

## Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: February 2, 2016

For the Community Development Committee meeting of February 16, 2016

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of February 24, 2016

**Subject:** Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail Master Plan, Anoka County

**District(s), Member(s):** MPOSC District E, Michael Kopp and District F, Sarah Hietpas

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

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

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

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail Master Plan.
2. Require that prior to initiating development, Anoka County must send preliminary plans to Scott Dentz, Interceptor Engineer Manager at Metropolitan Council Environmental Services, so he may assess the potential impacts to the regional interceptor system.

### Background

Anoka County has submitted a master plan for the Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail, which will connect the Bunker Hills Regional Park with the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve and provide connections to the East Anoka County, Central Anoka County, Rice Creek North, and Chain of Lakes-Otter Lake Regional Trails. The trail will travel 14.5 miles through the cities of Blaine, Lino Lakes, and Centerville. Of the 14.5 miles of trail, approximately 11.5 have been previously constructed, leaving three sections, totaling approximately three miles, in need of completion.

### Rationale

The Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail Master Plan is consistent with the requirements of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* including the section on regional linking trails. It is also consistent with other Council policies.

### Funding

The estimated cost to implement the master plan is \$6,711,500, which includes \$645,000 for right of way and easement acquisition and \$6,066,500 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), the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund, and the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund. Council action is required to approve the CIP and to approve specific grants to Anoka County.

### Known Support / Opposition

The Anoka County Board of Commissioners approved and adopted the master plan. The cities of Blaine, Lino Lakes, and Centerville have adopted resolutions of support for the development of the regional trail. There is no known opposition to the master plan.

