

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: September 12, 2017

For the Community Development meeting of September 18, 2017

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of September 27, 2017

Subject: Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan, Washington County

District(s), Member(s): District F, Sarah Hietpas

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statute 473.313; Planning Strategy 1 *2040 Regional Park Policy Plan*

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 Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan.
2. Require Washington County to submit detailed parcel information for Metropolitan Council review and approval prior to seeking future grants for acquisition.
3. Require that prior to initiating development, Washington County 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

The *2040 Regional Park Policy Plan* identifies a north-south regional trail search corridor in Washington County that links Big Marine Park Reserve, Lake Elmo Park Reserve, and Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. This future regional trail has been named Central Greenway Regional Trail and when complete will have a total length of approximately 25 miles.

Washington County has submitted a master plan for the southern portion of the search corridor. This segment of trail is 9.65 miles in length and stretches from Interstate 94 (I-94) in Woodbury, south to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park in Cottage Grove. The 9.65 miles of trail described in the master plan consists of two segments. There is a 4-mile segment of existing trail located between I-94 and County Road 18/Bailey Road. South of County Road 18/Bailey Road, the trail travels 5.65 miles to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. Along this section of trail, the master plan describes new trail development that will connect small segments of existing trail.

Rationale

The Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan is consistent with the requirements of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* including Planning Strategy 1, which requires activities in regional parks be tied to the natural resources of the parks, but not adversely affect them. Also, the master plan is consistent with other Council policies.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The Central Greenway Regional Trail Master Plan advances the Thrive outcome of livability by enhancing the quality of life in the region through increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation.

Funding

The estimated cost to implement the master plan is \$8,207,500, which includes \$306,500 for land acquisition and \$7,901,000 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), the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund, and the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund. Council action is required to approve the CIP, the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund, and specific grants to Washington County.

Known Support / Opposition

The Washington County Board of County Commissioners has approved the master plan. The Cities of Woodbury and Cottage Grove have provided letters supporting the master plan. There is no known opposition to the master plan.

Analysis

Planning Strategy 1 of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that master plans for regional linking trails address the nine items listed below.

Boundaries and Acquisition

Once fully developed, the Central Greenway Regional Trail will travel through Washington County from Big Marine Park Reserve in the north to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park in the south. This master plan is for the southern portion of the search corridor from Interstate 94 to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. This section of the trail will pass through the cities of Woodbury and Cottage Grove.

An overview of the entire Central Greenway Regional Trail corridor can be seen in *Figure 1*, which also highlights the project limits for this master plan. The master plan portion of the trail search corridor consists of segments of existing and proposed trail that generally parallel County Road 19/Keats Avenue. County Road 19/Keats Avenue is also referred to as Woodbury Drive, Keats Avenue North, Chemolite Road South, and Innovation Road. For this master plan, the roadway is referred to as County Road 19/Keats Avenue. The four-mile section of trail between I-94 and County Road 18/Bailey Road has been previously developed. South of County Road 18/Bailey Road to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, 5.65 miles of trail are proposed for development.

As a general guideline, Washington County Parks will attempt to work within the established right of way along County Road 19/Keats Avenue. The proposed trail alignment has taken into account future roadway improvements and widening with the expectation that additional right-of-way acquisition for the road will include the regional trail. In the event Washington County does not expand County Road 19/Keats Avenue or trail development occurs before road improvements, four locations have been identified where acquisitions may be needed to develop or improve the regional trail. The four locations are identified in *Figure 2*.

Acquisition Area A

The plan calls for an underpass located north of Dale Road and south of Bailey Road. In order to accommodate the underpass, 0.25 acres of additional right-of-way is needed.

Acquisition Area B

The plan includes an alternative alignment for a 1.75-mile section of trail that would divert the trail away from County Road 19/Keats Avenue to take advantage of natural amenities and provide a more scenic experience. If this segment is developed by Washington County, 4.25 acres of additional right-of-way will need to be acquired. This would include acquiring land presently owned by the City of Woodbury, the South Washington Watershed District, and a private corporation.

