

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: January 2, 2018

For the Community Development Committee meeting of January 16, 2018

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of January 24, 2018

Subject: Robert Piram Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment, Saint Paul

District(s), Member(s): District G, Anthony Taylor

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 Planning

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Robert Piram Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment.
2. Require Saint Paul to submit estimated development costs related to the overpass of Barge Channel Road to the Metropolitan Council for review and approval prior to seeking grants for its development.
3. Require that Saint Paul, prior to initiating development of the regional trail, send preliminary plans to Scott Dentz, Interceptor Engineering Manager at Metropolitan Council Environmental Services, for review in order to assess the potential impacts to the regional interceptor system.

Background

Saint Paul has submitted a master plan amendment for the Robert Piram Regional Trail, formerly named the Harriet Island-South St. Paul Regional Trail. When complete, the regional trail will travel 3.4 miles and connect Lilydale-Harriet Island Regional Park in Saint Paul to the River to River Greenway and Mississippi River Regional Trails at Kaposia Landing in South St. Paul. The regional trail will complete an important gap in the system and make connections to existing and planned trails that lead to downtown Saint Paul and Hastings along the Mississippi River, and Burnsville along the Minnesota River. The Metropolitan Council approved the current master plan for the regional trail in April 2016.

The primary purpose of the master plan amendment is to change a portion of the original trail alignment which located the trail on a flood control levee adjacent to the Saint Paul Downtown Airport. This alignment was determined to be unfeasible due to levee structural limitations, airport runway related constraints, and railroad crossings. The trail corridor will now parallel East Lafayette Frontage Road between Plato Boulevard and Eaton Street. The amendment also includes future easement locations along Plato Boulevard and East Lafayette Frontage Road. Additionally, the amendment changes the name of the regional trail from the Harriet Island-South St. Paul Regional Trail to the Robert Piram Regional Trail in honor Mr. Piram's 28 years as the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department Superintendent/Director.

Rationale

The Robert Piram Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment is consistent with the requirements of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* including Planning Strategy

1, which outlines the requirements for regional trail master plans. Also, the master plan is consistent with other Council policies.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The Robert Piram Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment 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 \$9,457,078, which includes \$772,932 for land acquisition and \$8,684,146 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. The Council may award future funding based on this master plan 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 project list, and specific grants to Saint Paul.

Known Support / Opposition

The Saint Paul City Council adopted the master plan amendment on December 13, 2017. The original master plan included resolutions of support from Dakota County and the City of South St. Paul as well as letters of support from the Metropolitan Airports Commission, Minnesota Department of Transportation, and Saint Paul Port Authority. There is no known opposition to the master plan amendment.

