

# Business Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission: June 2, 2022

Community Development Committee: June 21, 2022

For the Metropolitan Council: July 13, 2022

## Business Item: 2022-143

Luce Line, Medicine Lake, Shingle Creek, and Northeast Diagonal LRT Regional Trail Master Plans, Three Rivers Park District

<b>District(s), Member(s):</b>	District A, Monica Dillenburg District C, Cana Yang District D, Assata Brown District 1, Judy Johnson District 2, Reva Chamblis District 6, John Pacheco Jr. District 8, Abdirahman Muse
<b>Policy/Legal Reference:</b>	Minnesota Statutes § 473.313; 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan: Chapter 5, Planning Strategy 1
<b>Staff Prepared/Presented:</b>	Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst, 651-602-1361 Chee Yang, Planner, 651-602-1449
<b>Division/Department:</b>	Community Development / Regional Planning

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Luce Line Regional Trail Master Plan.
2. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Medicine Lake Regional Trail Master Plan.
3. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Shingle Creek Regional Trail Master Plan.
4. Approve Three Rivers Park District's Northeast Diagonal Regional Trail Master Plan.
5. Require Three Rivers Park District, prior to initiating any construction of new or updating of existing paths, trails, bridges, or any other construction project, to send preliminary plans to the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager.

### Background

Three Rivers Park District (Park District) submitted one regional trail plan for nine existing regional trails that currently do not have master plans. Some of the plan content is shared across all nine regional trail corridors, while other content is distinct and specific to each trail. The organization of the required plan content is discussed in the Analysis section of this report.

Council Parks staff intend to present the nine regional trail plans in two separate business items for the Council's review and approval. This business item focuses on the Luce Line, Medicine Lake, Shingle Creek, and Northeast Diagonal Regional Trails. A second, future business item will focus on Lake Independence, Lake Minnetonka LRT, Minnesota River Bluffs LRT, Cedar Lake, and

## North Cedar Lake Regional Trails.

The Luce Line Regional Trail is centrally located in the Regional Parks System (Figure 1) and the eastern part of Hennepin County (Figure 2). The existing paved regional trail is 8.8 miles long, travelling east-west along the former Electric Short Line Railroad corridor within the cities of Plymouth, Golden Valley, and Minneapolis. The trail continues west 63 miles to Winsted as the Luce Line State Trail and is operated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR). The regional trail also connects with Theodore Wirth Regional Park, Medicine Lake Regional Trail, and the planned Eagle Lake Regional Trail (Figure 3).

The Medicine Lake Regional Trail is in the northwest portion of the Regional Parks System (Figure 1) and the northern part of Hennepin County (Figure 2). The 25.6-mile existing paved trail extends south from the Mississippi River in Dayton through Maple Grove and Plymouth to the southwest corner of Medicine Lake. The regional trail provides an important north/south trail corridor for recreation and includes connections to Elm Creek Park Reserve, Fish Lake Regional Park, and Clifton French Regional Park. In addition, the regional trail provides connections with the planned West Mississippi River Regional Trail at its northern terminus, Rush Creek and Bassett Creek Regional Trails mid-route, the Luce Line, and planned Eagle Lake Regional Trails at its southern terminus (Figure 4).

The Shingle Creek Regional Trail is located centrally in the Regional Parks System (Figure 1) and the northeastern part of Hennepin County (Figure 2). The 11-mile existing paved trail runs between Rush Creek Regional Trail in Brooklyn Park to North Mississippi Regional Park in Minneapolis. The northern 8.4 miles are owned, operated, and maintained by the Park District. The southern 2.6 miles are owned, operated, and maintained by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB). This trail plan addresses the Park District portion of the trail. The regional trail corridor also connects to and follows Shingle Creek – its namesake – in southern Brooklyn Park and all of Brooklyn Center (Figure 5).

The Northeast Diagonal LRT Regional Trail is located centrally in the Regional Parks System (Figure 1) and the eastern part of Hennepin County (Figure 2). The northeast terminus of the 2-mile regional trail is in Roseville and runs southwest into St. Anthony and Minneapolis, generally along a former railroad corridor or within public right-of-way. The 700-foot trail segment in Roseville is owned by Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority and is operated by the Park District. The 1.25-mile trail segment along New Brighton Boulevard between Lowry Avenue and Broadway Street is owned and operated by MPRB. This trail plan covers the remaining 0.6-mile segment in St. Anthony between the Roseville border and Lowry Avenue, which is owned and operated by the Park District (Figure 6).

## Rationale

The Luce Line, Medicine Lake, Shingle Creek, and Northeast Diagonal Regional Trails are consistent with the requirements of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, particularly Planning Strategy 1 (Master plan requirements) and other Council policies.

## Thrive Lens Analysis

The Luce Line, Medicine Lake, Shingle Creek, and Northeast Diagonal Regional Trails advances the Thrive outcome of Livability by increasing access to nature and outdoor recreation, which enhances quality of life in the region.

## Funding

The total estimated acquisition and improvement costs for the Luce Line, Medicine Lake, Shingle Creek, and Northeast Diagonal Regional Trails is \$8,119,000. Estimated costs per trail are found in Table 1.

The total estimated operations and maintenance costs for the Luce Line, Medicine Lake, Shingle Creek, and Northeast Diagonal Regional Trails is \$229,000. Estimated costs per trail are found in Table 1.



The combined total estimated cost for the Luce Line, Medicine, Lake, Shingle Creek, and Northeast Diagonal Regional Trails is \$8,348,000.

Table 1: Total Estimated Cost for Luce Line, Medicine Lake, Shingle Creek, and Northeast Diagonal Reg. Trails

Regional Trail	Acquisition & Improvements	Operations & Maintenance
Luce Line Regional Trail	\$358,000	\$54,000
Medicine Lake Regional Trail	\$3,392,000	\$119,000
Shingle Creek Regional Trail	\$4,369,000	\$51,000
Northeast Diagonal Reg. Trail	\$0	\$5,000
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$8,119,000</b>	<b>\$229,000</b>