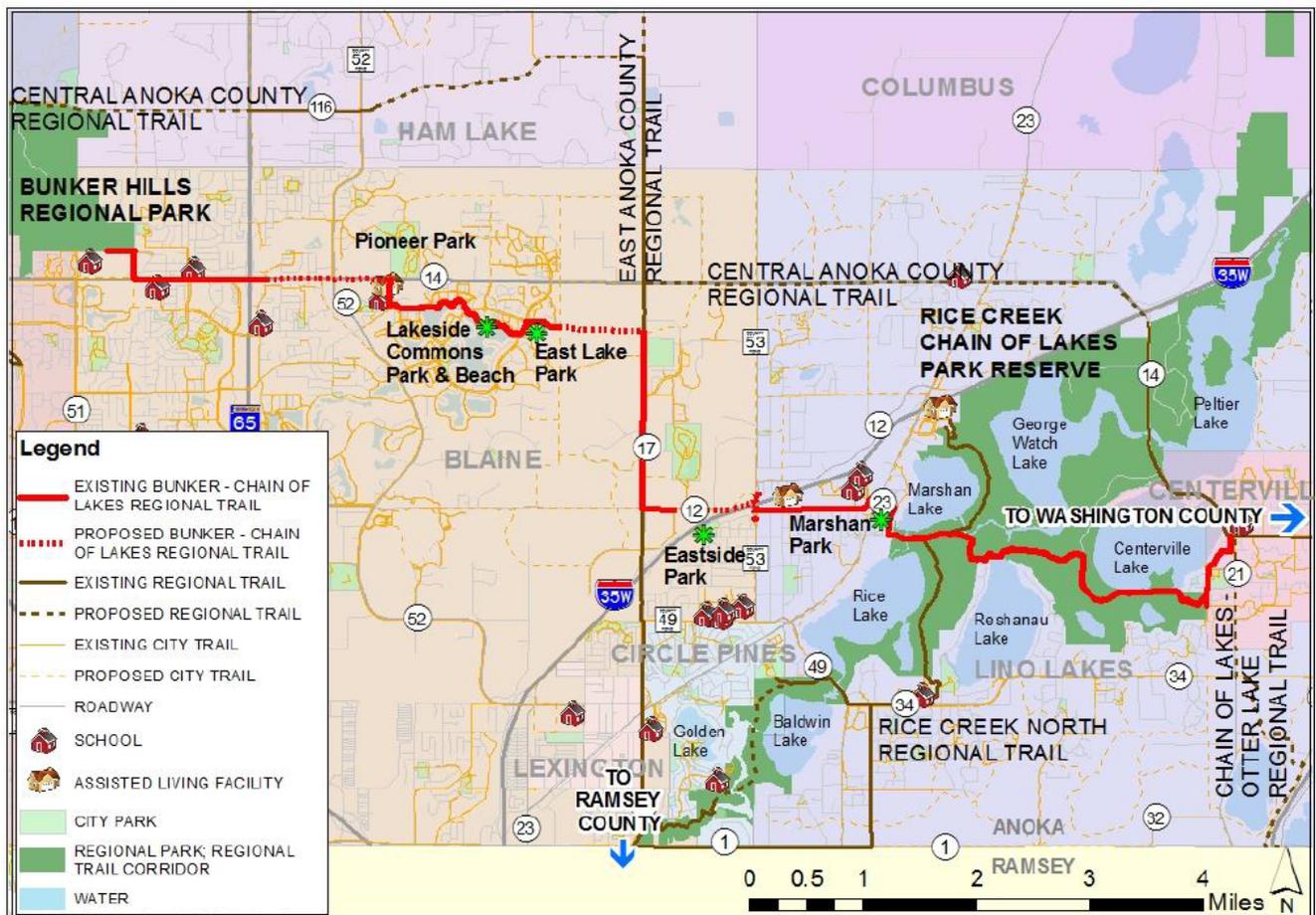
## Analysis

### Boundaries and Acquisition

The Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail will travel through the cities of Blaine, Lino Lakes, and Centerville along a 14.5 mile route. The regional trail will connect the Bunker Hills Regional Park to the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve and provide connections to the East Anoka County, Central Anoka County, Rice Creek North, and Chain of Lakes - Otter Lake Regional Trails. Additionally, the regional trail will provide access to local destinations including six schools and several local parks.

The general alignment of the preferred route for the Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail is shown in red in *Figure 1*. Much of the trail corridor includes existing segments. Of the 14.5 mile planned route, approximately 11.5 miles have been previously constructed by the local communities. There are three sections of trail still requiring construction totaling approximately three miles in length.