Acquisition Area C

There is an existing trail on the east side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue between 80th Street and 85th Street that is eight feet wide. This is adequate on a short-term basis, but the County would like to develop an improved 0.50-mile segment of trail on the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue. This would require an additional 10-foot-wide strip of right-of-way totaling 0.60 acres.

Acquisition Area D

On the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue between 85th Street South and the new entrance to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, nine parcels may be affected. The segment is 0.85 miles in length and would require an additional 20-foot-wide strip of right-of-way to accommodate the new trail. An underpass is also proposed for this section. The total estimated acquisition needed for the segment is two acres.

In the future, if Washington County is not able to construct the trail in existing right-of-way and needs to acquire the previously described land, County staff must provide the Metropolitan Council with detailed parcel information for review and approval prior to seeking future grants for acquisition.

Figure 1: Entire Central Greenway Regional Trail Corridor



Figure 2: Potential Acquisition Areas



Demand Forecast

The master plan states that in general, recreation use trends are affected by demographic trends. To analyze demographic trends specific to the Central Greenway Regional Trail, Washington County used a quantitative measuring methodology that involved identifying the population within a primary service area of three miles.

Based on the 2014-2018 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), the trend has been young adults and their children reducing their involvement in nature-based recreation. However, older adults have maintained more stable involvement in outdoor recreation. Within the primary service area, 25 percent of the residents are between the ages of 40 and 55. As this group ages, physical limitations will require individuals to change their activities from higher-intensity activity to lower-impact activities. Many low-impact activities such as walking and nature observation will be provided by the Central Greenway Regional Trail.

Population growth in the region and the primary service area is also expected to play a role in increasing demand for recreational opportunities in Washington County. The population in the trail's primary service area is expected to increase from just under 100,000 in 2010 to over 130,000 in 2040.

Development Concept

The trail design for Central Greenway Regional Trail consists of a 10-foot-wide bituminous surface that will be separated from vehicular traffic. There are some instances where an existing eight-foot-wide trail will remain in place until funding is available to widen the trail. In locations with limited right-of-way, the trail will be separated from the road by a minimum of a two-foot-wide clear zone.

The portion of the Central Greenway Regional Trail contained in the master plan is recognized as a Tier 2 Corridor in the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network. The proposed alignment should be considered for inclusion as a Tier 2 alignment in the Transportation Policy Plan update in 2018, making the regional trail fully eligible for the Metropolitan Council's Regional Solicitation for federal transportation funds.

The suburban nature of the Central Greenway Regional Trail requires wayfinding at strategic locations. These include major roadway intersections, intersections with other trails, trailheads, and parks or other adjacent public facilities. The wayfinding elements Washington County plans to incorporate in the regional trail include freestanding kiosks with maps and general information; directional signage depicting the direction, name, and distance to major destinations and points of interest; and rest stops with amenities at key locations throughout the corridor. A signage location map and examples of kiosks and rest stops can be found in *Figure 3*.

The master plan portion of the Central Greenway Regional Trail from I-94 to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park has been divided into seven segments. A map showing an overview of the segments can be seen in *Figure 4*. More detailed maps of the trail corridor can be found in *Appendix A*.

Figure 3: Wayfinding Location Map and Examples



Example of kiosk concept and signage for Washington County trails. (Artwork provided by Washington County)



Hardwood Creek kiosk and rest stop. (Photo provided by Washington County)

Segment A: I - 94 to Valley Creek Road

This segment is two miles in length and will utilize an existing trail on the east side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue until it reaches Powers Lake Park. In the park, the trail will travel through an existing underpass and enter Lakeview Knolls Park. The trail continues south along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue to Valley Creek Road. Improvements to this section include widening the trail from Lakeview Knolls Park to Valley Creek Road to ten feet; adding ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps at Regatta Alcove, Regatta Drive, and Valley Creek Road; and improving the existing underpass below County Road 19/Keats Avenue.