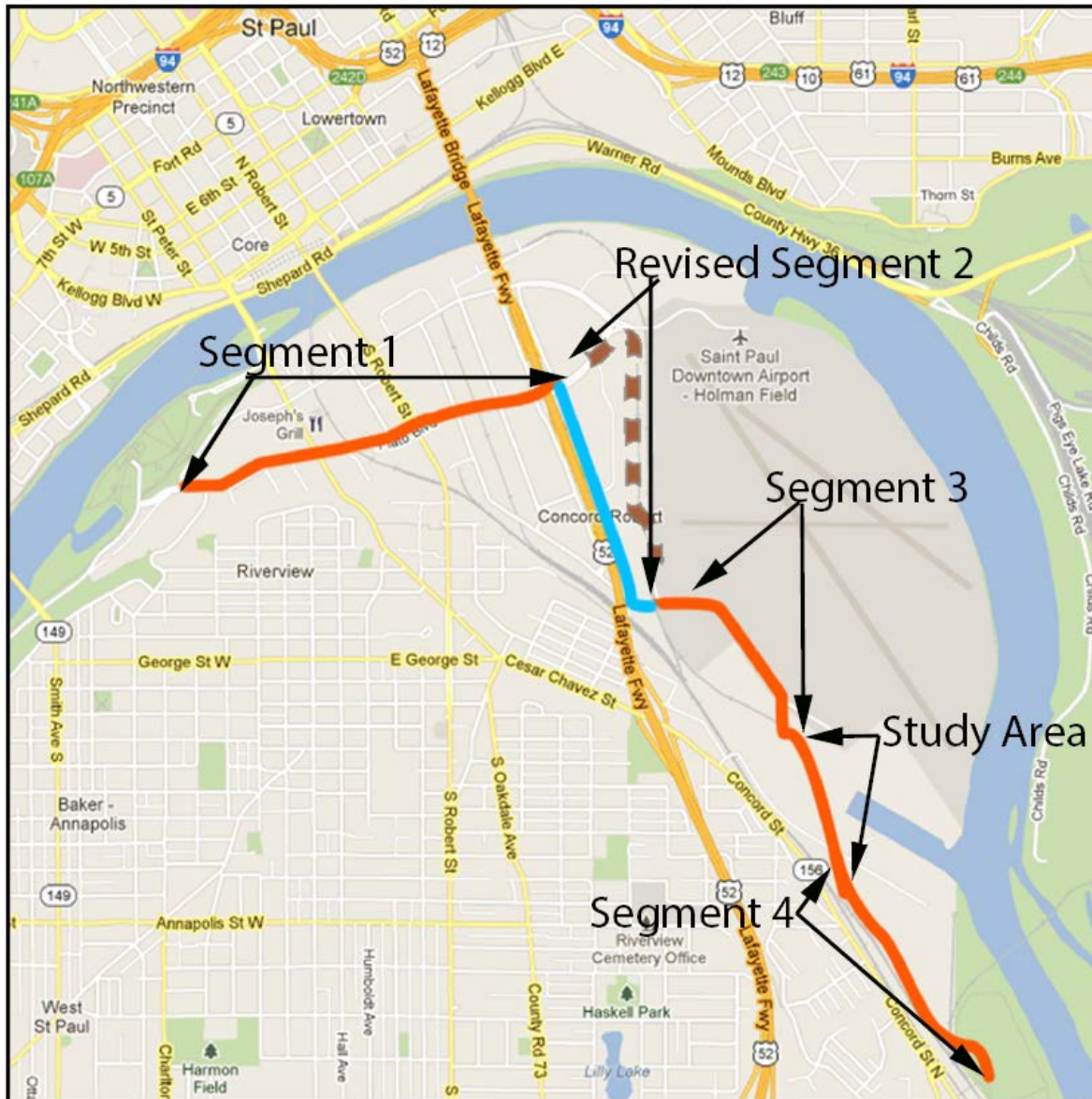
Analysis

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

The Robert Pira Regional Trail will travel 3.4 miles between Lilydale-Harriet Island Regional Park in Saint Paul and Kaposia Landing, a local park in South St. Paul. Within Kaposia Landing Park, connections will be made to the River to River Greenway and Mississippi River Regional Trails, which are both operated by Dakota County. For planning purposes, this trail has been divided into four segments. Figure 1 shows the alignment of the regional trail with the four segments labeled. Additionally, Appendix A contains a table with additional acquisition information.

Figure 1: Robert Pira Regional Trail Route



Segment 1

Segment 1 of the regional trail travels from existing trails within Lilydale-Harriet Island Regional Park east along Plato Boulevard to Chester Street. The master plan did not originally anticipate land acquisitions in this section. The amendment now calls for three small easements to correct existing

right-of-way anomalies. A larger easement on a fourth parcel will be required at Plato Boulevard and Starkey Street to allow for an acceptable crossing of Union Pacific railroad tracks.

Segment 2

The original planned alignment for segment 2 used the right-of-way on the flood control levee bordering the Saint Paul Downtown Airport, which is shown by the dotted brown line in Figure 1. This was determined to be unworkable due to a combination of disallowed railroad crossings, levee structural limitations, and airport runway related constraints. The new alignment for this section now parallels East Lafayette Frontage Road and is shown by the blue line in Figure 1. Near the south end of this segment, easements ranging from 160-817 feet long and 15-20 feet wide affecting 8 parcels will be needed.

Segment 3

The realigned trail returns to the original alignment at the intersection of East Lafayette Frontage Road and Eaton Street where it will follow Eaton Street and utilize an easement from the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC). No acquisition costs are anticipated for the easement from the MAC.

The remaining property utilized by Segment 3 is owned by the Saint Paul Port Authority (SPPA) and Union Pacific Railroad. The City is working to establish temporary easements with both the SPPA and Union Pacific until an overpass structure can be constructed in the area.

Segment 4

Segment 4 is located in the City of South St. Paul. The trail will parallel existing right-of-way and will require the crossing of several railroad tracks as it enters into Kaposia Landing Park. A bicycle/pedestrian bridge over the tracks has been proposed.

The total estimated acquisition cost for the regional trail is \$772,932. A table containing detail acquisition information can be found in *Appendix A*.

