

Business Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission



Community Development Committee: November 18, 2024

Metropolitan Council: December 11, 2024

Business Item: 2024-307

Scott County, Shallow Waters Regional Trail Long-Range Plan

District(s), member(s):	District B, Robert Moeller District H, Amanda Duerr District 4, Deb Barber
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minn. Stat. § 473.313; <i>2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan</i> : Chapter 5, Planning Policy Strategy 1, Master Plans
Staff prepared/Presented:	Kevin Phan, Planner (651-602-1333)
Division/department:	Community Development / Regional Planning

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council approve the Shallow Waters Regional Trail Long-Range Plan.

Background

Scott County's Shallow Waters Regional Trail is located in the southern part of the Regional Parks and Trails System in the southeastern portion of Scott County (Figure 1). Formerly a part of the Southern Scott Regional Trail Search Corridor, the Shallow Waters Regional Trail spans 17 miles across the communities of Prior Lake, Cedar Lake Township, Spring Lake Township, Credit River, and New Prague.

The proposed Shallow Waters Regional Trail will provide a predominately north-south trail corridor in an area of Scott County that is seeing increased development pressure. Cleary Lake Regional Park in Credit River Township will represent the northern terminus while Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park in New Prague will represent the southern terminus (Figures 2 and 3).

The name "Shallow Waters" emerged from robust engagement with the public and key partners during the planning process. The name refers to the hydrologic term "shallow lakes," which are lakes dominated by wetland ecosystems. Since the trail alignment connects multiple shallow lakes and wetlands, Shallow Waters was chosen as the regional trail name.

This regional trail is planned to connect three regional parks (Cedar Lake Farm, Doyle-Kennefick, and Cleary Lake) and Big Woods Regional Trail, as well as make future connections to four regional trail search corridors in southern Scott County (Elko New Market-Doyle Kennefick Search Corridor, Elko New Market-Blakeley-Doyle Kennefick Search Corridor, Southern Scott Search Corridor, and Cedar Lake Farm to New Prague Search Corridor).

The focus of the long-range plan is to outline the proposed development concept as well as the operations and maintenance needs for the multi-use regional trail. This plan will help achieve the full development of the trail, getting Scott County closer to its mission of connecting people to the natural world.

Rationale

As described in the Analysis, the Shallow Waters Regional Trail Long-Range Plan is consistent with the requirements of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* including Chapter 5, Planning Policy Strategy 1.

Thrive lens analysis

The Shallow Waters Regional Trail Long-Range Plan 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 development cost to complete the Shallow Waters Regional Trail is \$28.7 million, with acquisitions estimated to cost \$1.47 million.

When the regional trail corridor is fully developed, the estimated total annual operations and maintenance costs for the Shallow Waters Regional Trail is \$26,280.

Funding for implementing the priorities within the long-range plan will come from a variety of sources, including the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Program and the Regional Parks Bonding Program. Both of these funding sources are subject to future Council actions.



Analysis

Planning Strategy 1 of the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that long-range 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. The following summary analyzes the long-range plan against these requirements.

Boundaries

The Shallow Waters Regional Trail corridor will be a 17-mile north-south regional trail in southern Scott County. The alignment starts at the southern border of Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park and travels north to Hickey Lake before extending east toward Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park. This segment between the Cedar Lake Farm and Doyle-Kennefick Regional Parks will primarily deviate from road right-of-way and extend across more natural landscapes. After reaching Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park, the Shallow Waters Regional Trail will extend north through the park and connect to Mushtown Road from County Road 8. From here, the alignment continues north and connects with the southern entrance of Cleary Lake Regional Park.

The trail will provide connections to the existing Big Woods Regional Trail and several trail search corridors including Elko New Market-Doyle Kennefick Search Corridor, Elko New Market-Blakeley-Doyle Kennefick Search Corridor, Southern Scott Search Corridor, and Cedar Lake Farm to New Prague Search Corridor.

Acquisition Costs

The Shallow Waters Regional Trail plan identifies a total of 16.71 miles across five planned trail segments that need to be acquired. Segment 1 acquisitions are expected to cost \$369,000. Segment 2 acquisitions are expected to cost \$394,000. Segment 3 acquisitions are expected to cost \$84,000. Segment 4 has no anticipated acquisition costs as it goes through the future Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park. Segment 5 acquisition costs are expected to be \$618,000.

The total combined acquisition cost for the Shallow Waters Regional Trail is estimated to be \$1,465,000.

Demand Forecast

According to the Metropolitan Council, Scott County's population in 2020 was 150,928 residents. This figure is forecasted to grow by 60,000 residents by 2040. As the county's population continues to grow, Scott County has seen a steady increase in visitation to their regional parks and trails. In previous Scott County resident surveys, participants have recognized the value of parks and trails for recreational opportunities and open space preservation. During the planning process, Scott County received feedback from residents indicating an interest in creating more connections to parks and trails, and that there is a need for safe places to walk, run, and bike in the county.