Figure 1. Regional Trail Locations within the Regional Parks System

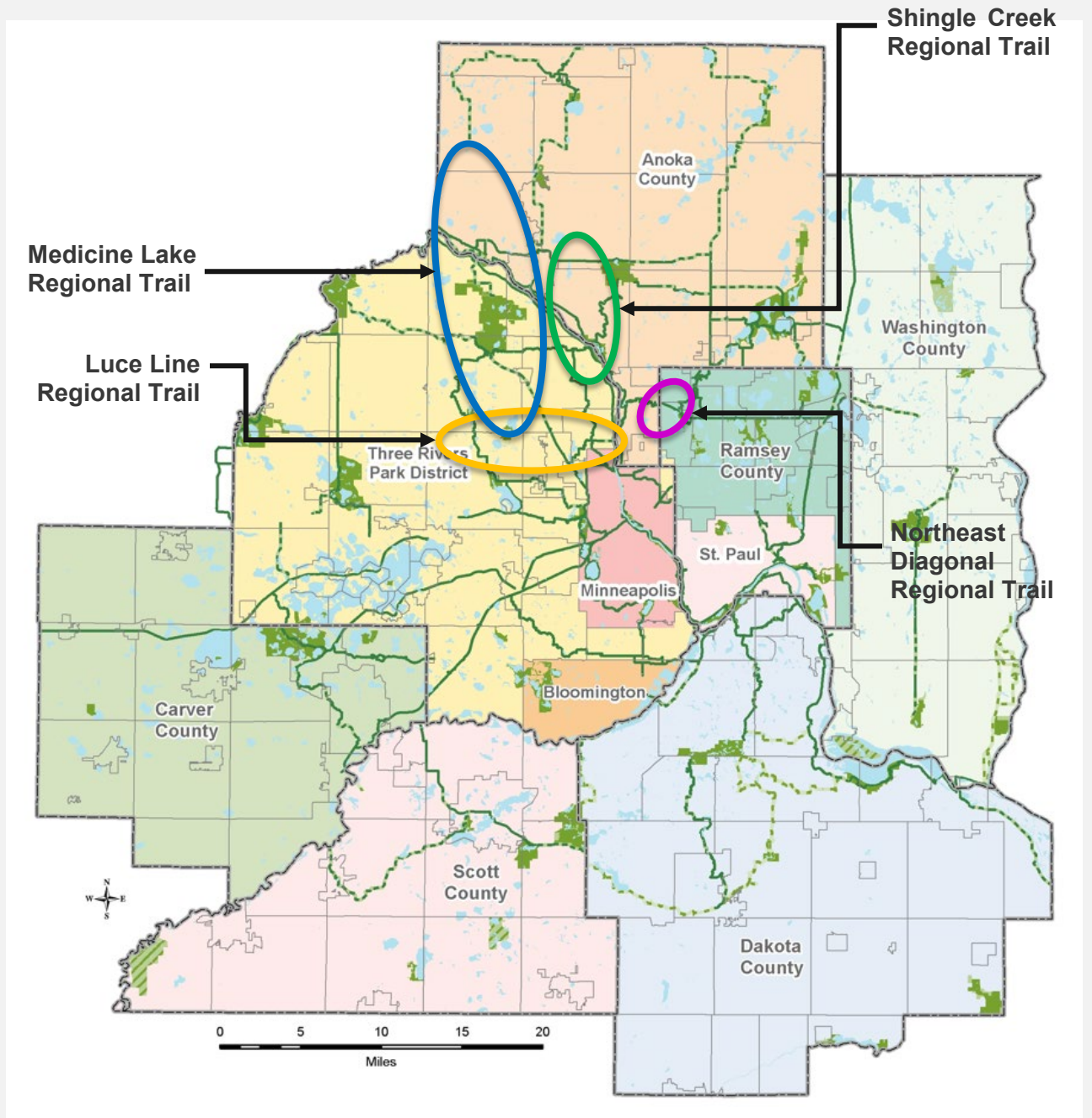


Figure 2: Regional Trails in Three Rivers Park District (MP Map 1)

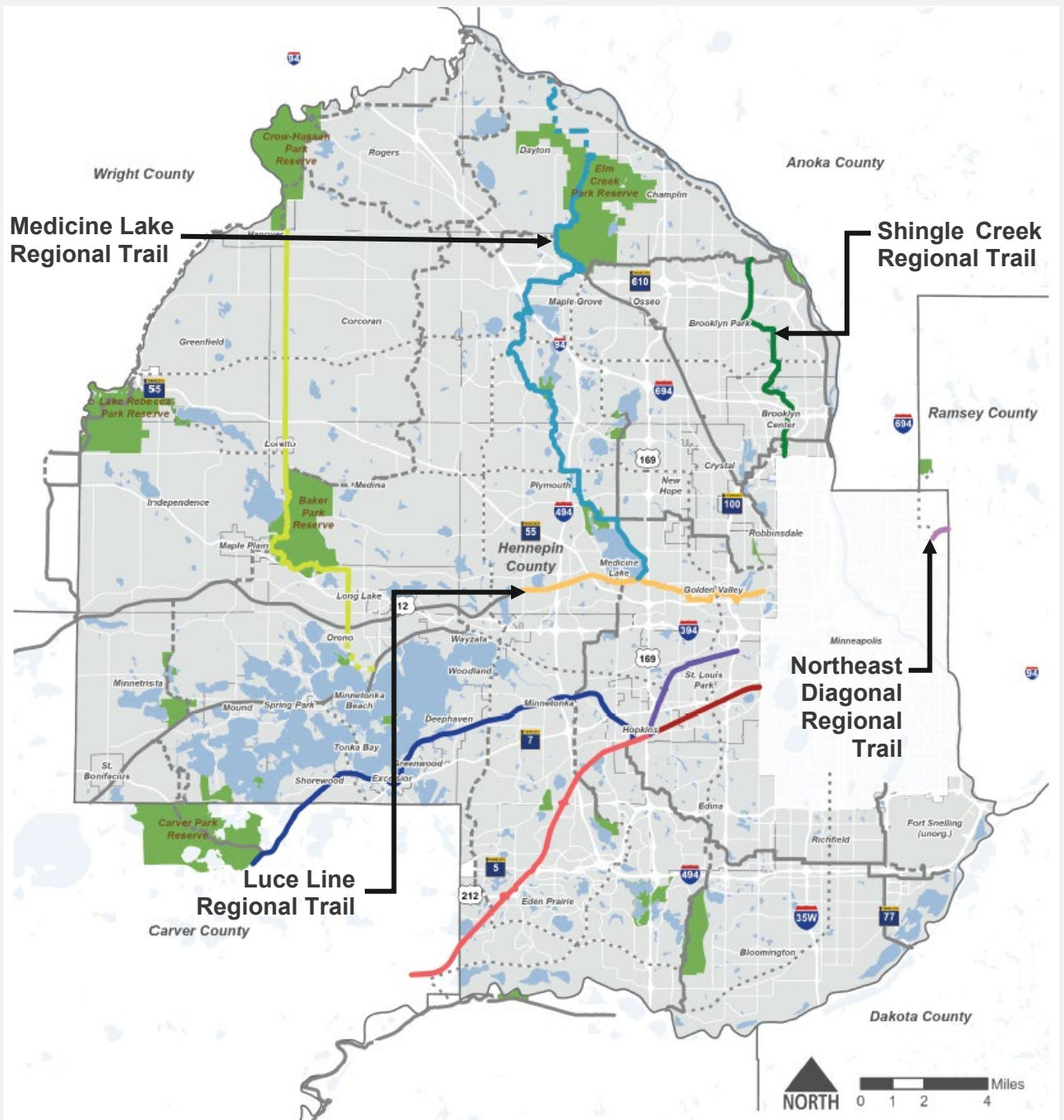
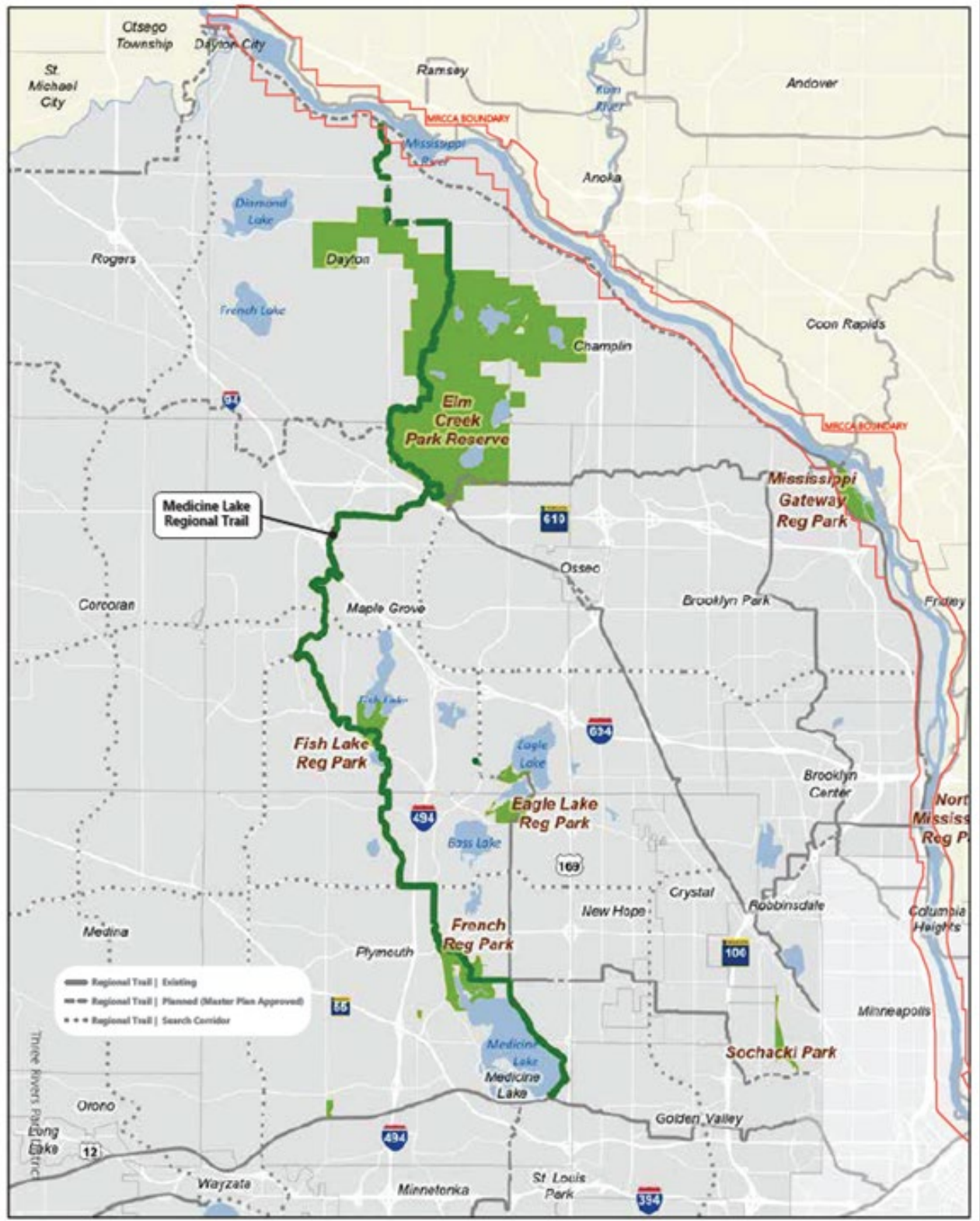