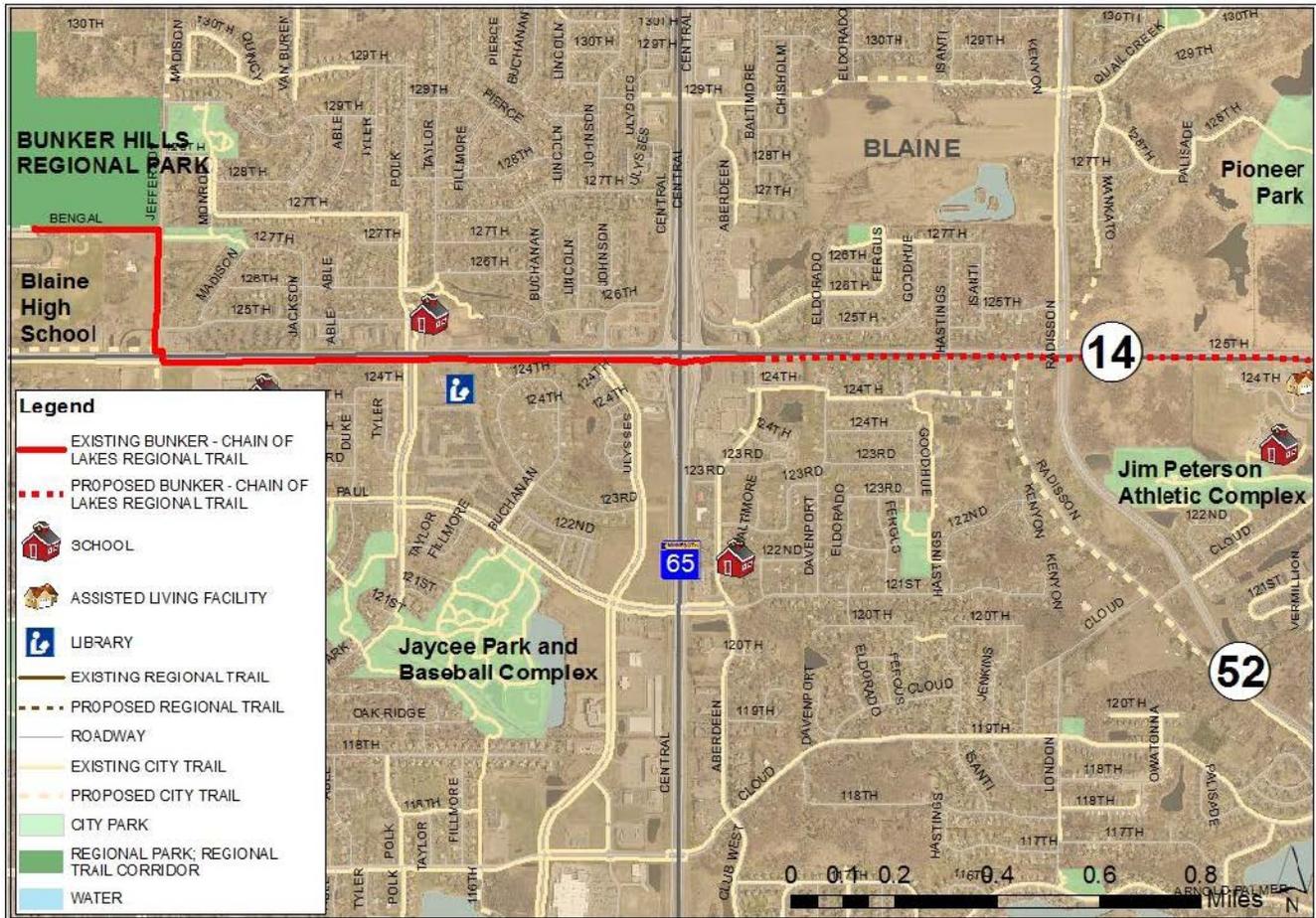
**Figure 1: Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail Route Map**



**Proposed Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail  
City Context**

Figure 2 displays the westernmost section of the trail, beginning in Blaine. Here the trail leaves Bunker Hills Regional Park as an eight foot wide striped on-road bicycle lane. At Jefferson Avenue, the existing trail turns south on a 10-foot-wide grade-separated trail. The trail then turns east and parallels CSAH 14/Main Street. After crossing Highway 65, the existing trail ends at Aberdeen Street. From Aberdeen Street, a proposed 10-foot-wide trail will continue to parallel CSAH 14/Main Street to Cloud Drive. This proposed section of trail is just over a mile in length and may require easements on 22 parcels.