The Shallow Waters Regional Trail will primarily serve the county's central communities and will create an important connection between three regional parks that are experiencing growing visitation. With the eastern portion of Scott County seeing increased development pressure and population growth, this trail will help respond to increased demands for recreational opportunities. The Metropolitan Council estimates that 75 percent of trail users live within three miles of the trail (Primary Service Area), which is estimated to be 41,305 for the Shallow Waters Regional Trail.

Development Concept

The Shallow Waters Regional Trail Long-Range Plan has an implementation timeline of at least 20 years. The plan outlines how the trail should be developed and represents a balance between meeting the needs of the regional population while respecting the opinions and concerns of residents living near the trail. The proposed trail is designed as a 10-foot wide, non-motorized, paved, multi-use trail that will have a gravel base underneath and a bituminous pavement surface on top. For segments that run alongside a roadway, the trail will be fully separated from the road at a safe distance. There are a number of roadway crossings along the Shallow Waters Regional Trail. Each crossing will be evaluated for safety and will be designed in accordance with industry

best standards.

New segments of the trail will incorporate traffic control signs and devices, such as centerline markings and stop signs. The cost to implement trail signage is approximately \$1 per linear foot. In addition to trail signage, wayfinding signage and kiosks will be located at road intersections or at trailheads. Rest stop amenities such as trash cans, benches, and bike racks will be installed every two miles.

Segment 1

Segment 1 is 2.4 miles long and begins in the southern extent of Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park with a trailhead located near the intersection of Juniper Avenue and County Road 2 (Figure 4). The exact location of the trailhead is not known currently, as Juniper Avenue and the parking lot are planned for relocation. The alignment will connect to existing trails within Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park and continue north, eventually leaving the park and crossing Pexa Drive. The trail crosses six private parcels and continues north, ending at an at-grade crossing at County Road 64.

The total estimated cost for this segment is \$4.4 million with \$369,000 dedicated to acquisitions and \$4 million for design and construction costs.

Segment 2

Segment 2 extends 3.05 miles and begins north of County Road 64, traveling north to the western side of Hickey Lake (Figure 5). The trail then extends east and on the western side of Hickey Lake. The trail continues east to Minnesota Highway 13 and Porter Creek. The plan recommends a trail underpass at County Road 13 to ensure safe crossings on the busy roadway. With up to 2,035 feet of wetlands along the proposed corridor in Segment 2, Scott County plans to extend across the edge of these wetlands to provide a buffer and long-term protection. The trail will cross one driveway and eleven private parcels.

The total estimated cost for this segment is \$5.52 million with \$394,000 dedicated to acquisitions and \$5.1 million for design and construction costs.

Segment 3

Segment 3 is 4.05 miles long and extends southeast from State Highway 13, following Porter Creek until reaching 230th Street east (Figure 6). From there, the trail extends east along 230th Street east until it reaches County Road 23/Panama Avenue and the future Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park, where it will travel south to 235th Street. This trail segment crosses seven private parcels, which will require right-of-way easements. Segment 3 is proposed to have an at-grade crossing at Balsa Avenue and a grade-separated crossing at County Road 23/Panama Avenue. The trail recommends an underpass crossing at Panama Avenue, but the final details will be determined during the design development phase. Another consideration for the design phase is how to minimally impact wetlands present along 230th Street east.

The total estimated cost for this segment is \$6.31 million with \$84,000 dedicated to acquisitions and \$6.2 million for design and construction costs.

Segment 4

Segment 4 is 2.62 miles long and extends east along 235th Street East within the future Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park (Figure 7). The trail will then extend north through Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park until it reaches a crossing at County Road 8. A grade-separated crossing will be required to extend the trail from the south side of County Road 8 to the north side of Mushtown Road. The exact location of this crossing will be identified during design development. The final alignment of the trail through Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park will depend on land acquisition and future park development.

Since the alignment is entirely within future Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park there are no anticipated acquisition costs. The total estimated cost for this segment is \$4.51 million.

Segment 5

Segment 5 extends north from Doyle-Kennefick Regional Park at County Road 8 and follows



Mushtown Road north to County Road 68 (Figure 8). At County Road 68, the trail extends east to the entrance of Cleary Lake Regional Park. This segment is 4.59 miles long and has multiple driveway crossings that will be addressed during design development to ensure safe crossing. Depending on the location of a trail crossing at County Road 68, a grade-separated crossing might be recommended for increased safety.