Demand Forecast

To demonstrate demand for the regional trail, the master plan cites the Metropolitan Council's 2008 *Regional Parks and Trails Survey*, which indicates that walking/hiking and bicycling are rated as the top activities for regional parks system visitors. Also noted is information from the Minnesota Department of Transportation that in 2000, more than 10,000 people biked to work in the Twin Cities, and that number has increased substantially in subsequent years. The completion of key trail connections, including the Robert Pira Regional Trail, will provide additional opportunities for these activities.

The regional trail will facilitate connections to several popular regional parks and trails in Saint Paul and Dakota County and will become an important part of the overall trail network. The north end of the regional trail will connect to Lilydale-Harriet Island Regional Park, which had 559,800 visits in 2016. From existing trails in Lilydale-Harriet Island Regional Park, connections can be made to the Samuel Morgan Regional Trail in Saint Paul (539,500 visits in 2016) and to the Big Rivers Regional Trail in Dakota County (135,500 visits in 2016). At the south end of the regional trail, users can connect to the River to River Greenway Regional Trail (formerly known as the North Urban Regional Trail) and to the Mississippi River Regional Trail in Dakota County, with 87,600 and 148,400 visits in 2016, respectively. With these key regional connections, use of the Robert Pira Regional Trail is anticipated to be strong.

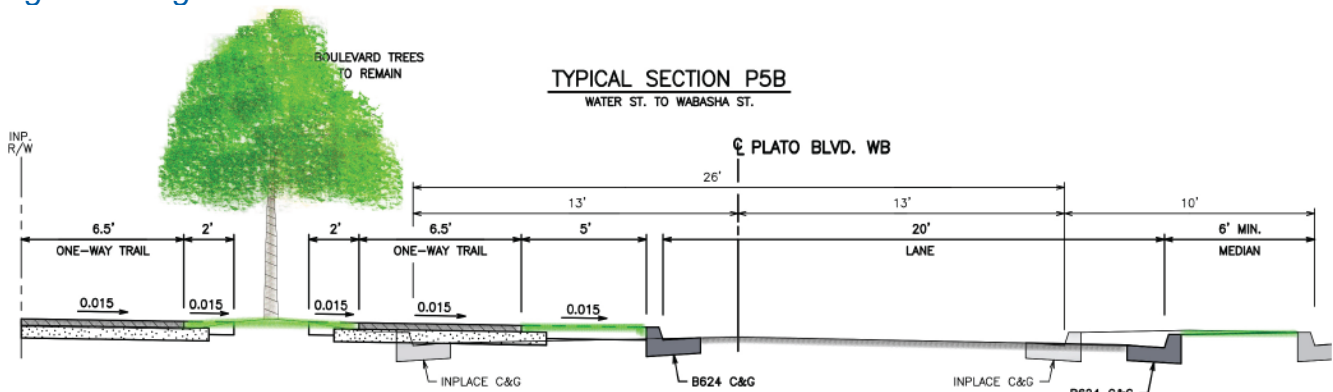
Development Concept

As described in the Boundaries and Acquisition section, the trail has been divided into four segments for planning purposes.

Segment 1

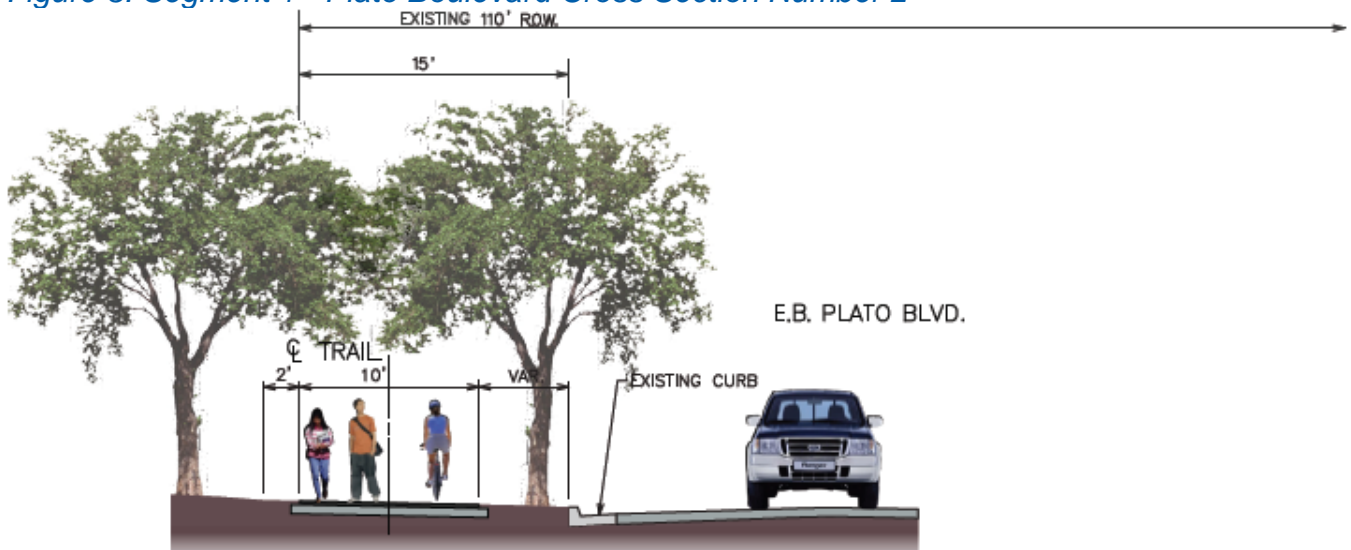
Segment 1 will primarily use existing right-of-way along Plato Boulevard, which will require modifications to the existing road lanes at some portions of the segment. Where there is sufficient space, it may be necessary to narrow the median and shift the north curb. *Figure 2* shows a cross section of the trail with separated bicycle and pedestrian trails located along the westbound right-of-way along Plato Avenue. Prompted by low traffic counts and the goal of preserving mature trees, the westbound road segment between Water Street and Wabasha Street will be narrowed to accommodate the trail.