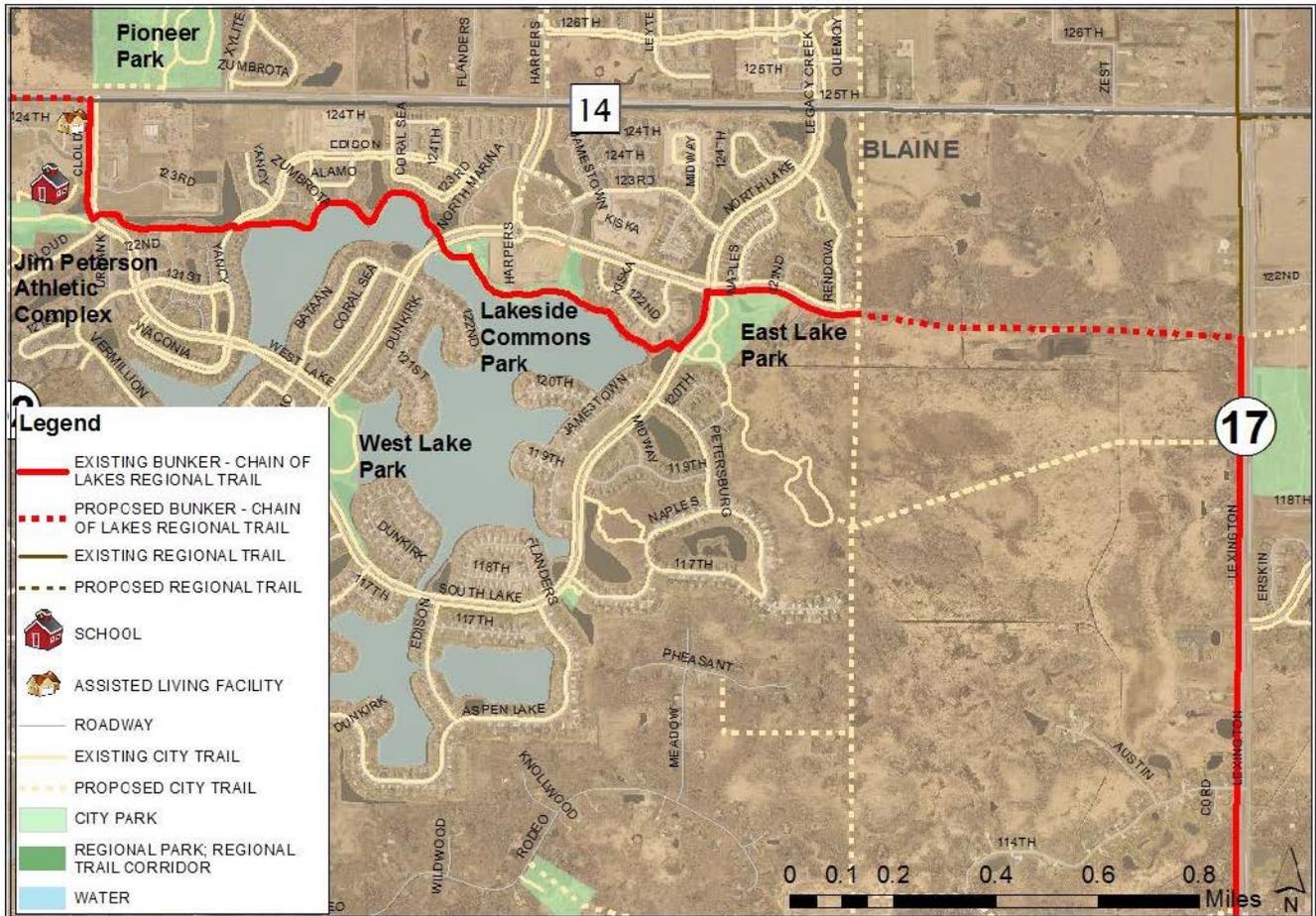
Figure 2:



Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail Alignment

As displayed in *Figure 3*, the existing trail resumes at Cloud Drive before passing through Lakeside Commons Park and on to East Lake Park, which are local parks in Blaine. Upon reaching the east side of East Lake Park, a proposed 10-foot-wide trail will continue east through a future development site to CSAH 17/Lexington Avenue. This trail segment is approximately ¾ of a mile long and may require easements on four parcels. The existing trail then continues south along CSAH 17/Lexington Avenue.

**Figure 3:**



**Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail Alignment**

In Figure 4, the existing trail turns east from CSAH 17/Lexington Avenue on 109<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Beginning at Pheasant Ridge Drive, a proposed 10-foot-wide trail will continue along 109<sup>th</sup> Avenue to County Road 53/Sunset Avenue. Near County Road 53/Sunset Avenue, the Anoka County Highway Department is currently working on a roundabout project at 109<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Apollo Drive. This project will include a short segment of trail to be constructed during the summer of 2016. From the roundabout, the proposed trail will cross over Interstate 35W to Elm Street. The proposed trail segment is just over one mile in length and may require easements on 14 parcels. After crossing Interstate 35W an existing eight-foot-wide trail paralleling Elm Street continues to Marshan Park.