The total estimated cost for this segment is \$7.95 million with \$618,000 dedicated to acquisitions and \$7.3 million for design and construction costs

Conflicts

The land surrounding the proposed trail consists of a mix of agricultural, residential, and public uses. Some of the potential conflicts might be concerns around driveway crossings where the trail is situated along road rights-of-way. Scott County will work to review driveway crossings during design development to identify any mitigation strategies, such as clearing sight lines or adding warning signage to the crossings.

Another potential source of conflict is inappropriate trail uses. The trail is planned for non-motorized uses and will not allow all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, motorized scooters, or horseback riding. E-bike use is allowed on the trail. There are two snowmobile trails that cross the trail corridor and a third segment of trail that runs parallel to the Shallow Waters Regional Trail. Measures will be developed to keep these uses separate in areas where the two facilities come in close proximity to one another.

Public Services

Since the Shallow Waters Regional Trail will be situated between three regional parks that can provide access to parking and restroom facilities, the trail will not require additional services, such as sewer infrastructure, to become operational. If neighboring communities show interest in adding signature features like rest stops, interpretation, or local park access; additional features including utilities and roads may need to be developed to accommodate the improvement.

To ensure safety for trail visitors, Scott County will work with local public safety organizations to monitor trail use and deter unauthorized activity. Emergency services will be provided by the Scott County Sheriff's Office and the Elko New Market, New Prague, and Prior Lake Fire Departments as well as the Allina Ambulance service.

Operations

The Scott County Park Ordinance provides safe and peaceful use of the regional parks and trails year-round. County trails operate year-round from 5 AM to 10 PM, and they are maintained from April 1 until November 15. General rules for existing regional trails, and at the time this long-range plan was prepared, are anticipated for the Shallow Waters Regional Trail.

The Scott County Park Service Unit is responsible for patrolling parks in the county. Patrollers enforce rules and regulations and have the authority to enforce the County's Park Ordinance and issue citations. The Park Service Unit also collaborates with the Scott County Sheriff's Office (SCSO). On the Shallow Waters Regional Trail, the SCSO will respond to calls for service needs. In addition, the 911 First Responder System will answer emergency calls made from the trail.

Maintenance of the Shallow Waters Regional Trail will help ensure a safe, clean, and usable trail. The County works in partnership with their cities as well as Three Rivers Park District in carrying out maintenance of its regional trails. Anticipated maintenance costs are to be \$6,000 per mile, for a total of \$26,280 annually.

Partner Engagement

Scott County staff held one-on-one meetings with staff from all townships surrounding the Shallow Waters Regional Trail. County staff also met with the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC) leadership to present the trail plan and to discuss how the proposed project could connect with SMSC parks and trails, and how the trail may otherwise benefit their community.

General themes from the partner engagement included:

- Concerns about the trail traveling through private property



- Questions on how wetland areas will be mitigated and funded
- Concerns over preliminary trail alignments along and near Kane Lake due to residential development
- Concerns over disturbing the wildlife habitat and corridor widths of the trail alignment
- Comments that people used trails mostly for recreation or health and exercise
- An interest in parks and trails and in connecting facilities

This feedback shaped the outcomes of the plan and supports the opportunity for the regional trail system to be strengthened in Scott County.

Public Engagement and Participation

Scott County Parks and Recreation worked to engage the public throughout the planning process. The project team engaged the public by holding community conversations, hosting an online engagement opportunity, and holding open house meetings. Online, Scott County created a project website that included updates, upcoming events, and an interactive mapping tool that allowed participants to add comments on alternative alignments. Scott County held two open houses on May 10, 2022, and March 29, 2023, which allowed people to learn about the trail and provide feedback on the proposed trail route.

In addition to these efforts, Scott County recruited individuals with local and technical knowledge to serve on the Technical and Community Design Team to help provide guidance and identify a preferred route for the trail corridor. This team was comprised of multiple people from relevant cities and townships, tribal governments, and residents from around the County. The team met seven times throughout the planning process to provide input about route alternatives. This experience provided team members with an opportunity to consistently engage with the plan on a deeper level.

The themes identified in these events can be found in the Equity Analysis below.

Equity Analysis

Scott County conducted an equity analysis as part of the long-range planning process. The advice heard during the planning process shaped the long-range plan.

Project Data

Scott County identified underserved groups at a local and regional scale using previous park visitor studies. Scott County Parks identified gaps in services for groups including:

- Residents of Shakopee and Belle Plaine
- People of Color
- Individuals with less than a high school education
- Households with annual incomes less than \$75,000
- Individuals under the age of 18

Some of these groups are consistent with historically underserved groups on a regional level. A reason these groups face barriers to access include poor physical proximity to parks, feeling unwelcome or unsafe, a lack of cultural accommodations, language barriers, cost, and lack of awareness.