Figure 3: Luce Line Regional Trail Context Map (MP Map 84)



Figure 4: Medicine Lake Regional Trail Context Map (MP Map 104)



Metropolitan Council

Figure 5: Shingle Creek Regional Trail Context Map (MP Map 189)

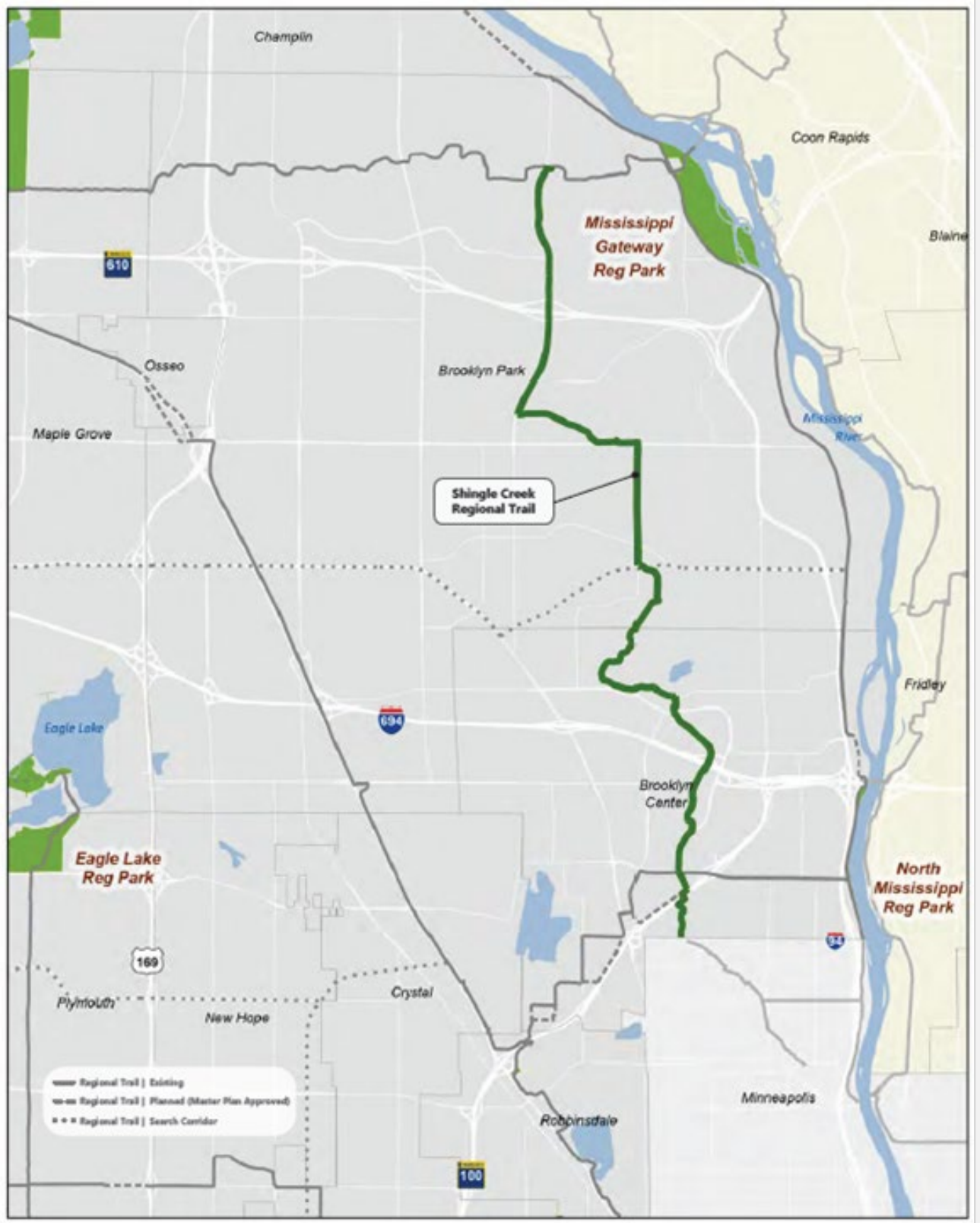


Figure 6: Northeast Diagonal LRT Regional Trail Context Map (MP Map 184)



## Analysis

Planning Strategy 1 of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan requires that master plans for regional linking trails address 13 items: boundaries, acquisition costs, demand forecast, development concept, conflicts, public services, operations, partner engagement, public engagement and participation, equity analysis, public awareness, accessibility, and Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (where applicable). For regional destination trails, master plans are required to address the 13 items stated above as well as stewardship plan and natural resources. The following analyzes the master plan against those requirements.

The Luce Line and Medicine Lake Regional Trails are considered destination trails. The Shingle Creek and Northeast Diagonal Regional Trails are considered linking trails.

The Analysis is organized by shared and distinct content for each individual regional trail. Shared content consists of information that is applicable to all the regional trails. It includes partner engagement, public engagement, equity analysis, conflicts, public services, public awareness, and accessibility.

Distinct content applies specifically to the regional trail based on its geography and location. It is organized under the Development Concept section. Distinct content includes boundaries, acquisition, demand forecast, specific equity components such as demographics, trail improvements, operations and maintenance, stewardship plan (where applicable), and natural resources (where applicable).

### Partner Engagement

This set of regional trail plans is unique because it was created for trails that are generally already constructed and open to the public. As a result, the engagement efforts and focus were conducted differently compared to new regional trail initiatives. They were centered around increasing the enjoyment, safety, comfort, and welcoming nature of the existing regional trails, especially for new users and those currently underrepresented throughout the regional trail system.





The Park District divided its engagement efforts into four categories: General Public, Existing Regional Trail Users, Underrepresented Community Members/Groups, and Cities & Public Agencies. This portion of the Analysis focuses on cities and public agencies.

The Park District engaged the cities that the various regional trails travel through to support the planning process and to coordinate acquisition, implementation, operations, and maintenance activities. For the purposes of this business item and the four regional trails, this analysis includes the cities of Medicine Lake, Plymouth, Golden Valley, Dayton, Maple Grove, Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, and St. Anthony.

The Park District defines public agencies as those in which the trail is proposed to impact their facilities or land and like cities, their support and coordination is desired. For the purposes of the trails included in this business item, this includes the Minnesota Department of Transportation, MnDNR, and Hennepin County.

During the regional trail planning process, engagement efforts for cities and public agencies generally stayed at the staff level as the regional trails already exist, and trail implementation challenges and opportunities are well known to staff.

Phase 1 of the partner and public engagement process focused on working closely with local city and agency partners to better understand the performance of the existing regional trails in their communities, including their concerns, opportunities, and recommendations for them moving forward. Phase 1 worked in collaboration with the community partners to understand and consider their perspectives during the analysis and decision-making processes.

Phase 2 focused on engaging members of the public, underrepresented community members, and existing regional trail users. More information on this engagement is found in the next two sections of the Analysis: Public Engagement and Equity Analysis.