Figure 4:



Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail Alignment

Figure 5 and Figure 6 display the easternmost sections of trail, which have previously been constructed. After passing through the Marshan Park, the trail becomes an on-road striped bicycle lane for .2 miles along Aqua Lane. The 10-foot-wide trail is then routed off-road while passing through Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve. The trail reaches its eastern terminus at CSAH 14/Main Street in Centerville where users can make a connection to the Central Anoka County Regional Trail.

Anoka County will work with the County Highway Department and the cities of Blaine, Lino Lakes, and Centerville to ensure any development plans or street reconstruction projects in the proposed trail areas include dedicated right of way or easements for the trail. Anoka County anticipates the construction of the remaining trail segments will potentially affect a total of 40 parcels. Based on the 2016 assessed value, the required right of way acquisition is anticipated to be \$645,000.

**Figure 5:**



**Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail Alignment**

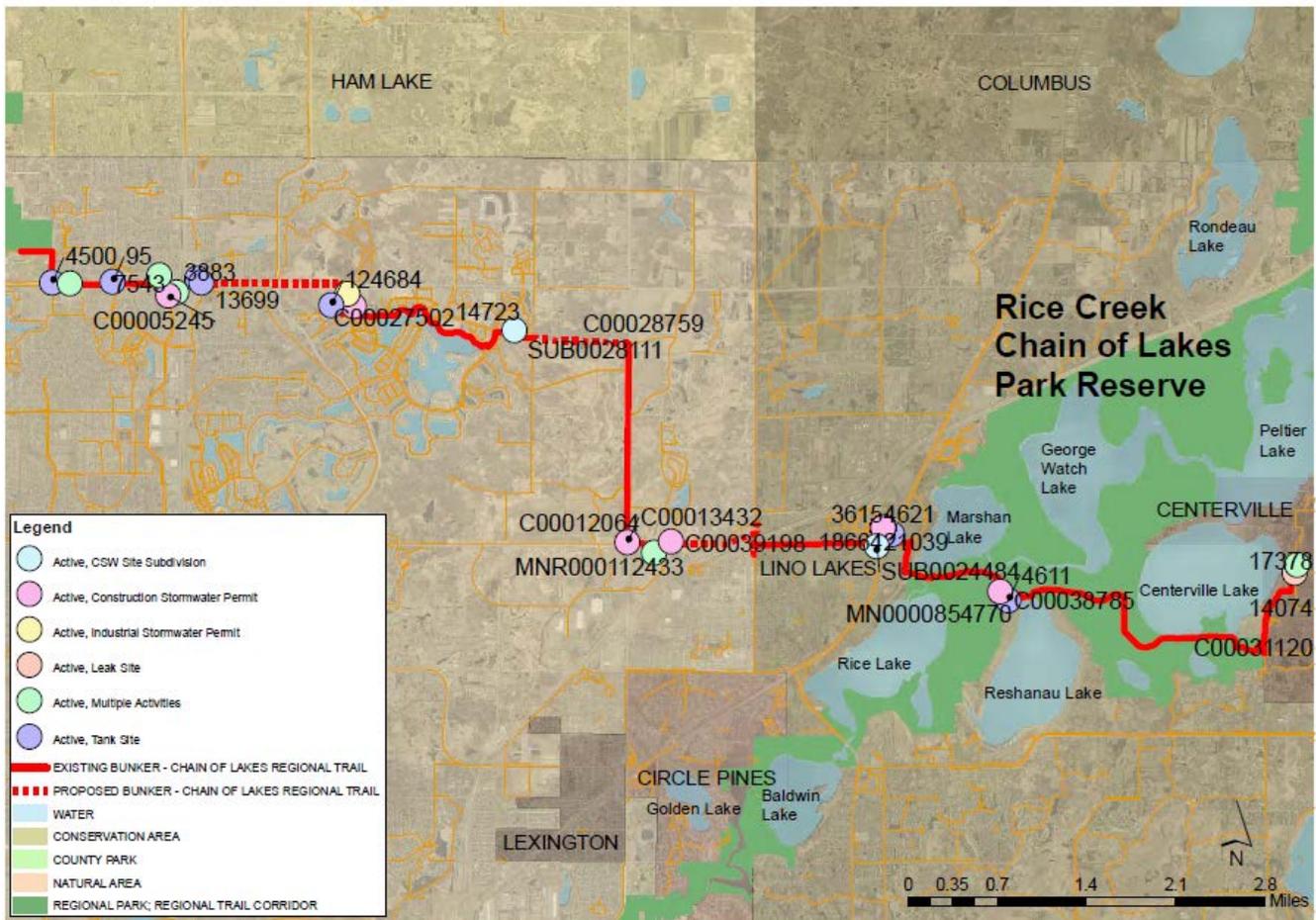
Figure 6:



Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail Alignment

In accordance with new policies in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, Anoka County included a map, *Figure 7*, of active Minnesota Pollution Control Agency contamination sites within 500 feet of the trail corridor. While several are noted in the map, Anoka County does not anticipate them to impact the trail or require additional funds for remediation.

**Figure 7:**



**Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail Alignment  
MPCA Site Information**

**Demand Forecast**

Outdoor recreation patterns in the region have been growing steadily. These patterns have also been seen in Anoka County. Recreational visits to Anoka County Regional Trails have increased from 504,000 in 2008 to just over 1 million in 2014.

Regional parks and trails have been increasing in popularity along with increases in population. As the population in the region continues to grow, recreation resources and amenities should also increase. As seen in *Figure 8*, populations of communities along the trail corridor are anticipated to grow steadily to 2040.

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

Year	Blaine	Lino Lakes	Centerville	Anoka County
2010	57,186	20,216	3,792	330,844
2040	87,300	31,100	4,060	438,820

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 Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail.

### **Development Concept**

The development concept for the trail will be similar to the cross-section displayed in *Figure 9*. This consists of a grade-separated, 8- to 10-foot-wide, paved trail. Throughout most of the trail corridor, a grade-separated buffer, determined by the speed and type of road, will be used. The buffer will have a preferred minimum width of 5 – 10 feet. When the trail right of way is constrained, a minimum of a six inch curb will be placed between the trail and the roadway.

Additionally, the County would like to widen the existing eight-foot-wide trail segments to 10 feet, where feasible, when trail reconstruction is needed in the future. The proposed trail crosses Interstate 35W at County Road 53/Sunset Avenue. The current bridge is a narrow, two-lane bridge that does not have any pedestrian accommodations. Anoka County is proposing to either include regional trail accommodations into the future bridge reconstruction or construct a separate pedestrian and bicycle bridge over Interstate 35W.