Public Engagement

The project team worked to address these barriers and gaps by prioritizing engagement with historically underserved communities such as low-income individuals, people with limited-English proficiency, Hispanic residents, youth and seniors, and members of the SMSC.

Scott County hosted multiple multilingual engagement opportunities throughout the process, including offering a trails survey at community events in both Spanish and English, providing information about assistance in Spanish on open house post cards, and providing Spanish-speaking staff during open house events. Scott County also held the following engagement events:



- Multilingual support with Community Design Team applications, open houses, and in-person engagement surveys (Spanish).
- Public engagement events were prioritized based on the audiences being served:
 - International Walking Club Walk Around the World (140+ individuals from various backgrounds, connecting newly immigrated families and families learning English): an international community event in Shakopee supporting diverse communities of color and new English learners.
 - Scott County Fair (many people attended): serving all residents of Scott County and particularly engaging with families and youth.
 - Celebrate Jordan (approximately 1,800 people attended): a community open house that showcases businesses and organizations that specifically provide opportunities and assistance for families and residents located in the Southwest portion of the County (near Belle Plaine).
- English and Spanish surveys: At the Celebrate Jordan Event and Walk Around the World Event, surveys were provided about trail use and opportunity for the chance to win one of two \$50 Visa gift cards.
- Opportunities for convenient engagement with the plan, including online planning process information and commenting capabilities, and information hosted in the Scott County SCENE (a free newspaper provided to every Scott County resident).
- County staff reached out to diverse applicants to serve on the Community Design Team, by promoting applications through community organizations and township boards.

Themes that resulted from this engagement include:

- Concerns over disturbing wildlife habitat.
- Questions about the safety of a crossing on County Road 8.
- Concerns about preliminary trail alignments along and near Kane Lake due to residential development and adjacent wetlands.
- Concerns about the trail running through private property.
- Concerns about the trail's proximity to hunting grounds on private property.
- Generally, people valued trails that had great scenery and recognized the trail's value for health, exercise, and connecting different facilities.

Evaluation Summary

Transparency: The feedback received shaped the final outcome of the plan. As the system grows and develops, it will be able to support these communities' needs with access to recreation, health and exercise options, and free ways to connect with relatives and peers.

Accountability: To ensure that these efforts will create better outcomes in the trail system, Scott County noted in the plan that they will need consistent consideration of feedback and future engagement and communication efforts as the trail moves from a planned alignment to a developed trail.

Public Awareness

As development and construction plans are proposed, Scott County will hold public meetings to inform the public and collect input. Once the alignment is completed, Scott County will inform and engage with the public through its website, public and media relation activities, and social media. Other tools such as digital and social media, maps, direct mailings, brochures, and press releases will be used to promote the regional park and trail system.

Scott County also engages with community, faith-based, business and government partners to promote its facilities, programs, and services.



Accessibility

Scott County is committed to providing access, resources, and activities for all trail visitors and supports affordable and accessible park and trail facilities. By creating accessible recreation, it supports the aging population of Scott County.

The trail will be designed to meet or exceed the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA)

Shallow Waters Regional Trail is not located within the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area. The planning, design, and implementation requirements of the MRCCA will not apply to this portion of the Regional Parks and Trails System.

Other Council Policies and Systems – Advisory Comments

Environmental Services – Water Resources (Maureen Hoffman, 651-602-8026)

The draft Scott County Shallow Waters Regional Trail Long Range Plan connects several lakes from the Met Council's Priority Waters List (Cedar, Cleary, and McMahan Lakes). Council staff commend the improvements in accessibility for these lakes that qualified for the Priority Waters List due to their Recreation and Tourism value.



Figure 1. Shallow Waters Regional Trail location in the Regional Parks and Trails System