Figure 2: Segment 1 - Plato Boulevard Cross Section Number 1



Other portions of the trail along Plato Boulevard will require different configuration strategies, with the intent to preserve existing boulevard trees as much as possible. Options for the trail alignment will depend on specific conditions along each block of Plato Boulevard. *Figure 3* shows cross section of a second trail alignment possibility along Plato Boulevard and includes a shared use trail.

Figure 3: Segment 1 - Plato Boulevard Cross Section Number 2

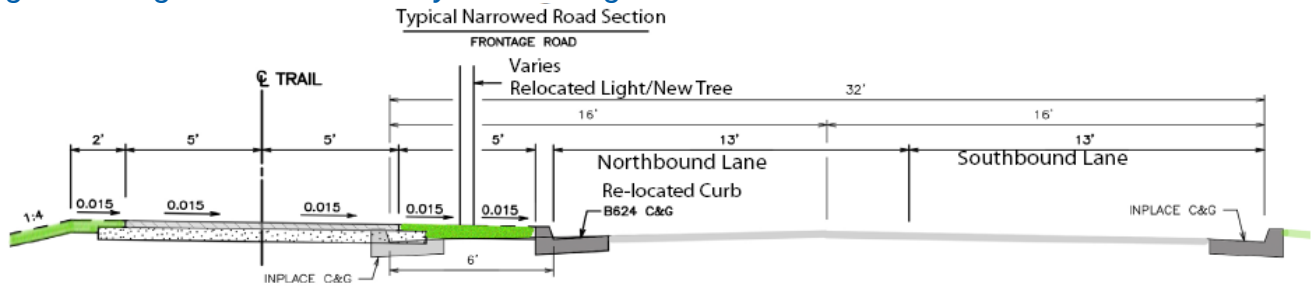


Segment 2

As preliminary engineering efforts began and conversations with airport officials continued, it became clear that the original trail alignment located on the airport levee would not be feasible. In order to

complete an off-road trail connection through this section, an alignment paralleling East Lafayette Frontage Road was selected. A portion of the road will be narrowed to provide additional right-of-way for the trail and to minimize disruption for adjacent property owners. *Figure 4* depicts a trail cross section along East Lafayette Frontage Road.

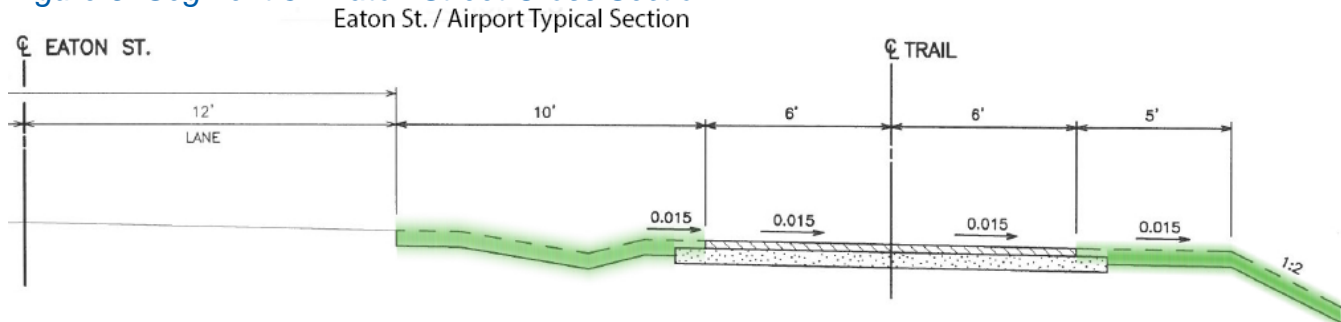
Figure 4: Segment 2 - East Lafayette Frontage Road