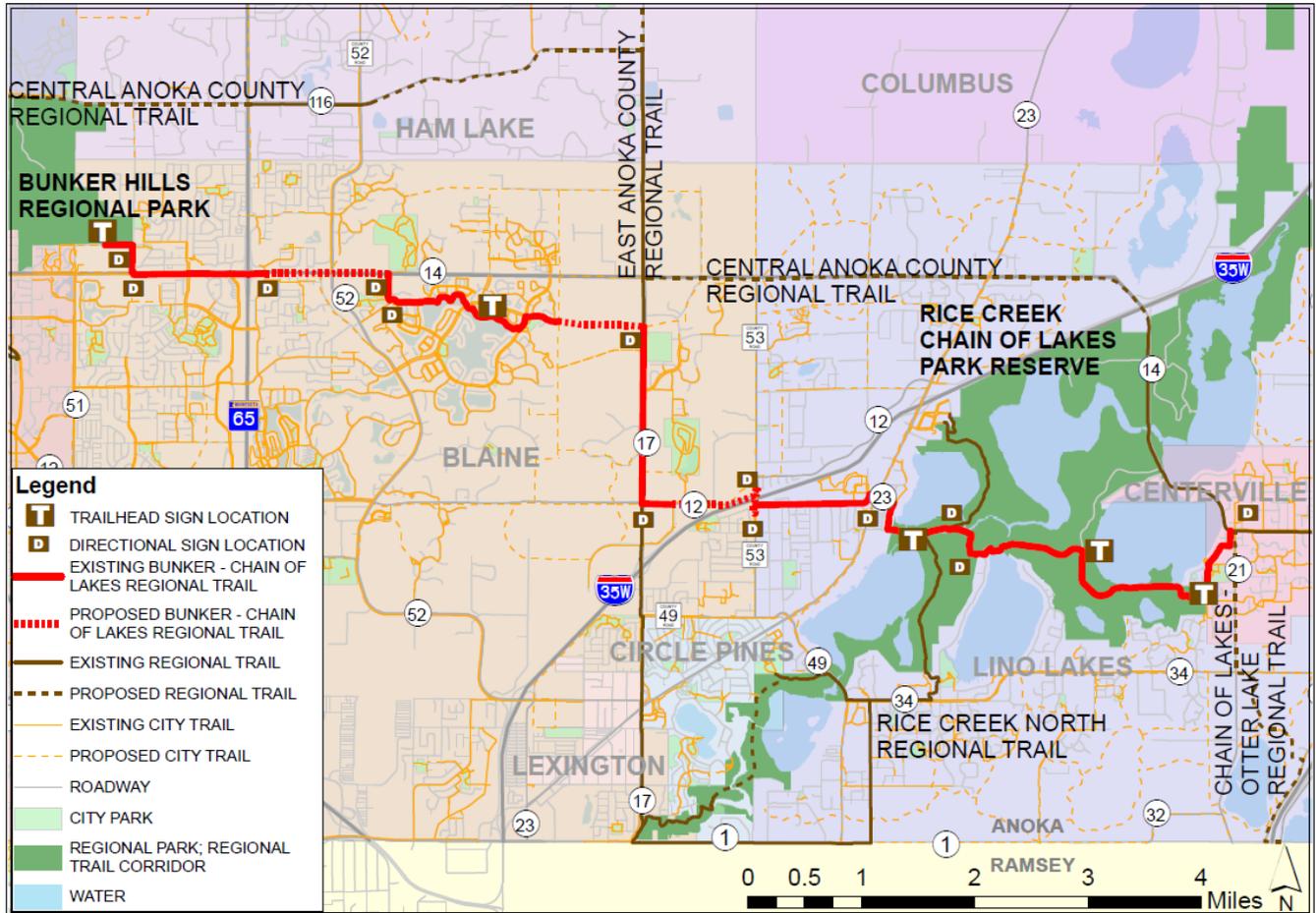
***Figure 9: Typical Cross-Section for Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail***



Regional trailhead facilities are located at Bunker Hills Regional Park and Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve. These locations provide parking, restrooms, and additional recreation amenities. There are additional facilities located at Lakeside Commons Park and Beach in Blaine, Marshan Park in Lino Lakes, and Laurie LaMotte Park in Centerville.

New wayfinding signs will be installed throughout the route. Trailhead signs are proposed at major intersections along the trail with additional directional signs located at decision points. A sign plan for the trail can be seen in *Figure 10*.

**Figure 10: Proposed Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail Sign Location Plan**



**Figure 11: Proposed Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail Signs**



Storm water management for the proposed trail will follow the requirements of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, Coon Creek and Rice Creek Watershed Districts, and other permitting and regulatory agency requirements at the time of construction.

Prior to construction, Anoka County will conduct a Natural Heritage Information System Review to determine if any rare species or natural resources exist within the trail corridor. Corridor observations show there is one vertebrate animal of threatened status within 500 feet of the existing trail with none located near the sections of trail still to be constructed.

The estimated development costs for trail construction and supporting elements is approximately \$6,066,500 as shown in *Figure 12*. The schedule for construction will depend on right of way acquisition, roadway reconstruction, future development, and funding availability. Anoka County anticipates some portions of trail to be constructed within the next 5 – 7 years, while others within the next 15 – 20 years.