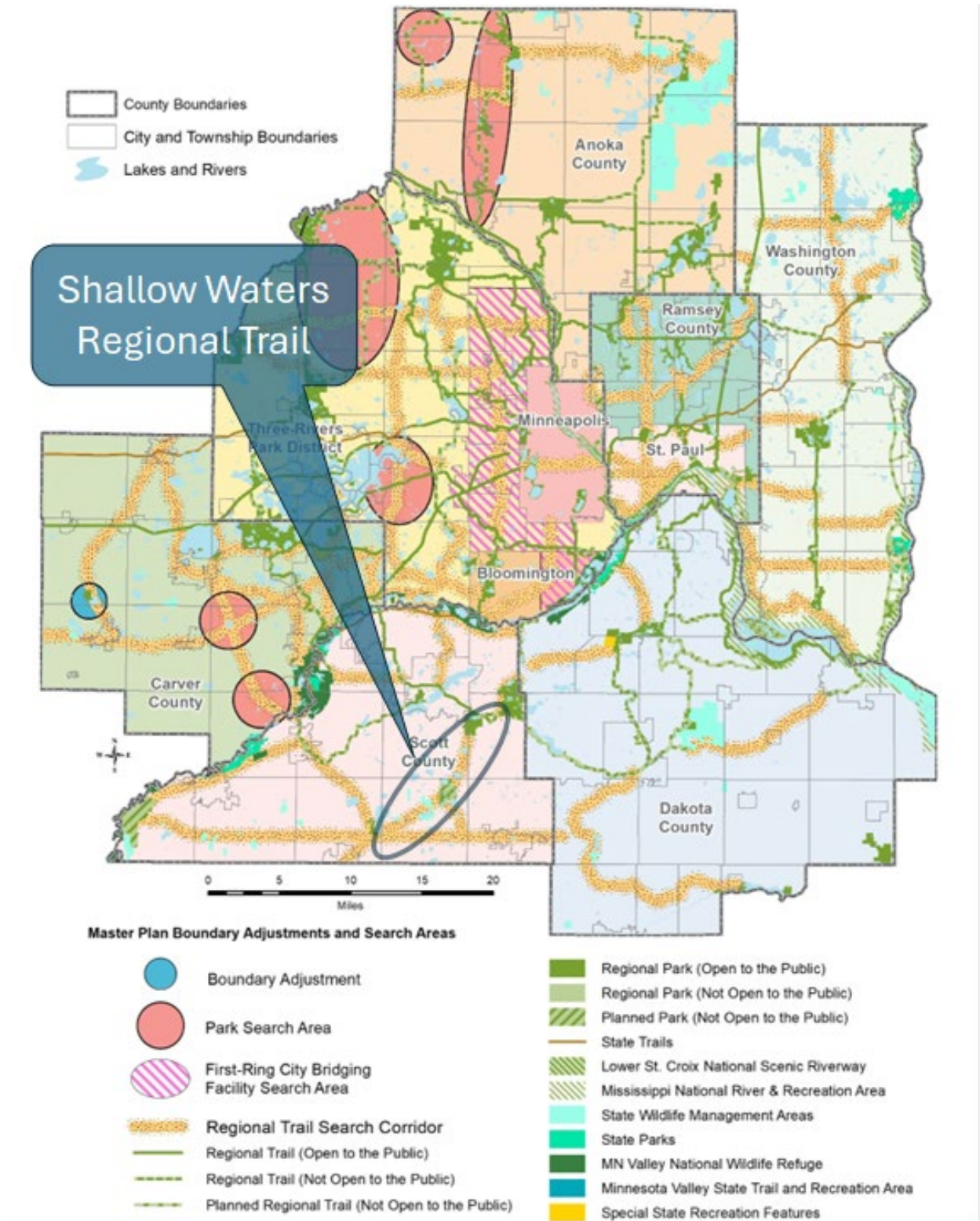
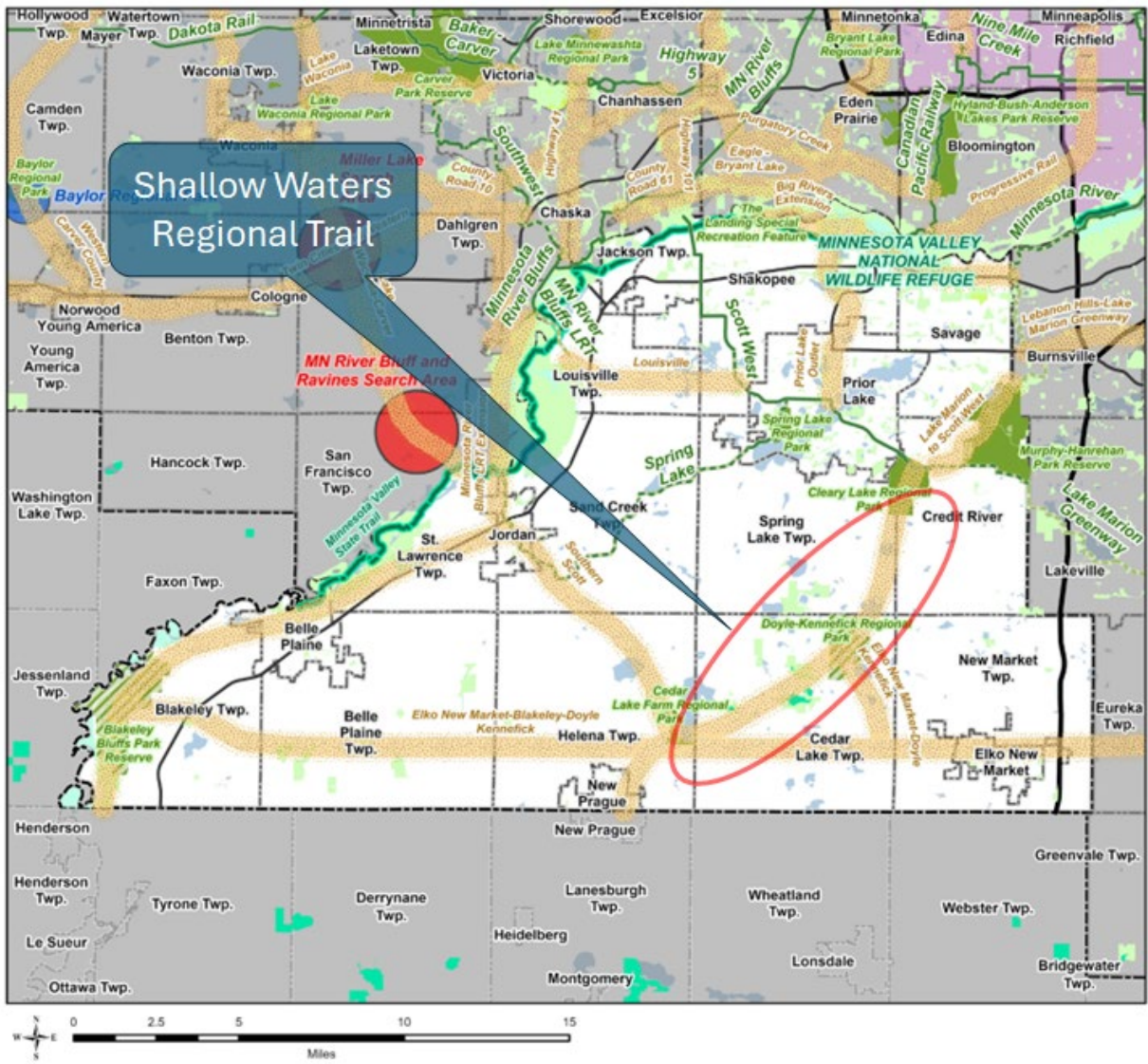