Segment 3

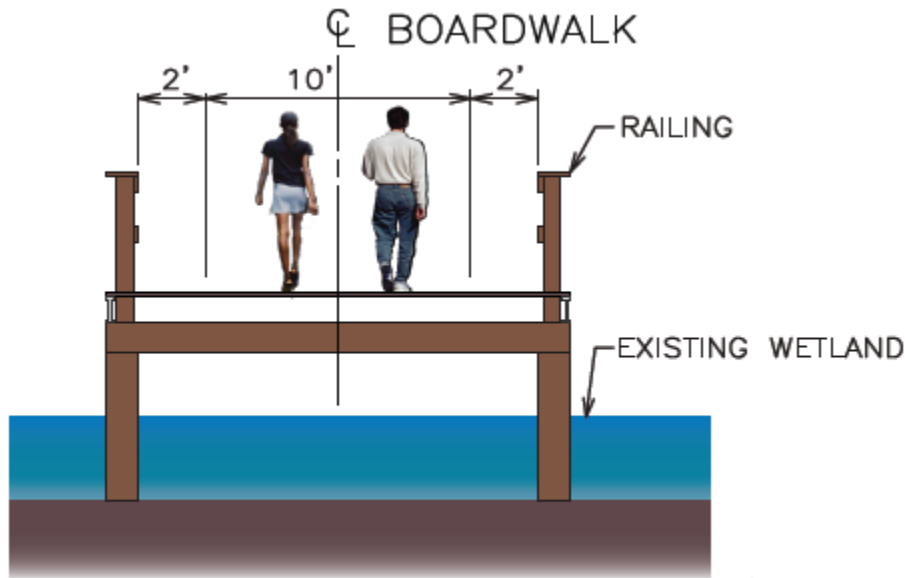
Beginning at the intersection of East Lafayette Frontage Road and Eaton Street, the revised alignment returns to the originally proposed route along the south side of Eaton Street where the trail will utilize MAC property. *Figure 5* depicts a trail cross section along Eaton Street.

Figure 5: Segment 3 - Eaton Street Cross Section



After the trail leaves MAC property, it will be located on Saint Paul Port Authority land as it passes through the Barge Channel Road/Southport business area. A short segment of the trail will require a boardwalk crossing of wetlands that are also owned by the Port Authority. The boardwalk will be constructed to meet safety standards and minimize, eliminate, or mitigate wetland impacts. Design and construction of the boardwalk will comply with applicable wetland laws and regulations and will be coordinated with the Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization, which is the responsible permitting agency. *Figure 6* shows a cross section of the boardwalk.

Figure 6: Segment 3 - Boardwalk Cross Section



Due to changes in operational conditions of adjacent businesses, Barge Channel Road has seen an increase in truck traffic and the development of a new adjacent rail spur. This has changed the original design parameters and the feasibility of creating an at-grade crossing of Barge Channel Road using the existing trail easement. This area is described as a “Study Area” in *Figure 1*. At this time, a temporary at-grade crossing of Barge Channel Road is proposed with the goal being a future overpass of the area. The master plan amendment did not include estimated costs for the future overpass. Therefore, prior to seeking grants for the overpass, the City must submit estimated development costs to the Metropolitan Council for review and approval.

Segment 4

Segment 4 is located in the City of South St. Paul in Dakota County. The trail will parallel existing right-of-way and will require the crossing of several railroad tracks as it enters into Kaposia Landing Park. A bicycle/pedestrian bridge over the tracks has been proposed. Dakota County is committed to working with Saint Paul on the completion of the trail segment within their jurisdiction.

Wayfinding and interpretive signage will be provided along the regional trail route. Near the trail junction at Lilydale-Harriet Island Regional Park, there is an existing informational kiosk that will be updated to include maps and other information about the Robert Pira Regional Trail and its connections to other local and regional facilities. Other wayfinding signage locations will be determined during the detail design process, but will generally be located at key intersections along the route. *Appendix B* includes a map of the regional trail (shown in yellow), the key local and regional trail connections (shown in red) and the general location of wayfinding signage (shown by the blue and yellow dots).