Phase 3 reengaged partners and focused on obtaining additional feedback from partners, keeping them informed of decisions and how their feedback was considered during the process. Phase 3 included sharing draft plan text and graphics with affected cities and agencies and encouraging their review and comment. This was primarily done via email. Each partner was given several weeks to review the applicable material.

The focus of Phase 4 was obtaining feedback from community members and partners and keeping them informed of decisions and how their feedback was considered during the process. As a result of this engagement, the City of Plymouth provided a letter of support relating to the Luce Line and Medicine Lake regional trails. (Attachment 1). The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority also provided a letter of support for the Northeast Diagonal Regional Trail (Attachment 2), as well as other regional trails that will be discussed in a future business item.

General themes of partner review included adding more local connections, adding more trailheads and amenities, and adding more wayfinding.

### ***Public Engagement***

In addition to gathering information from events and opportunities tied specifically to the regional trail planning process, relevant information from other recent planning and engagement initiatives was used to ensure the recommendations help foster more equitable access and use of the regional trails.

The goals of the public engagement were:

1. Engage all interested and affected parties.
2. Make engagement easy, convenient, interactive, thoughtful, and valuable to all parties.
3. Focus engagement on improving the safety, comfort, and use of the regional trail for all users, especially new users and groups who are currently underrepresented.
4. Develop/expand relationships and partnerships with local communities, affected public agencies and community groups.
5. Mitigate existing racial, ethnic, cultural, or linguistic barriers and include people of diverse ages, races, ethnicities, incomes, national origins, and abilities.

As referenced above, the Park District divided its engagement efforts into four categories: General Public, Existing Regional Trail Users, Underrepresented Community Members/Groups, and Cities & Public Agencies. This portion of the Analysis focuses on the general public and existing regional trail users. Underrepresented community members and groups is the focus of the next section in the Analysis.

The general public represents the full range of potential trail users – and includes people of all ages, abilities, races, ethnicity, income levels and more which generally live or spend time within the defined service area. This category includes everyone who is intended to benefit from the project. It includes both existing and non-trail users as well as property owners, renters, and visitors.

Engagement efforts with this group focus on increasing awareness, understanding barriers, and obtaining more broad, general feedback on preferences and recommendations.

Existing regional trail users tend to skew toward adults over 35 years of age, community members from households with an annual income of \$75,000 or greater, and White adults. Typically, this group has a higher level of comfort on the trails than non-trail users; greater trail awareness; access to gear and equipment; knowledge of the wayfinding system; and locations of parking, drinking water, bathrooms, and rest areas. Taking this into consideration, engagement efforts with this group often focus on identifying specific locations for improvements (i.e., specific trail crossings, missing wayfinding signage or desired local connection) and expansion.

As referenced above, Phase 2 of the engagement process focused on engaging members of the public, underrepresented community members, and existing regional trail users. This phase used several engagement strategies to ensure all three targeted groups were easily reached and provided an opportunity to participate. General public engagement opportunities most relevant to the four regional trails included a wiki map and several events in local communities including Earle Brown Days (Brooklyn Center), Tater Daze (Brooklyn Park), and Tour de Tonka (Minnetonka). Approximately 75 people were engaged through these methods.

As a result of feedback received during these events, several improvements were incorporated into the regional trail plans including trail realignments, reconstruction, and paving; and enhanced wayfinding, including where water is publicly available.

Existing regional trail user engagement opportunities most relevant to the four regional trails included pop up “tabling” events on the Luce Line, Medicine Lake, and Shingle Creek regional trails. 75 people were engaged via these pop-up events.

As a result of feedback received during these events, several improvements were incorporated into the regional trail plans including enhanced wayfinding and the addition of trailside amenities, like benches, garbage cans and bike repair stations.

The general public, regional trail users, underrepresented community members and partners were welcome to review and provide comments on the draft regional trail plan over a 30-day comment period from February 23 to March 25, 2022. The Park District shared this opportunity through several methods including a press release, social media posts, Park District list serves, and a news item on the Park District website. The plan was available online, at local public venues (i.e., libraries, city halls, and nearby Park District facilities) and shared via email to identified partners and others upon request.

The Park District identified general themes that emerged during the 30-day comment period. Some of those themes included design standards, wayfinding, amenities, local connections, intersection improvements, map accessibility, trail etiquette, sustainability, drainage, and winter maintenance.

### ***Equity Analysis***

#### ***Project Data***

The engagement efforts were geographically focused on those areas that would be most likely to benefit the regional trail(s). In accordance with the Park District’s research findings and its 2040 System Plan, 50% of visits are anticipated to originate from 1.5 miles of a regional trail (a.k.a. core



service area) and 75% of visits are anticipated to originate from within 3 miles of a regional trail (a.k.a. primary service area). Therefore, the Park District's engagement efforts are generally focused on reaching and engaging community members that live or spend time within these service areas.

Underrepresented community members or groups are those who are not using the regional trails to the extent which is expected given their percentage of the overall population, and those who were historically left out of park and trail planning processes. Since this varies from one regional trail to another, underrepresented community groups for the regional trails in this plan were considered throughout engagement efforts. Demographic information and engagement specific to individual trail corridors may be found in the Development Concept section of the Analysis.

The Park District identified the following groups as underrepresented on at least one of the regional trails included in the plan: Elementary school-aged youth and younger, Seniors over 75 years old, Black adults, Latinx persons, Women, and Households with an annual income under \$75,000.

The scope of the regional trail plans focused on identifying infrastructure investments that would increase the safety and inclusion of underrepresented community groups since the regional trails are already in place. Significant trail reroutes or expansions were generally outside the scope of the regional trail plans.

The engagement efforts for this group focused primarily on building awareness, understanding barriers, and identifying infrastructure improvements that help create a more inviting and comfortable user experience.

### Public Engagement

As referenced above, Phase 2 of the engagement process focused on engaging members of the public, underrepresented community members and existing regional trail users. This phase utilized several engagement strategies to ensure all three targeted groups were easily reached and provided an opportunity to participate. In addition, other recent engagement and research work focusing on better understanding regional trail use, preferences, barriers, and recommendations were used when their findings were directly relevant.

In addition to tabling at events in local communities (e.g., Earle Brown Days, Tater Daze), the Park District drew on feedback shared through other planning and research efforts including a virtual listening session with senior women's Nordic walking groups, bike tours at the Hispanic Heritage Celebration, and a resident meeting at the Dayton Mobile Park. Senior and low-income residents of the Boardwalk Apartments in Wayzata were also sent a mailing inviting them to provide feedback at the project website and complete a questionnaire regarding trails. Over 140 people were engaged through these methods.

The Park District noted that the engagement occurring in Phases 2, 3, and 4 of this regional trail planning process aligned with the "Consult" level of public participation, as defined by the International Association for Public Participation. The Consult level means "to obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions."

Participants shared that they prefer trails that accommodate physical needs (i.e., smooth pavement, wide boulevards, access to restrooms) and appreciate park-like settings along the route. Some people requested more-user friendly wayfinding, to include QR code signs, loops, and accessible maps. Other participants noted they would prefer additional facilities such as bathrooms and water fountains along the way. Virtually all respondents noted that safety is a top priority.

### Evaluation Summary

Many of the improvements included in the regional trail plans reflect the values and needs of the underrepresented community members who participated in Park District planning processes. Examples include Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements, trail surface maintenance and reconstruction (where needed), pedestrian bridge improvements, and providing additional rest

stops and wayfinding. The plans also note the Park District is very supportive of local trail connections and that it works closely with local communities to connect their local trails to the regional system.

The Park District recognizes that many of these regional trails were planned and implemented as opportunities presented themselves (i.e., abandoned rail corridors) and did not always include extensive public engagement or connections to communities that may face significant barriers to participation. Further, many of the communities that these trail corridors intersect are becoming more racially, ethnically, and economically diverse and, in several cases, older (or younger).

With that in mind, the Park District will remain open to additional recommendations to better integrate the regional trails directly into the communities they are intended to serve, which includes but is not limited to:

1. Improving safety and providing more direct routes, where possible
2. Better connecting with nature, parks, and other destinations
3. Developing more operational/programming solutions to increase awareness, comfort and ability and remove barriers such as lack of equipment

Put simply, the regional trail plans are intended to be a starting point for improvements and the Park District will continue to be inclusive and responsive to changing needs and priorities.