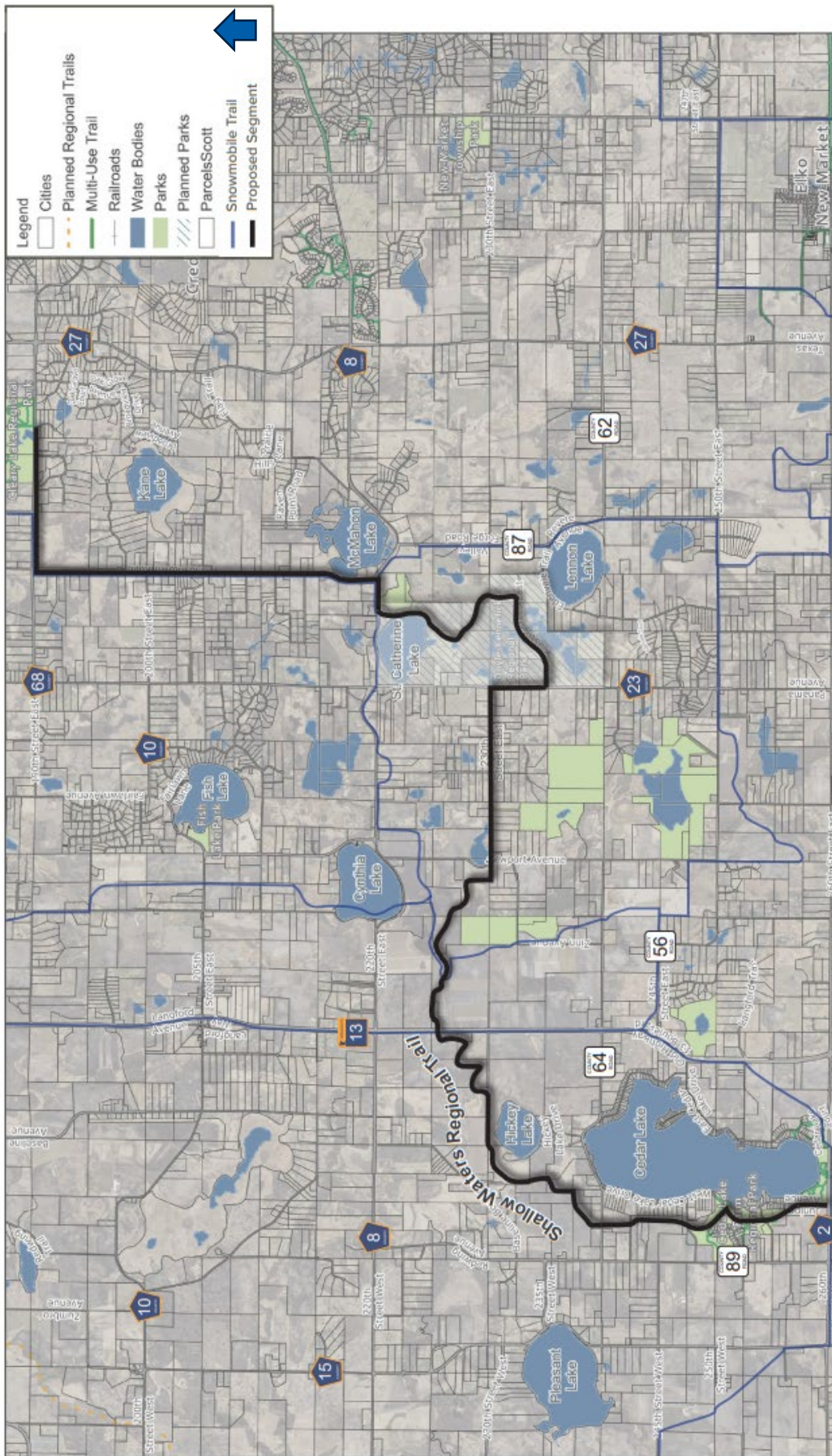