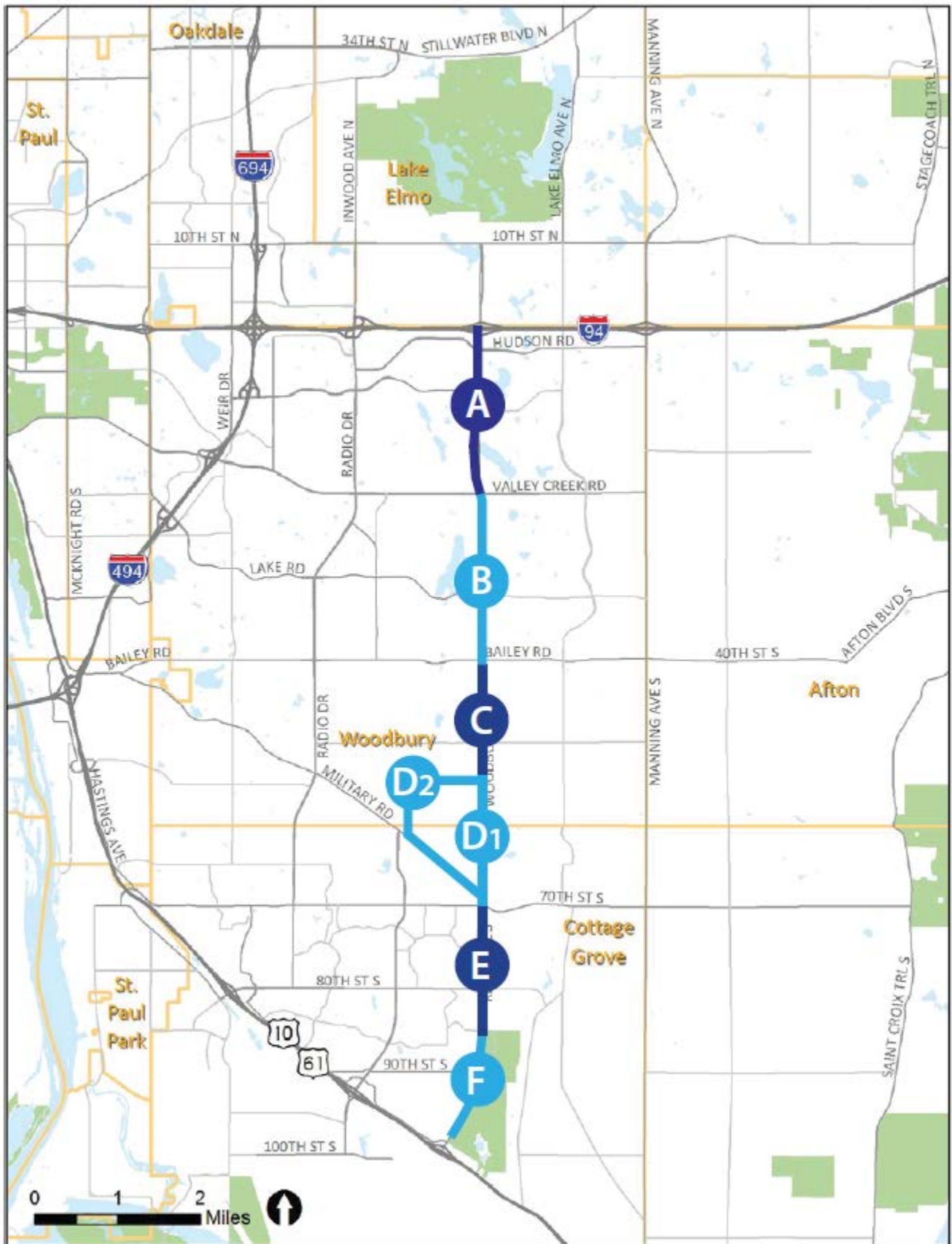
Segment B - Valley Creek Road to Bailey Road

South of Valley Creek Road, the trail continues on existing trail along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue to Bailey Road. This section of trail is two miles in length. Improvements to this section include upgraded ADA compliant pedestrian ramps at Park Crossing.