### ***Conflicts***

Safety for all regional trail users is a top priority. Regional trails are a shared public space which serve a variety of people and user groups. However, from time to time, trail users may find themselves in conflict with other users. Everyone benefits when people respect each other's mode of travel. The Park District encourages users to respect each other through a "Share the Trail" safety campaign.

The most common conflicts involve cyclists and pedestrians as they move at very different speeds and take up different spaces. Cyclists often do not alert pedestrians when passing at high speeds, which can cause sudden and startled responses from those on foot. Sometimes groups of walkers can take up both lanes, which leaves cyclists nowhere to pass as they move through. Both users have a responsibility to share the trail.

Another common safety concern revolves around obeying traffic signs. Trail users are sometimes required to stop at roadway crossings and there is often confusion between motorists and trail users regarding right of way. Overall, trail users need to obey all traffic signs to stay safe.

### ***Public Services***

All existing roadway configuration, infrastructure elements, vegetation and other potential visual obstructions will be evaluated so sight lines can be maintained within regional trail corridors. Special provisions, such as mirrors, may be added to improve trail visibility from driveways if deemed appropriate. As vehicular traffic fluctuates, there may be a need for additional traffic signals or modifications to existing signalized intersections. These type of design considerations and trail enhancements will be addressed during the trail design phase and as necessary to address safety concerns.

The Park District is committed to work closely with local agencies and communities to route the trail with the greatest public benefit and least amount of private property impacts.

### ***Public Awareness***

The Marketing and Community Engagement Department manages a centralized marketing communications function that oversees the Park District's website, public relations, marketing, media relations, social media, brand management, event planning, and promotion. Several effective marketing and outreach tools are used to promote the Park District, including but not limited to events calendars, maps, digital and social media, direct mail, press releases, a centralized reservation system, brochures, advertising, and on-site promotion.



The Park District collaborates with a wide array of community, business, and government organizations to promote its facilities, programs, and services, and to educate the public about its resources. The Park District also works with the Metropolitan Council Regional Parks System, the State Office of Tourism, and other partners to leverage shared opportunities for creating awareness and visibility. Additionally, a focus is placed on developing partnerships and programming opportunities that allow the Park District to better serve all residents of Suburban Hennepin County, especially those with less access to its facilities and programs.

Overall themes from partner agencies and communities support an increase in trail amenities, wayfinding, and safety. The plan identifies the need for trail amenities and features that would increase accessibility, awareness, safety, and natural resources management along the existing regional trail corridors.

### **Accessibility**

The Park District is committed to providing access and recreational and transportation opportunities to all people, including persons with disabilities; black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) community members; and other special-population groups. The Park District meets this commitment through appropriate facility design, programming considerations and by actively addressing potential barriers to participation.

All regional trail facilities, including associated trailheads and trail amenities, will be designed to accommodate individuals with disabilities and developed in accordance with ADA standards and guidelines.

In respect to programming opportunities, the Park District offers its own adaptive recreation offerings and works with special-interest organizations such as the Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute and Wilderness Inquiry to encourage participation in regional trail activities by persons with special needs. If arrangements are made in advance, interpreters and alternative forms of printed material are available at programmed events.

In addition to supporting individuals with disabilities, these trails span nearly all of Hennepin County, providing access to people with a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds and connecting community members with local community destinations such as parks, trails, commercial areas, community facilities, cultural destinations, and transit facilities.

On a broader scale, communities adjacent to the trails will not only have access to regional trails but also gain direct and indirect access to the regional park and trail system, as well as state trails. To improve local access, neighborhood trail connections are encouraged at regular intervals.

The Park District does not charge entrance fees for its regional trails; therefore, the regional trails are available for all users to enjoy regardless of financial status.

### **Development Concept**

Typically, this section of the Analysis focuses on the implementing agency's plan for development of the regional trail including a map, section graphic(s), and wayfinding signage plan. Unlike the previous sections of the Analysis, which summarizes content that is shared across all the subject regional trails, each of the trail plans submitted by the Park District includes other required plan content that is distinct due to each trail's unique geography and location (e.g., Boundaries, Acquisition Costs, Demand Forecast, etc.). Therefore, the Development Concept section of the Analysis will be expanded in this business item to highlight other required plan content for each regional trail corridor (*to aid the reader, these requirements are highlighted in italics*).

#### **Luce Line Regional Trail**

The 8.8-mile Luce Line offers beautiful vistas and opportunities to visually connect with the broader landscape. On the south side of Medicine Lake, the trail includes a series of boardwalks over Bassett Creek wetlands. Further east, the trail offers glimpses of downtown Minneapolis before entering a wooded complex within Theodore Wirth Regional Park.

The Park District has secured property rights via permit, easement, and fee-title for much of the



corridor; however, there are a few segments where additional easements are needed. The Park District intends to work with the property owners on a willing-seller basis to secure the missing property rights as opportunities present themselves. There may be other areas where additional property rights are needed but not yet known to secure a continuous and contiguous trail corridor or which help preserve and highlight the adjacent landscape (*Boundaries*). The total acquisition cost estimate is \$76,320, the majority of which would be for easements. (*Acquisition costs*)

The regional trail currently receives an estimated 480,000 annual visits. By 2040, assuming similar use patterns, the Luce Line’s visitation is projected to increase by 93,000 annual visits to 573,000 visits (Figure 7). (*Demand forecast*)

Figure 7: Luce Line Regional Trail Service Area (MP Map 85)



Underrepresented community groups represent people or groups that are not participating on regional trails to the extent in which it is expected given the percent of the overall population – these are the group the Park District would like to better serve (Table 2). For the Luce Line Regional Trail, underrepresented groups include:

1. People 5 to 34 years old
2. Black adults
3. People from households with an annual income of \$75,000 or less

Table 2: Luce Line Regional Trail Demographics (MP Table 31)

AGE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented	RACE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
<5 years		✓		White			✓
5–9 years	✓ <sup>1</sup>			Black	✓ <sup>5</sup>		
10–17 years	✓ <sup>2</sup>			American Indian		✓	
18–24 years	✓ <sup>3</sup>			Asian		✓	
25–34 years	✓ <sup>4</sup>			Other		✓	
35–44 years		✓		<b>ETHNICITY</b>			
45–59 years			✓	Not Hispanic		✓	
60–74 years			✓	Hispanic		✓	
75+ years		✓		<b>ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>			
<b>GENDER</b>				<\$50,000	✓ <sup>6</sup>		
Female		✓		\$50,000 - \$75,000	✓ <sup>7</sup>		
Male		✓		>\$75,000			✓

\*Group names are those used by the Federal Government, many people prefer different terminology.

According to the Park District, the underrepresented community groups are generally consistent with district-wide regional trail trends. Further, the Luce Line has one of the highest percentages of transportation related visits (27%) and these visits tend to be from adults. Similarly, the Luce Line attracts a lot of fitness bicyclists. As such, visitor age does not mirror the service area (it is skewed toward adults ages 45-74).

One concern is that commuters and fitness bicycle user groups – who tend to be more experienced and generally ride faster than more casual or less experienced users – could be displacing the latter groups or impacting their experience.

The Park District is committed to reducing trail user conflicts and making the regional trails more inclusive, welcoming, and safe to all user groups, especially for trail users that may be new to the trail system.

There are several proposed improvements to the 8.8 miles of the Luce Line Regional Trail that the Park District is responsible for. The total estimated improvement cost is \$282,000. Trail improvements include:

1. Widening portions of the trails
2. Trailhead parking lot development
3. Improving ADA crossings
4. Improving clear zone
5. Wayfinding and other signage

The estimated cost for operations and maintenance for the Luce Line Regional Trail is estimated to be \$54,000/year. (*Operations*) Beyond the improvements listed, the regional trail is generally considered complete, and no additional operation and maintenance costs are foreseen.