**Figure 12: Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail Estimated Development Costs**

Description	Estimate
Design/Engineering/Project Management	\$540,000
Archaeological Survey	\$100,000
Wetland Delineation	\$150,000
Topographic Survey/Construction Staking	\$300,000
Geotechnical Survey	\$150,000
Clearing and Grubbing	\$200,000
Utility Relocations	\$200,000
Bituminous Trail Construction	\$1,600,000
Pedestrian Bridge Construction	\$2,000,000
Lighting	\$50,000
Landscaping and Restoration, including seeding, vegetated screening, etc. if required	\$150,000
Signage and Striping	\$50,000
Site Furnishings, such as trash containers and/or benches	\$25,000
Contingency (10%)	\$551,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,066,500</b>

**Conflicts**

Through the use of proper planning and community involvement, conflicts related to the Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail will be minimal. Since the majority of the trail already exists, the County does not anticipate issues between the trail and current land uses. Anoka County indicates that potential

conflicts between trail users and vehicular traffic will be kept to a minimum by working with the County Highway Department and cities along the trail to ensure safe crossings at road intersections and driveways.

### **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 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 Bunker - Chain of Lakes 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.

### **Public Engagement and Participation**

Anoka County engaged local populations through several methods during the master planning process. The first engagement opportunity was a public comment period. The plan was posted on the County website, and the public was informed by postcard mailings to corridor residents and newspaper notices.

To reach a wider variety of the population base, the County attended events in local communities. Events included Blaine's Family Fun Night, the Lino Lakes Corn Roast, and Centerville's Fete des Lacs. The County also sought comments at the Anoka County Fair, which typically has a total attendance of around 40,000 throughout its week-long run.

Through the engagement process, the County received several comments. The most significant issue raised pertaining to this master plan related to wayfinding signage for the trail corridor. This concern was addressed in the master plan by including a sign plan that shows trailhead and directional sign locations throughout the corridor.

During the planning process, the Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department worked with local units of government as well as the Anoka County Transportation Division, which includes the Highway Department, the Transit Department, and Commute Solutions, the Anoka County transportation management organization. The County also presented to various city park advisory boards and city councils for review and comment. The cities of Blaine, Lino Lakes, and Centerville passed resolutions in support for the development of the regional trail.

### **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 250, 275, 285, and 854. 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) – No Comments

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

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

**Environmental Services – Sewers** (Roger Janzig 651-602-1119) – The construction of any new or updating of existing trails may have an impact on multiple Metropolitan Council Interceptors in multiple locations. To assess the potential impacts to our interceptor system, prior to initiating any proposed project, Anoka County should send preliminary plans to Scott Dentz, Interceptor Engineering Manager (651-602-4503) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services, for review and comment.

**Local Planning Assistance** (Eric Wojchik 651-602-1330) – The proposed Master Plan for the Bunker Hills - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail is in conformance with the City of Blaine's 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update, which identifies the proposed regional trail corridor (preliminary alignment), which is jointly planned and developed by the City of Blaine and Anoka County. At the time the 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update for the City of Blaine was approved, the Master Plan boundary was not set. The City of Blaine's 2015 System Statement identifies the proposed trail alignment as referenced in the *2040 Regional Park Policy Plan*, and the aforementioned details conform with the alignment as detailed in the proposed Master Plan for the Bunker Hills - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail. For information, the City of Blaine should acknowledge the final Master Plan alignment in its drafting of the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update.

## Conclusions

1. The Bunker - Chain of Lakes Regional Trail Master Plan is consistent with the requirements of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, including the section on regional linking trails. It is also consistent with other Council policies.
2. The regional trail is located in the vicinity of several Metropolitan Council Environmental Services facilities. Any construction may have an impact on these MCES Interceptors. In order to maintain the integrity of the regional sewer interceptor system, Anoka County should submit preliminary development plans for the regional trail to the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review and comment.
3. The City of Blaine should acknowledge the final Master Plan alignment in its drafting of the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update. Council staff will communicate this requirement to Blaine City staff.
4. The estimated cost to implement the master plan is \$6,711,500 which includes \$645,000 for right of way and easement acquisition and \$6,066,500 for development.
5. 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 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.