Total estimated development costs for all four segments of the Robert Pira Regional Trail are \$8.6 million. A detailed project cost estimate can be seen in *Appendix C*.

Conflicts

The master plan describes several collaboration agreements with public agencies that are needed in order to develop the regional trail and avoid potential conflicts. The agencies include:

- Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC): Construction and operation of the trail will require that MAC’s requirements regarding security, lighting and vertical obstacles are addressed in order to use its right-of-way for the trail.
- Saint Paul Public Works: Saint Paul’s Public Works department has jurisdiction and control over several aspects of the trail’s development.
- Ramsey County Public Works: Plato Boulevard is under the jurisdiction of Ramsey County.
- Saint Paul Port Authority: The Saint Paul Parks Department and Port Authority have had several conversations regarding key land and easement agreements needed along the Mississippi River, including those that support this regional trail plan. The City and Port Authority will work to ensure that the trail alignment will be safe and compatible with the Port Authority’s business development goals.
- Union Pacific: The City is meeting with Union Pacific officials to reach an agreement on possible rail crossing options near Barge Channel Road. The crossing options include an at grade crossing that may eventually be replaced by a bicycle/pedestrian bridge.

Public Services

The regional trail will not require any new non-recreational public services or facilities to serve it. Drinking water is available at Harriet Island and Kaposia Landing Park, serving both ends of the trail corridor. Additional drinking water fountains could be provided at the intersection of Airport Road and Eaton Street, where there is an existing water service main in close proximity.

Operations

The City of Saint Paul and Dakota County will cooperatively operate and maintain the portions of the regional trail that fall within its jurisdiction. Maintenance of the regional trail will include: turf maintenance, sweeping, snow removal, litter pickup and waste disposal, and annual trail and asphalt maintenance. The master plan calls for mill and overlay of the trail after 15-20 years. Existing City of Saint Paul, South St. Paul and Dakota County ordinances for usage and operations of the regional trail will apply. Due to the trail’s proximity to the Saint Paul Holman Field Airport, additional security measures will be incorporated as needed to meet Metropolitan Airport Commission and Department of Homeland Security requirements. The estimated annual maintenance costs are \$17,342 for the portion of the regional trail in Saint Paul and \$2,225 for the portion within Dakota County. Operations and maintenance costs are included in the regional park implementing agencies’ annual budgets and are supplemented with regional parks operations and maintenance funding which is administered by the Metropolitan Council and comes from the State’s general fund as well as lottery in lieu of sales tax.

Public Engagement and Participation

Public engagement for the Robert Pira Regional Trail was conducted in conjunction with the planning process for the Great River Passage, which is Saint Paul’s plan for connecting people to the Mississippi River. The planning process included a “Cultural Audit”, which consisted of onsite interviews with a variety of community residents and visitors to the riverfront. Several public meetings and community design forums were held, and a project website was established that provided opportunities for public comments. Other forms of outreach included sharing information through newspapers, library displays, and list-servs. Specific consideration was given to a gap analysis to identify access and connections for bicycle and pedestrian amenities, through which the Robert Pira Regional Trail was identified as a critical link. The regional trail was specifically addressed as part two design forums and received positive feedback, including its plans to provide connections to Dakota County.

The master plan amendment also describes a community engagement process to be undertaken during the detailed design phase for the regional trail. The process will seek wide and diverse participation from both Saint Paul and Dakota County residents and project stakeholders and will include:

- Workshops between City and County staff,
- Coordination meetings with applicable public agencies
- Coordination with railroad entities
- Public open houses in both Dakota County and Saint Paul

Project information will be communicated through newsletters in Dakota County and through websites in both Dakota County and Saint Paul.

Public Awareness

The trail is within the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA), which is one of Minnesota's national parks, so the trail will be promoted as part of the MNRRA marketing efforts of the National Park Service. The trail will also likely serve as part of the national Mississippi River Trail, and will benefit from marketing efforts of the Minnesota Department of Transportation and other groups.

At the local level, a Grand Opening celebration will be held for the regional trail. The trail will be promoted through brochures, website information, and other trail related publications that will be available at park facilities.

Accessibility

The regional trail will be designed in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' [Trail Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines](#) resource book and the Minnesota Department of Transportation's [Bicycle Facility Design Manual](#) will be used when developing accessible bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including trail surfaces, street crossings, and the bridge connection in South St. Paul. There are no charges for the use of the facility, making the trail available for all users.