Segment C - Bailey Road to Crossroads Church

Segment C is 1.85 miles in length and does not contain any existing trail. A new, 10-foot-wide trail will be constructed in the County Road 19/Keats Avenue right-of-way. A new pedestrian crossing will be constructed at Dale Road. The master plan also calls for a pedestrian underpass below County Road 19/Keats Avenue located approximately 0.30 miles north of Dale Road. This underpass will be built when significant development has occurred on the east side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue to provide a connection to the regional trail. Given that this underpass is not for the regional trail alignment, it would not be eligible for regional parks funding.

Figure 4: Central Greenway Regional Trail Segment Map



Segment D Alternatives

There are two alternative alignments for Segment D, which is located between Crossroads Church and Military Road. Washington County will determine which alignment is best suited for trail development at a future date. There are several unknown circumstances that will factor into the final alignment including residential development patterns, future local park locations, and stakeholder input. The two alternatives are described as Segment D1 and Segment D2.

Segment D1

If alignment D1 is chosen, a section of trail one mile in length will be constructed along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue. Pedestrian ramps and a crosswalk will be constructed at Military Road. This alignment would provide trail users a more direct connection through the corridor.

Segment D2

If alignment D2 is developed, the trail will travel west from County Road 19/Keats Avenue and then south to Military Road in an off-road corridor through several undeveloped parcels. Upon reaching Military Road, the trail would travel southeast to County Road 19/Keats Avenue. The total length of the segment is 1.6 miles. This alignment would provide a more scenic experience due to the off-road route.

Segment E - Military Road to 85th Street

Segment E is 1.6 miles in length and will travel along an existing eight-foot-wide trail along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue to Indian Boulevard South. This trail will be widened to ten feet at a later date. The trail will then pass by Cottage Grove Middle School, where a future rest stop and kiosk will be constructed. A new trail will be constructed from the middle school to 80th Street South. When the trail reaches 80th Street South, a new trail will be constructed along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue to 85th Street South. Until the new trail is constructed between 80th and 85th, an existing eight-foot-wide trail along the east side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue will be used.

Segment F - 85th Street to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park Entrance

Segment F is 1.2 miles in length and will travel along the west side of County Road 19/Keats Avenue. There are also two proposed underpasses that will provide grade separated connections into Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. The first underpass is located between 85th Street South and 90th Street South. The 2nd underpass will be located at the newly constructed entrance to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park.

The estimated development costs for the master plan portion of the regional trail are \$7,901,500. A table detailing development and acquisition costs can be found in *Appendix B*.

Conflicts

The Central Greenway Regional Trail is proposed to be developed within the public right-of-way along County Road 19/Keats Avenue. This is anticipated to minimize conflicts throughout the corridor. The County will coordinate with utility providers to ensure gas, sanitary sewer, and high-voltage overhead power lines are not impacted.

Public Services

The master plan does not identify and new public services that are needed to accommodate the regional trail.

Operations

Washington County will be responsible for the public safety, operations, and maintenance of the Central Greenway Regional Trail with staff based at the County's South Maintenance Unit in St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park. The County will utilize existing equipment to maintain the trail, but additional staff time will be required. Maintenance activities include sign inventory and replacement, spring cleanup,

sweeping, trash pickup, erosion repair, fence repair, bituminous patching, striping replacement, and mowing.

The County has adopted Ordinance No. 174 which establishes rules and regulations for park and trail use and management under its jurisdiction. Rules are posted throughout Washington County park properties and facilities. Posted information includes park hours, permitted and prohibited activities, fees, maps of the parks and trails, and emergency contacts.