Figure 2. Shallow Waters Regional Trail location in Scott County



Metropolitan Council

Figure 3. Proposed Shallow Waters Regional Trail Alignment



Metropolitan Council

Figure 4. Shallow Waters Regional Trail Segment 1

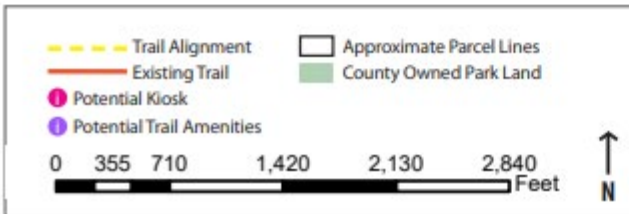


Figure 5. Shallow Waters Regional Trail Segment 2

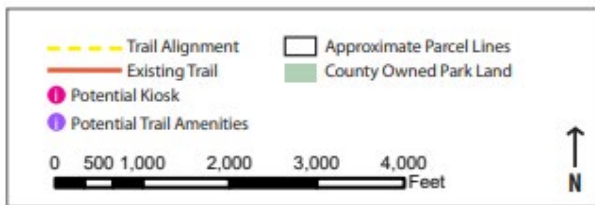
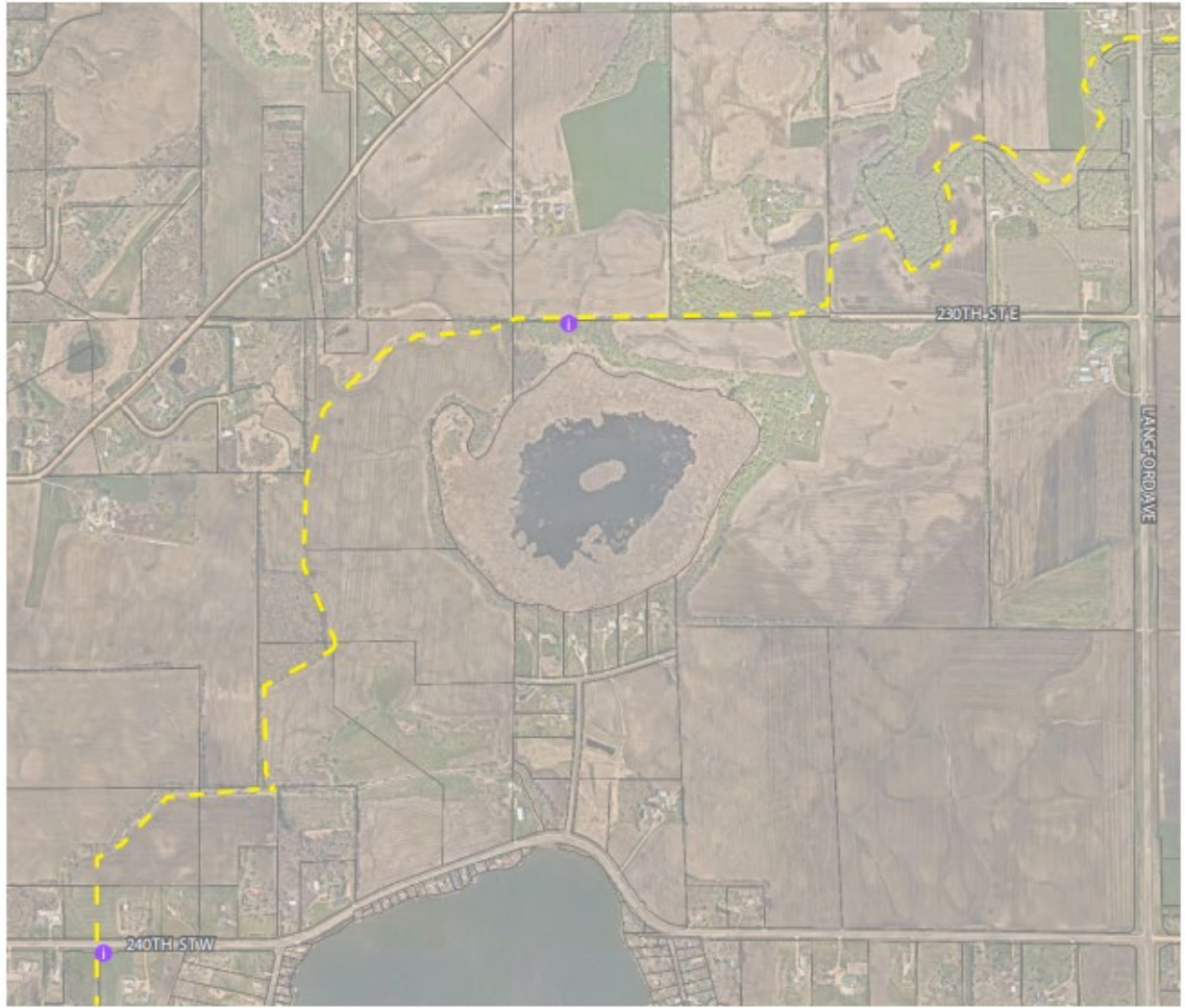