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 (Russ Owen 651-602-1724) – No Comments

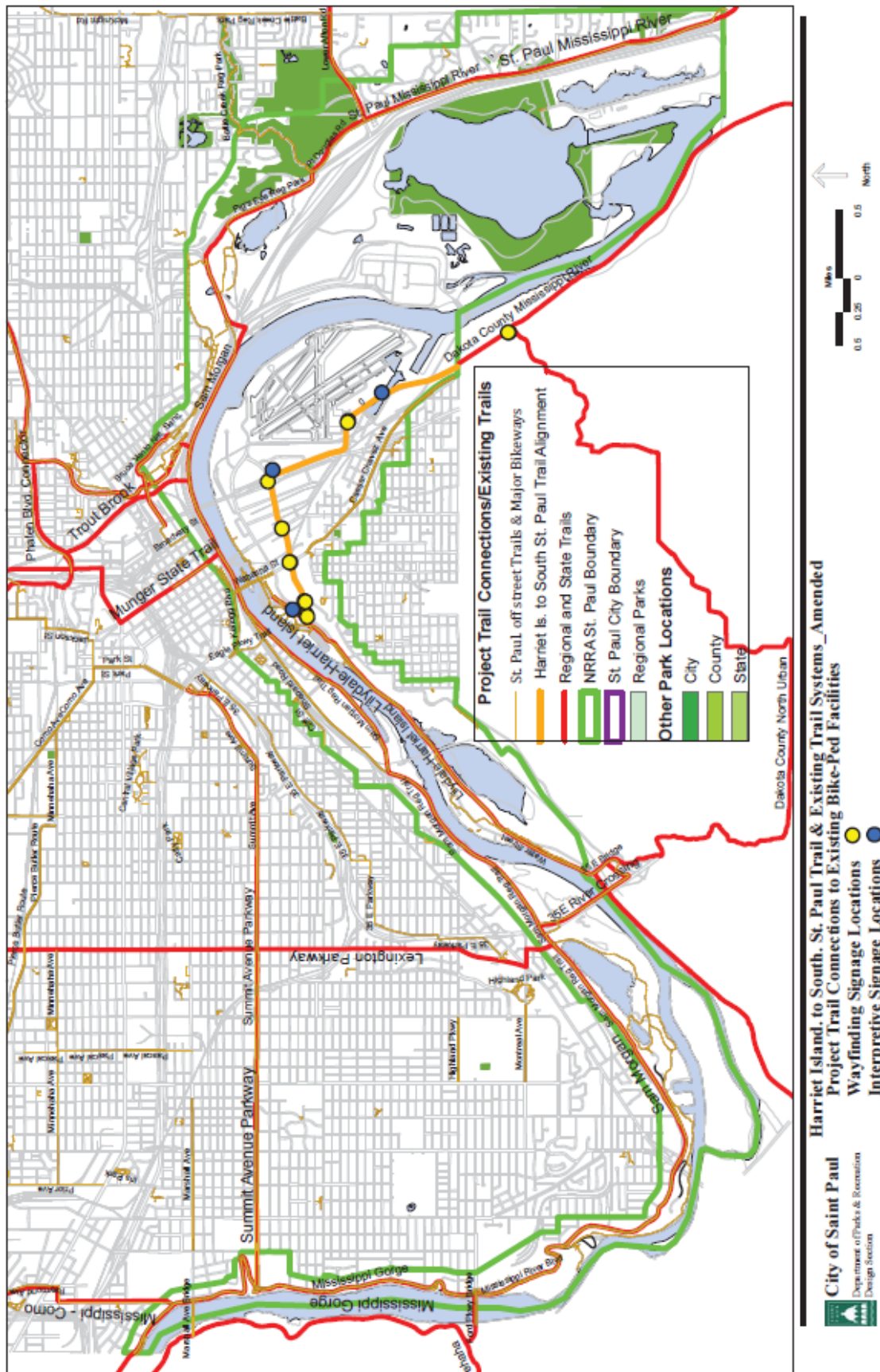
Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig 651-602-1119) - This project extends 3.7 miles through the communities of St. Paul, and South St. Paul. The construction of any new or updating of existing trails may have an impact on multiple Metropolitan Council Interceptors in multiple locations. To assess the potential impacts to our interceptor system, prior to initiating any proposed project, 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: Summary of Acquisition Costs