Washington County estimates the annual cost to maintain the trail will be \$16,000 with an additional \$2,000 annually for the first five years to establish prairie and pollinator plantings along the trail. Sources of revenue to cover these costs will come from vehicle entrance fees, County levy, and operations and maintenance grants from the Metropolitan Council.

Public Engagement and Participation

The public engagement process for development of the master plan included meetings with a technical advisory committee, updates to the Washington County Parks Commission, public open houses, pop-up meetings, and presentations at local government meetings.

The technical advisory committee included representatives from the City of Woodbury, City of Cottage Grove, Washington County, and the South Washington Watershed District. The committee was responsible for coordinating with their respective governing bodies, assisting in implementing the public participation opportunities, providing information needed to identify feasible trail routes, and assisting with the governmental agency approval process. The committee met six times between May 2015 and January 2016.

The Washington County Park Commission discussed the regional trail plan at four meetings between September 2015 and January 2016. Presentations were also made to the Cottage Grove Parks and Recreation Committee and City Council as well as to the Woodbury Park, Planning, and Economic Development staff and City Council.

Four public open houses were held between July 2015 and December 2015 to present information and receive feedback. Three of the open houses were held at the Washington County South Service Center, and the other open house occurred at an affordable housing apartment complex in Cottage Grove. Feedback from the open houses indicated interest from the public in developing a linking regional trail along County Road 19/Keats Avenue with connections to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park.

Supplemental public engagement was conducted in April 2017 through pop-up meetings at the Central Park Atrium in Woodbury and the Park Grove Library in Cottage Grove. These meetings allowed for more in-depth, one on one conversations than the open houses. The County received positive feedback that was incorporated into the master plan.

Several themes came out during the engagement process. They included prioritizing connections to local trails and destinations, providing a safe route with minimal driveway crossings, and minimizing adjacent property impacts. A summary of comments and responses can be found in the master plan.

Public Awareness

Washington County promotes its parks and trails through public relations, marketing, and media tools such as a website, event planning, press releases, and promotional materials. Washington County also collaborates with a wide array of community, business, and government organizations to promote their facilities, programs, and services and to educate the public about the available resources. Washington County also provides park and trail information on its website. This includes programs and events,

permits, reservations, and opportunities to donate or volunteer. The County also uses Facebook and Twitter to share news and information.

Accessibility

Washington County is committed to providing access and recreational opportunities to all people including persons with disabilities, minorities, and other special-population groups. All regional trail facilities described in the master plan will be developed in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and guidelines. The regional trail will adhere to the Minnesota Bikeway Facility Design Manual (MnDOT 2007); Trail Planning and Development Guidelines (MnDNR 2007); Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access Part I and II: Best Practices Design Guide (FHWA); and ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (U.S. Access Board) unless more current guidelines and standards exist at the time of development.

Regional Trails in Washington County are free to use and provide recreational opportunities to residents of all income levels. The County does not charge park access fees for individuals who walk or bicycle into regional parks. As a result, the Central Greenway Regional Trail will provide trail users with free access to Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park.

Review by Other Council Divisions

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

Metro Transit (Steve Mahowald 612-349-7775) – No Comments

Transportation Planning (Steve Elmer 651-602-1756) – Washington County should add the following language to the plan. “The planned project segment of this proposed regional trail alignment follows the center line of a Regional Bicycle Transportation Network Tier 2 corridor throughout its length (along Woodbury Drive/Keats Avenue between I-94 and Cottage Grove Ravine Reg Park). Thus, this should be the proposed alignment for the RBTN corridor for inclusion in the Transportation Policy Plan update (2018), making it fully eligible for the Council’s Regional Solicitation for federal transportation funds.” – This comment has since been addressed in the Master Plan.

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig 651-602-1119) - The construction of any new or updating of existing trails may have an impact on Metropolitan Council Interceptor 9701 which runs along Keats Avenue South/Woodbury Drive/County Road 19 right-of-way. This interceptor was built in 2003 and is a 54 inch Reinforced Concrete Pipe at a depth of approximately 30 feet. To assess the potential impacts to our interceptor system, prior to initiating any proposed project, preliminary plans should be sent to Scott Dentz, Interceptor Engineering Manager (651-602-4503) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review and comment.