From a natural resource perspective, most of the Luce Line Regional Trail follows a railroad corridor that is vegetated along its right of way by volunteer trees and plants. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Minnesota Land Cover Classification System defines the area immediately adjacent to the trail as predominately artificial/impervious surfaces with pockets of



planted or cultivated vegetation, shrublands and herbaceous land cover. The regional trail also passes through several city parks and along the southern edge of Medicine Lake through the Bassett Creek wetland complex. Medicine Lake is the predominate water feature adjacent to the trail corridor. (*Natural resources*)

As linear facilities, the trail corridor typically does not extend wider than 100 feet in right-of-way and does not require substantial resource management on an annual basis. To account for minimal resource management along these trail corridors, the Park District utilizes seasonal or contract staffing, such as Conservation Corps of Minnesota to assist in maintenance. No regular staff are proposed for resource management purposes along this regional trail. (*Stewardship Plan*)

### Medicine Lake Regional Trail

The 25.6-mile Medicine Lake Regional Trail is nearly complete except for a 1.6-mile planned extension to the West Mississippi River Regional Trail in Dayton and the inclusion of a 0.6-mile interim route along Northwestern Boulevard in Plymouth.

The existing regional trail segments are primarily located within an independent trail corridor owned by the Park District through several fully developed communities and neighborhoods.

Similar to other regional trails, there are locations along the existing regional trail where additional property rights may be needed to help meet regional trail standards or address areas where property rights are missing or incomplete. In addition, there are a few areas where additional property rights are needed to support the extension through Dayton, the long-term interim route in Plymouth, and the vision as a linear park or greenway.

The portion of the northerly extension trail segment located beyond Elm Creek Park Reserve is planned to traverse through recently constructed residential development, undeveloped-privately owned property and within road rights-of-way.

The long-term interim route through Plymouth between the intersection of Schmidt Lake Road and Cheshire Parkway and French Regional Park also requires property rights likely in the form of an easement or permit. The Park District anticipates working with Hennepin County and Plymouth in early 2022 to officially transition trail ownership, operation, maintenance, and property rights to the Park District. While this is an “interim route,” it is recognized as the official regional trail route with the adoption of this master plan and until a route through Park District land along I-494 can be established in a manner that is not cost prohibitive. (*Boundaries*)

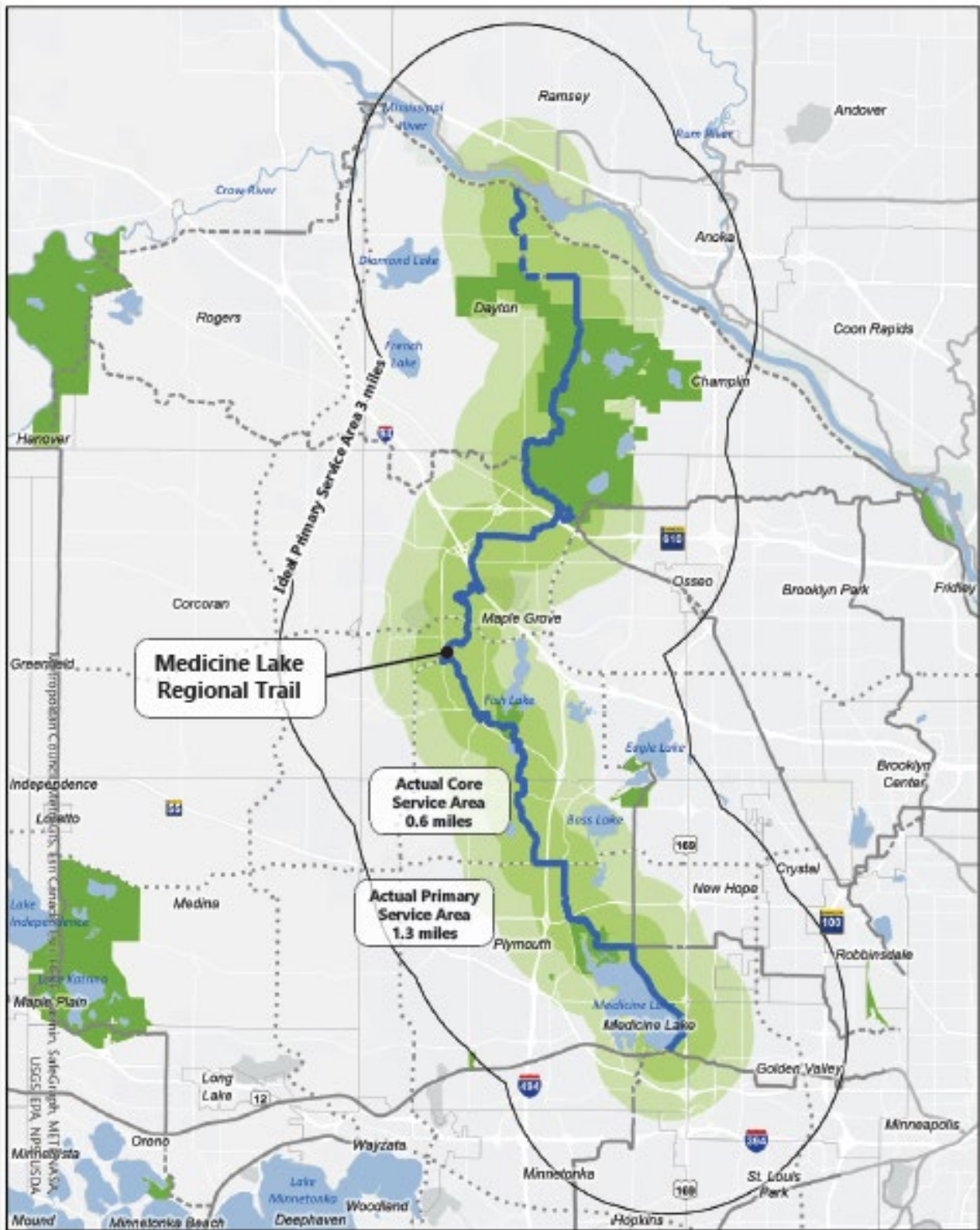
The total acquisition cost estimate is \$373,412, the majority of which would be for easements. (*Acquisition costs*)

The regional trail currently receives an estimated 665,000 annual visits. By 2040, assuming similar use patterns, the Medicine Lake Regional Trail visitation is projected to increase by 215,000 annual visits to 880,000 visits (Figure 8). (*Demand forecast*)





Figure 8: Medicine Lake Regional Trail Service Area (MP Map 105)



For the Medicine Lake Regional Trail, underrepresented groups include (Table 3):

1. People under 18 years old or over 75 years old
2. Black adults
3. People from households with an annual income of \$75,000 or less

The underrepresented community groups are generally consistent with district-wide regional trail trends and the Park District seeks to better serve these groups through a commitment to future conversations and relationship building.

Table 3: Medicine Lake Regional Trail Demographics (MP Table 36)

AGE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented	RACE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
<5 years	✓ <sup>1</sup>			White		✓	
5–9 years	✓ <sup>2</sup>			Black	✓ <sup>4</sup>		
10–17 years	✓ <sup>3</sup>			American Indian		✓	
18–24 years		✓		Asian		✓	
25–34 years		✓		Other		✓	
35–44 years		✓		<b>ETHNICITY</b>			
45–59 years			✓	Not Hispanic			✓
60–74 years			✓	Hispanic	✓ <sup>5</sup>		
75+ years		✓		<b>ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>			
<b>GENDER</b>				<\$50,000	✓ <sup>6</sup>		
Female		✓		\$50,000 - \$75,000	✓ <sup>7</sup>		
Male		✓		>\$75,000		✓	

\*Group names are those used by the Federal Government, many people prefer different terminology.

One explanation offered in the trail plan is that the Medicine Lake Regional Trail, as an independent trail corridor, is not as easily accessible or connected to the local trail and sidewalk network as much as it could be. As such, access and proximity could be a significant barrier.

There are several proposed improvements to the Medicine Lake Regional Trail. The total estimated improvement cost is \$3,019,000. Trail improvements include:

1. Developing the trail where it does not currently exist (Dayton)
2. Widening portions of the trails
3. Small parking lot development
4. Improving ADA crossings
5. Improving clear zone
6. Wayfinding and other signage
7. Erosion, drainage repair

The estimated cost for operations and maintenance for the Medicine Lake Regional Trail is estimated to be \$119,000/year. (*Operations*) Beyond the improvements listed, the regional trail is generally considered complete, and only minor operations and maintenance expenses are foreseen to account for the future two-mile trail extension.