Summary of Anticipated Permanent Acquisition/Easement Costs-Amended				Property	Project
Property Owner	Length of Trail	Width	SF	Value (1)	Cost
City of St. Paul /Ramsey Co. (ROW)	8,000	15	120,000	N/A	\$-
Plato Blvd. Properties					
Plato Blvd. Parcel 1 (2)	202	16	3,232	\$38,784	\$38,784
Plato Blvd. Parcel 2	N/A (3)		137	\$1,644	\$1,644
Plato Blvd. Parcel 3	N/A		639	\$7,668	\$7,668
Plato Blvd. Parcel 4	N/A		171	\$2,052	\$2,052
Lafayette E. Frontage Rd. Properties					
Parcel 1	380	15.5	7,573	\$ 88,188	\$ 88,188
Parcel 2	210	15.5	3,213	\$ 38,556	\$ 38,556
Parcel 3	597	15.5	9,302	\$111,624	\$111,624
Parcel 4	280	18.5	5,181	\$ 62,172	\$ 62,172
Parcel 5	817	18.5	14,579	\$174,948	\$174,948
Parcel 6	160	18.5	4,338	\$ 52,056	\$ 52,056
Parcel 7 (4)	262	18.5	5,132	\$ 61,584	\$ 61,584
Parcel 8 (4)	232	20	4,638	\$ 55,656	\$ 55,656
Metropolitan Airports Commission (5)	1,383	15	20,754	\$248,940	\$-
Union Pacific 'Temporary' Easement (6)	150	15	1,500	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000
St. Paul Port Authority (7)	390	18	7,020	\$ 84,240	\$-
Real Estate Administration *					
Appraisal Services, Title Work, Closing Costs (8)					
Total Estimated Easement potential costs. (7)					
1 All Valuations are estimates only based on \$12/SF-typical for the given property & zoning context.					
2 Assumes Starkey Crossing Option 1					
3 Small Easements that don't correlate with a specific trail length.					
4 Final Parcel boundary limits are being brought up to date. SF Area's are subject to change.					
5 Agreement with MAC/FAA will allow trail development along road with no acquisition purchase required. See additional MAC agreement information in text.					
6 Use of rail property is dependent on Union Pacific's willingness to allow a conditional, temporary easement through an unused segment. See Text for additional discussion of conditions.					
7 A temporary Port Authority easement will be used while the rail easement is in effect or until a permanent bridge replaces it.					
8 Costs estimated to meet required legal obligations for acquisitions.					
* Assumes fees for document preparation even when there is no purchase cost for easements.					
See Appendix A20 - A36 for additional property/easement information.					

Appendix B: Trail Connection and Wayfinding Signage Map



Appendix C: Project Cost Estimate

Amended Project Cost Estimate

ROBERT PIRAM REGIONAL TRAIL 30% COST ESTIMATE		
CONSTRUCTION ITEMS ESTIMATE	SAINT PAUL TOTAL	DAKOTA COUNTY TOTAL
SITE PREPARATION	\$941,339.00	\$508,836.00
TRAIL CONSTRUCTION	\$1,486,667.50	\$365,527.50
LIGHTING, SIGNALS, SIGNAGE	\$154,045.00	\$8,192.50
LANDSCAPING (1)	\$113,300.00	\$83,200.00
RAILROAD COSTS (2)	\$250,000.00	
TRAIL CONSTRUCTION TOTAL	\$2,945,351.50	\$965,756.00
CONTINGENCY 20%	\$589,070.30	\$193,151.20
CONSTRUCTION SUB-TOTAL	\$3,534,421.80	\$1,158,907.20
BRIDGE NO. R0733 (SOUTH ST. PAUL)		\$2,800,000.00
BRIDGE NO. R0738 (BOARDWALK)	\$355,000.00	
BRIDGE NO. R0739 (BOARDWALK)	\$193,000.00	
BRIDGES TOTAL	\$548,000.00	\$2,800,000.00
CONSTRUCTION TOTAL	\$3,534,421.80	\$1,158,907.20
TOTAL TRAIL & BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION ESTIMATE	\$4,082,421.80	\$3,958,907.20
SITE AMENITIES (3)	\$495,000.00	\$147,817.00
TOTAL INCLUDING SITE AMENITIES	\$4,577,421.80	\$4,106,724.20

(1) Includes Blvd. Trees and erosion control plantings.

(2) Railroad Cost increase includes FRA recommended pedestrian signal arm installation and bike/ped. crossing control gates but do not include Railroad owner's required engineering participation.

(3) Includes Landscaping, interpretive signage, Site Furnishings, public art