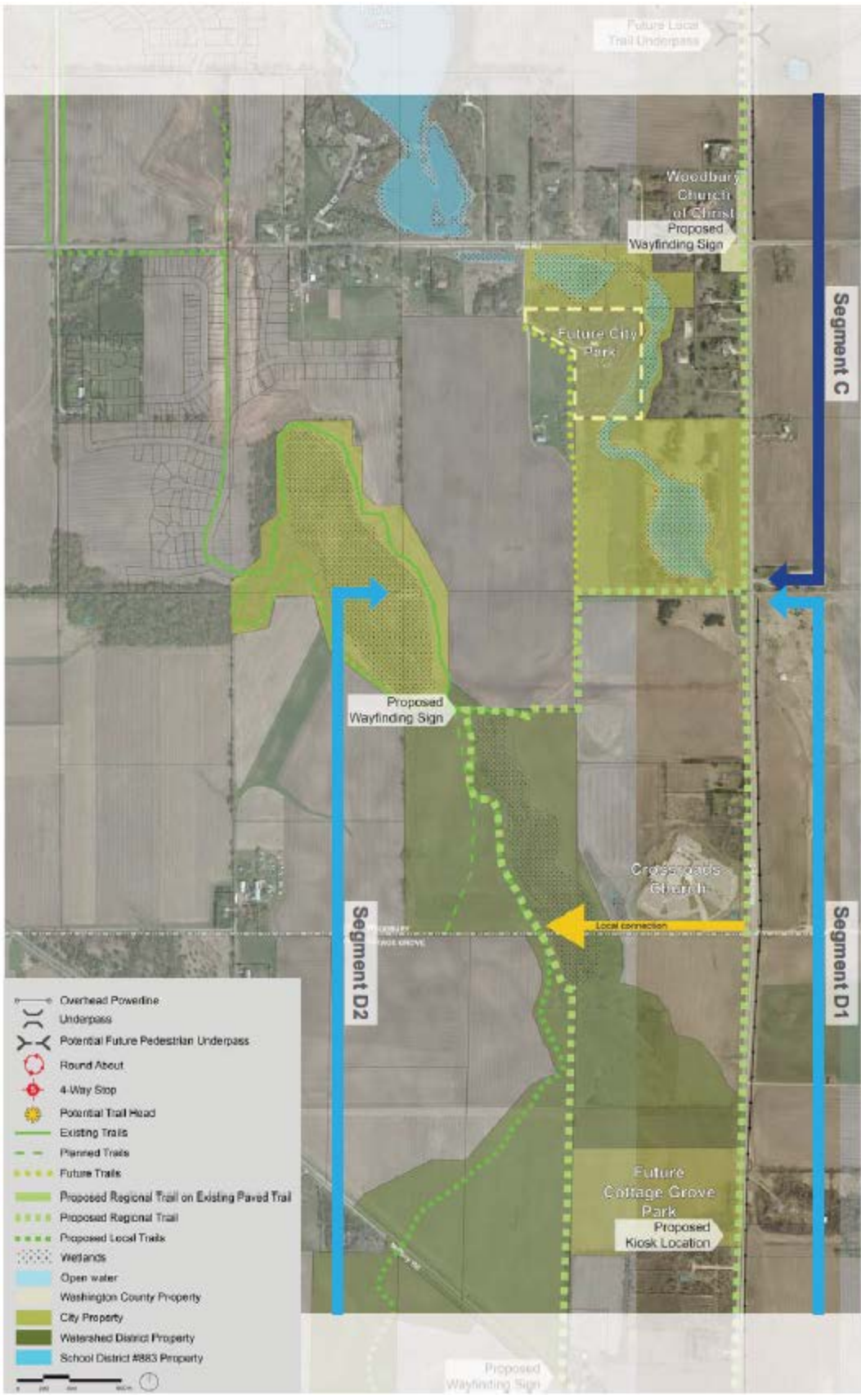
Local Planning Assistance (Patrick Boylan 651-602-1438) – No Comments