Like the Luce Line Regional Trail, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Minnesota Land Cover Classification System defines the area immediately adjacent to the trail as predominately artificial/impervious surfaces with planted or cultivated vegetation. As the trail travels north, there are more areas of forest, woodlands, and herbaceous land cover. The regional trail also passes through Clifton French and Fish Lake regional parks and Elm Creek Park Reserve. Medicine Lake is the predominate water feature adjacent to the trail corridor. (*Natural resources*)

The northern terminus of the trail – Elsie Stephens Park – is within the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA). The Medicine Lake Regional Trail Plan acknowledges that all future development of the trail within the MRCCA will need to comply with all applicable MRCCA standards and guidelines. (*Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area*)

If the Park District acquires additional property along the regional trail which includes significant



natural or cultural resources, the Park District will develop a stewardship plan specific to that resource and in accordance with other Park District natural and cultural resource management plans.

As linear facilities, the trail corridor typically does not extend wider than 100 feet in right-of-way and does not require substantial resource management on an annual basis. To account for minimal resource management along these trail corridors, the Park District utilizes seasonal or contract staffing, such as Conservation Corps of Minnesota to assist in maintenance. No regular staff are proposed for resource management purposes along this regional trail. (*Stewardship Plan*)

### Shingle Creek Regional Trail

The 11-mile Shingle Creek Regional Trail is a paved trail connecting community members to the broader regional park and trail system for recreational use (Figure 5). However, 12% of visits have a transportation related function.

The current Shingle Creek northern terminus is at the intersection with the Rush Creek Regional Trail in Brooklyn Park. The Park District is considering whether to extend Shingle Creek Regional Trail further north to intersect with the West Mississippi River Regional Trail at 109th Avenue N by improving the existing local trail along Noble Parkway N (0.5 miles).

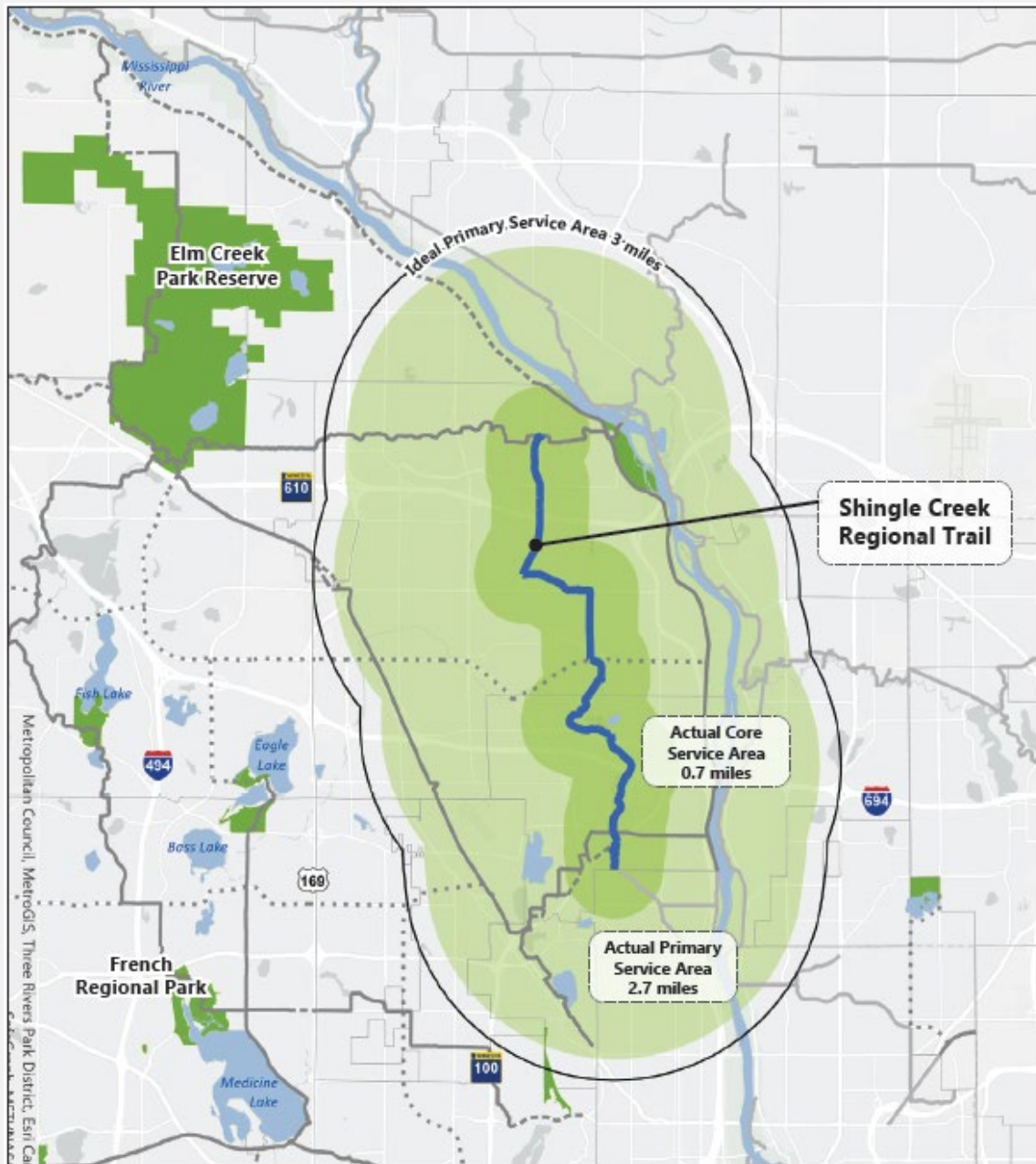
Shingle Creek is a fully developed trail generally situated within public road right of way and local parks in Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center, in which, the Park District has property rights to via permit or easement. (*Boundaries*)

There are several areas where additional easements are needed to fill small gaps or secure rights to clear zones. The total estimated acquisition cost is \$282,000 consisting mostly of easements. (*Acquisition costs*)

Currently, the regional trail receives an estimated 312,000 visits annually. It is anticipated that future use will increase by 54,000 (17%) to 366,000 annual visits by 2040 (Figure 9). (*Demand forecast*)



Figure 9: Shingle Creek Regional Trail Service Area (MP Map 190)



The underrepresented groups for Shingle Creek Regional Trail include:

1. People between 10- and 17-year-old
2. Black Adults
3. People from households with an annual income of less than \$50,000

These groups are generally underrepresented throughout the regional trail system (Table 4). It is unknown why this and other community groups are not represented as expected on the Shingle Creek Regional Trail. The Park District seeks to better serve these groups through a commitment to future conversations and relationship building.



Table 4: Shingle Creek Regional Trail Demographics (MP Table 54)

AGE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented	RACE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
<5 years		✓		White		✓	
5–9 years		✓		Black	✓ <sup>2</sup>		
10–17 years	✓ <sup>1</sup>			American Indian		✓	
18–24 years		✓		Asian		✓	
25–34 years		✓		Other		✓	
35–44 years		✓		<b>ETHNICITY</b>			
45–59 years		✓		Not Hispanic		✓	
60–74 years			✓	Hispanic		✓	
75+ years		✓		<b>ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>			
<b>GENDER</b>				<\$50,000	✓ <sup>3</sup>		
Female		✓		\$50,000 - \$75,000		✓	
Male		✓		>\$75,000			✓

\*Group names are those used by the Federal Government, many people prefer different terminology.

Some of the items believed to negatively affect visitation patterns on other regional trail corridors do not exist within this trail corridor. For example, this is not a major non-motorized transportation or bicycle fitness corridor, and it has less bicyclist use than other regional trails. In addition, the trail is generally more accessible to neighborhoods and communities with higher percentages of households with an annual income of \$50,000 or less.

The Park District is committed to continue working with community members to increase user and enjoyment especially those considered underrepresented. To reach the desired target for each underrepresented group, an approximate increase in summer visitation for:

1. people between 10-17 years old is 69 visits/day,
2. adult Black users by 101 visits/day,
3. and annual household incomes less than \$50,000 per year by 275 visits/day.

