols, and pedestrian/vehicle conflicts, which will be addressed by safe crossings and additional signage. The City of Coon Rapids also has a

concern regarding the Coon Rapids Boulevard section of trail, which still requires development. The City does not want the trail to conflict with future development plans for the area. Anoka County believes a satisfactory solution will come about through collaboration between the County and City. Conflicts resulting from the development of other trail sections are not expected. Given most of the trail has already been constructed within current land uses, issues between the trail and current land uses are not anticipated. In locations where future trail development will occur, conflicts are anticipated to be minimal. The County will work with the City of Coon Rapids, businesses, and residents to address any conflicts that may arise.

## **Public Services**

The master plan does not identify any non-recreational public services or facilities that are needed to accommodate the proposed trail.

## **Operations**

The Anoka County Ordinance, dated January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012, regulates parks and trails under the jurisdiction of Anoka County. Education and enforcement are provided by Anoka County Park Rangers, local police departments, and the Anoka County Sheriff's Department.

Anoka County partners with local communities to maintain its regional trails. The County typically enters into a Joint Powers Agreement or a Memorandum of Understanding with the affected Cities. These partnership agreements describe the roles and responsibilities of each agency with regard to maintenance and capital improvements along the trail corridor. Anoka County will provide routine maintenance for portions of the regional trail that travel within county or regional parks. Maintenance activities will include mowing, sweeping, plowing, clearing, and debris removal. Local cities will provide general routine maintenance for the portions of the regional trail that are not within these parks. Anoka County will inspect the trail annually and provide any necessary capital improvements or long term maintenance.

Annual maintenance costs for the Coon Creek Regional Trail are estimated to be approximately \$10,000, which also includes money for sign replacement, minor bituminous repair, and crack-sealing. Annual operating costs are funded through the Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department's annual operations and maintenance budget, which receives its funding from picnic shelter rentals, room rentals, programs, park entrance fees, and the County's general fund. Supplemental funding is received from the State of Minnesota as part of the Operations and Maintenance Fund allocation administered by the Metropolitan Council.

## **Citizen Participation**

Through collaboration with local units of government, regulatory agencies, and the Anoka County Transportation Division, a tentative alignment was determined and draft master plan created. Anoka County then reached out to the public for comment. This was done through an open house held March 25, 2015. In order to inform the public of the open house, post card invitations were sent to residents living within 200 feet of the trail corridor. Additionally, invitations were sent to a local mosque and Hmong Church, a notice was published in two local papers, and the draft plan was posted on the Anoka

County and City of Coon Rapids websites requesting input. This process resulted in a total of three comments. Based on the comments, appropriate revisions were made to the master plan. This included the trail realignment to the signalized intersection of Northdale Boulevard and Xeon Street, removing a mid-block crossing and making the trail section much safer.

The City of Coon Rapids adopted a resolution of support for the trail plan on April 21, 2015. The Coon Creek Watershed District did not provide any comments.

## **Public Awareness**

Anoka County uses a number of outreach tools to make the public aware of its regional parks and trails. These include wayfinding, maps, websites, social media, publications, and brochures.

## **Accessibility**

The facilities will meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. There will not be a fee for use of the regional trail, which helps eliminate economic barriers for trail users. Once constructed, the trail will provide a no cost transportation alternative for residents in the area.

The trail corridor is also served by several current transit routes. These include Metro Transit Routes 59, 854, and 850 and Anoka County Traveler Route 805. Additionally, Anoka County Traveler Transit Link and Metro Mobility dial-a-ride services are able to provide area residents with transportation to the trail for a minimal fee.

## *Review by Other Council Divisions*

**Transportation/Aviation Planning** (Steve Elmer 651-602-1756) – The plan should include a statement such as the following somewhere in the document to underscore the trail's importance as a regional transportation facility.

"The Coon Creek Regional Trail alignment, along its entire length and as proposed in the CCRT Master Plan, has been designated in the Met Council's 2040 Transportation Policy Plan as a Tier 2 alignment on the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network. This designation gives it a regional level of importance to serve regional transportation travel by bicycle and will be appropriately emphasized in regional planning and investment decisions for transportation."

**Community Development – Environment and Surface Water Management** (Jim Larsen 651-602-1159) – No Comments

**Environmental Services – Sewers** (Roger Janzig 651-602-1119) – No Comments

**Metro Transit** (Kyle Burrows 612-349-7749) – No Comments

## Conclusions

1. The Coon Creek Regional Trail Master Plan is consistent with the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and other Council policies.
2. The estimated cost to implement the master plan is \$1,165,000 which includes \$245,000 for right of way and easement acquisition and \$920,000 for development.
3. Approval of this master plan makes the development costs eligible for regional parks funding, but does not commit the Council to any funding at this time. Future funding based on this master plan may be awarded through the Parks Acquisition Opportunity Fund, the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund. Council action is required to approve specific grants to Anoka County.