Appendix A: Planned Regional Trail Corridor Maps













Appendix B: Detailed Cost Estimate

Estimated Project Construction Cost	Estimated Quantity	Unit of Measurement	Estimated Unit Cost	Estimated Total Cost	Notes
North Segment (I-94 to Bailey Road)					
Existing 8' Trail Removal	3,200	Lin Ft	\$16.00	\$51,200	
Trail Construction	3,200	Lin Ft	\$90.00	\$288,000	
Pedestrian Ramps	9	Each	\$2,000.00	\$18,000	
Wayfinding Directional Signage	7	Each	\$4,000.00	\$28,000	
Wayfinding Kiosk	2	Each	\$20,000.00	\$40,000	
Rest Stops	1	Each	\$6,000.00	\$6,000	
Traffic Control Signs and Devices (includes MUTCD signage)	21,120	Lin Ft	\$1.00	\$21,120	
			North Segment Total	\$452,000	
South Segment (Bailey Road to Ravine Park Entrance)					
Existing 8' Trail Removal	5,230	Lin Ft	\$16.00	\$83,680	3
Trail Construction	27,700	Lin Ft	\$90.00	\$2,493,000	5
Wayfinding Directional Signage	4	Each	\$4,000.00	\$16,000	10
Wayfinding Kiosk	3	Each	\$20,000.00	\$60,000	
Rest Stops	1	Each	\$6,000.00	\$6,000	
Traffic Control Signs and Devices (includes MUTCD signage)	30,000	Lin Ft	\$1.50	\$45,000	
Pairie and Pollinator Habitat Planting	14	Acres	\$6,000.00	\$81,000	8
			South Segment Total	\$2,785,000	
Trail Underpasses					
Underpass north of Valley Creek Road (Improvements)	1	Lump Sum	\$450,000.00	\$450,000	9
Underpass at 85th Street South (New Structure)	1	Lump Sum	\$900,000.00	\$900,000	9
Underpass at future Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park entrance (south of 90th Street South) (New Structure)	1	Lump Sum	\$900,000.00	\$900,000	9
			Underpasses Total	\$2,250,000	
Subtotal Construction Cost Estimate				\$5,487,000	
20% Construction Contingency				\$1,097,000	
Subtotal Construction Cost Estimate with Construction Contingency				\$6,584,000	
20% Design and Engineering Contingency				\$1,317,000	
Total Estimated Construction Cost				\$7,901,000	

Future Property Acquisitions (2017 tax assessed values)	Acres	Cost
Acquisition Area A	0.25	\$20,000.00
Acquisition Area B	4.25	\$164,000.00
Acquisition Area C	0.6	\$11,500.00
Acquisition Area D	2	\$275,000.00
Total Anticipated Acquisition Cost in 2017 Dollars	7.1	\$470,500.00

Area B is located in the alternative trail alignment (Segment D2). It is not included in the acquisition total on page 1 of this document.

D2 Segment					
Trail Construction	8,500	Lin Ft	\$90.00	\$765,000	
Traffic Control Signs and Devices (includes MUTCD signage)	8,500	Lin Ft	\$1.00	\$8,500	
Wayfinding Directional Signage	2	Each	\$4,000.00	\$8,000	
			D2 Segment Total	\$782,000	
20% Construction Contingency for D2 Segment				\$156,400	
20% Design and Engineering Contingency for D2 Segment				\$156,400	
			Total Estimated Cost for D2 Segment	\$1,094,800	

Estimated Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs	Estimated Cost	Notes
Equipment Costs	\$7,100	11
Staff Wages	\$8,900	12
Total Estimated Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs	\$16,000	