There are several proposed improvements to the 8.4 miles of the Shingle Creek Regional Trail that the Park District is responsible for. The total estimated improvement cost is \$4,087,000. Trail improvements include:

1. Widening portions of the trails
2. Improving ADA crossing(s)
3. Realigning the trail
4. Replacing or reconstructing trail bridge ramp(s)
5. Erosion repair

The estimated cost for operations and maintenance for the Shingle Creek Regional Trail is estimated to be \$51,000/year. (*Operations*) Beyond the improvements listed, the regional trail is generally considered complete, and no additional operation and maintenance costs are foreseen.

#### Northeast Diagonal LRT Regional Trail

The 2-mile Northeast Diagonal LRT Regional Trail is a paved trail generally along a former railroad corridor owned by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) or within public right-of-way. The trail is predominately for recreational purposes with over 30% visits related to transportation purposes playing a strong role in the multimodal transportation system.

While there are several agreements for this segment between HCRRA, MPRB, and the Park

District, the agreements do not clearly convey property rights to the Park District via permit, lease, or easement. The Park District is working with both agencies to clearly convey property rights to the Park District and eliminate any potential for confusion. (*Boundaries*)

There are no anticipated acquisition costs. (*Acquisition costs*)

Recognizing the regional trail system as an integral part of the region's transportation system, HCRRA is no longer requiring the 'LRT' acronym in the name of regional trails within their corridors. The Park District will be removing the LRT portion in trail names as sign replacement and wayfinding information updates are made.

The regional trail currently receives an estimated 65,000 annual visits (Figure 10). Annual visits are anticipated to increase by 16,000 (24.2%) to 81,000 annual visits by 2040. (*Demand forecast*) Based on the Park District's monitoring process, the regional trail meets or exceeds visitation expectations for all demographic categories (Table 5).

Figure 10: Northeast Diagonal LRT Regional Trail Service Area (MP Map 185)



Table 5: Northeast Diagonal LRT Regional Trail Demographics (MP Table 50)

AGE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented	RACE	Under Represented	On-Target	Over Represented
<5 years		✓		White			✓
5–9 years		✓		Black		✓	
10–17 years		✓		American Indian		✓	
18–24 years		✓		Asian		✓	
25–34 years		✓		Other		✓	
35–44 years		✓		<b>ETHNICITY</b>			
45–59 years			✓	Not Hispanic		✓	
60–74 years		✓		Hispanic		✓	
75+ years		✓		<b>ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>			
<b>GENDER</b>				<\$50,000		✓	
Female		✓		\$50,000 - \$75,000		✓	
Male		✓		>\$75,000		✓	

\*Group names are those used by the Federal Government, many people prefer different terminology.

There are no proposed improvements for the 0.6 miles segment of the Northeast Diagonal LRT Regional Trail.

The estimated cost for operations and maintenance for the Northeast Diagonal LRT Regional Trail is estimated to be \$5,000/year. (*Operations*)

### Consistency with Other Council Policies and Systems

Council staff have reviewed and found the proposed master plans to be consistent with the other plans and policies of the Council, including *Thrive MSP 2040*, the *Water Resources Policy Plan*, the *Transportation Policy Plan*, and the *Housing Policy Plan*. Additional review comments are included below.

#### Luce Line Regional Trail

Community Development – Forecasts (Todd Graham, 651-602-1322) – The Park District considers 2010-40 local population growth and park visitation estimates (e.g., MP Table 30). Further, the Park District discusses expected changing trail user needs. Council staff concur with this demand assessment.

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig, 651-602-1119) - The construction of any new or updating of existing paths, trails, bridges, or any other construction project 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 project, preliminary plans should be sent to Tim Wedin, Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager (651-602-4571) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services.

Environmental Services – Water Services (Joe Mulcahy, 651-602-1104) - The Plan appears to be accurate and complete, and potential water resource impacts appear to be addressed.

#### Medicine Lake Regional Trail

Community Development – Forecasts (Todd Graham, 651-602-1322) – The Park District considers 2010-40 local population growth and park visitation estimates (e.g., MP Table 35). Further, the Park District discusses expected changing trail user needs. Council staff concur with this demand assessment.



Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig, 651-602-1119) – The construction of any new or updating of existing paths, trails, bridges, or any other construction project 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 project, preliminary plans should be sent to Tim Wedin, Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager (651-602-4571) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services.

Metro Transit (Patrick Haney, 612-349-7451) - Council staff have reviewed the Plan and it appears complete. One minor correction: The facility labeled as “Maple Grove Transit Station” is called Parkway Station by Maple Grove Transit. Maple Grove Transit has a separate facility called Maple Grove Transit Station at a different site.

### ***Shingle Creek Regional Trail***

Community Development – Forecasts (Todd Graham, 651-602-1322) – The Park District considers 2010-40 local population growth and park visitation estimates (e.g., MP Table 53). Further, the Park District discusses expected changing trail user needs. Council staff concur with this demand assessment.

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig, 651-602-1119) – The construction of any new or updating of existing paths, trails, bridges, or any other construction project 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 project, preliminary plans should be sent to Tim Wedin, Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager (651-602-4571) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services.

Environmental Services – Water Services (Maureen Hoffman, 651-602-1279) – Council staff encourage Three Rivers Park District to consider planting native and chloride tolerant plants along the trail corridor near roadways. Council staff also recommend that the Park District minimize disturbance to mature trees, ecologically significant areas, and any negative impacts to nearby water bodies and wetlands. Staff recommends the Park District to partner with the local agency and watershed district to reroute the regional trail to mitigate flooding and improve potential flood/stormwater management.

### ***Northeast Diagonal Regional Trail***

Community Development – Forecasts (Todd Graham, 651-602-1322) – The Park District considers 2010-40 local population growth and park visitation estimates (e.g., MP Table 49). Further, the Park District discusses expected changing trail user needs. Council staff concur with this demand assessment.

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig, 651-602-1119) – The construction of any new or updating of existing paths, trails, bridges, or any other construction project 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 project, preliminary plans should be sent to Tim Wedin, Interceptor Engineering Assistant Manager (651-602-4571) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services.







March 14, 2022

Ms. Kelly Grissman  
Director of Planning  
Three Rivers Park District  
3000 Xenium Avenue North  
Plymouth, MN 55441

Dear Ms. Grissman,

The City of Plymouth supports the efforts of Three Rivers Park District to develop a master plan for nine existing regional trails, which includes the Medicine Lake and Luce Line Regional Trails located within Plymouth, to meet the requirements of the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

These trails are fully developed existing facilities that have operated for many years without a master plan and serve as the backbone to our local community's trail network. The City supports the Nine Regional Trails Master Plan's envisioned improvements that will ultimately increase the safety, usability, connectivity, and quality of the nine regional trails, including the regional trail segments located within our community.

The regional trails and envisioned improvements are consistent with the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Parks and Trail Plan. As such, the City looks forward to working collaboratively with Three Rivers to implement the envisioned improvements and further enhance regional recreation and non-motorized amenities located within our community and directly serving our residents.

Sincerely,  
DocuSigned by:  
  
9C27C138780E457...  
Jeffrey Woyte  
Mayor

3400 Plymouth Blvd • Plymouth, Minnesota 55447-1482 • Tel: 763-509-5000 • [www.plymouthmn.gov](http://www.plymouthmn.gov)



HENNEPIN COUNTY  
REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY

March 21, 2022

Ms. Kelly Grissman  
Director of Planning  
Three Rivers Park District  
3000 Xenium Avenue North  
Plymouth, MN 55441

Dear Ms. Grissman,

The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) supports the efforts of Three Rivers Park District to develop a master plan for nine existing regional trails, which includes Cedar Lake, Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota River Bluffs, and Northeast Diagonal Regional Trails located within HCRRA corridors, to meet the requirements of the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

These trails are fully developed existing facilities that have operated for many years without a master plan and serve as the backbone to our region's trail network. HCRRA supports the Nine Regional Trails Master Plan's envisioned improvements that will ultimately increase the safety, usability, connectivity, and quality of the nine regional trails, including the regional trail segments located on HCRRA corridors.

HCRRA looks forward to working collaboratively with Three Rivers to implement the envisioned improvements and further enhance regional recreation and non-motorized amenities located on HCRRA corridors and directly serving our residents.

Sincerely,



Lisa Cerney  
HCRRA Deputy Director

Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority  
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400, Minneapolis, MN 55415  
[hennepin.us/hcrra](http://hennepin.us/hcrra)