Figure 6. Shallow Waters Regional Trail Segment 3

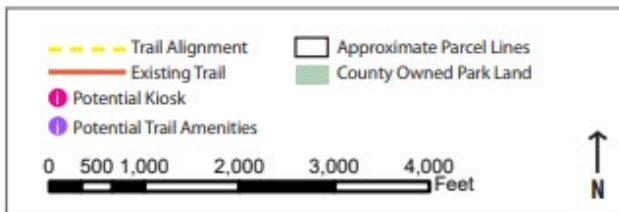
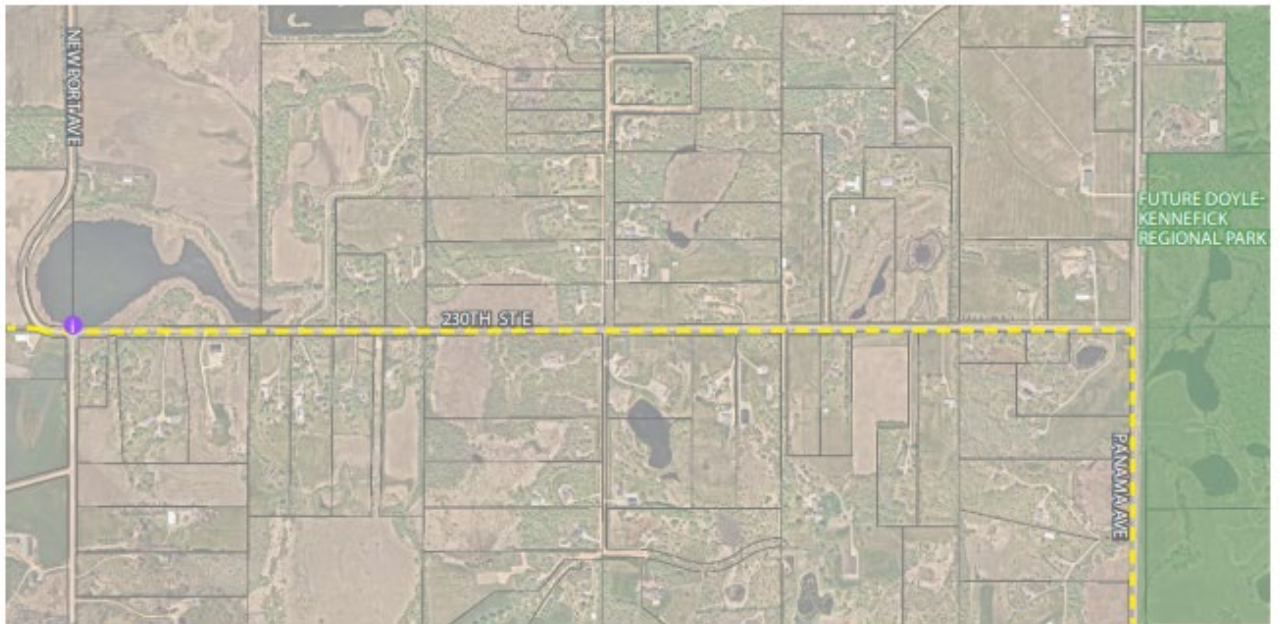
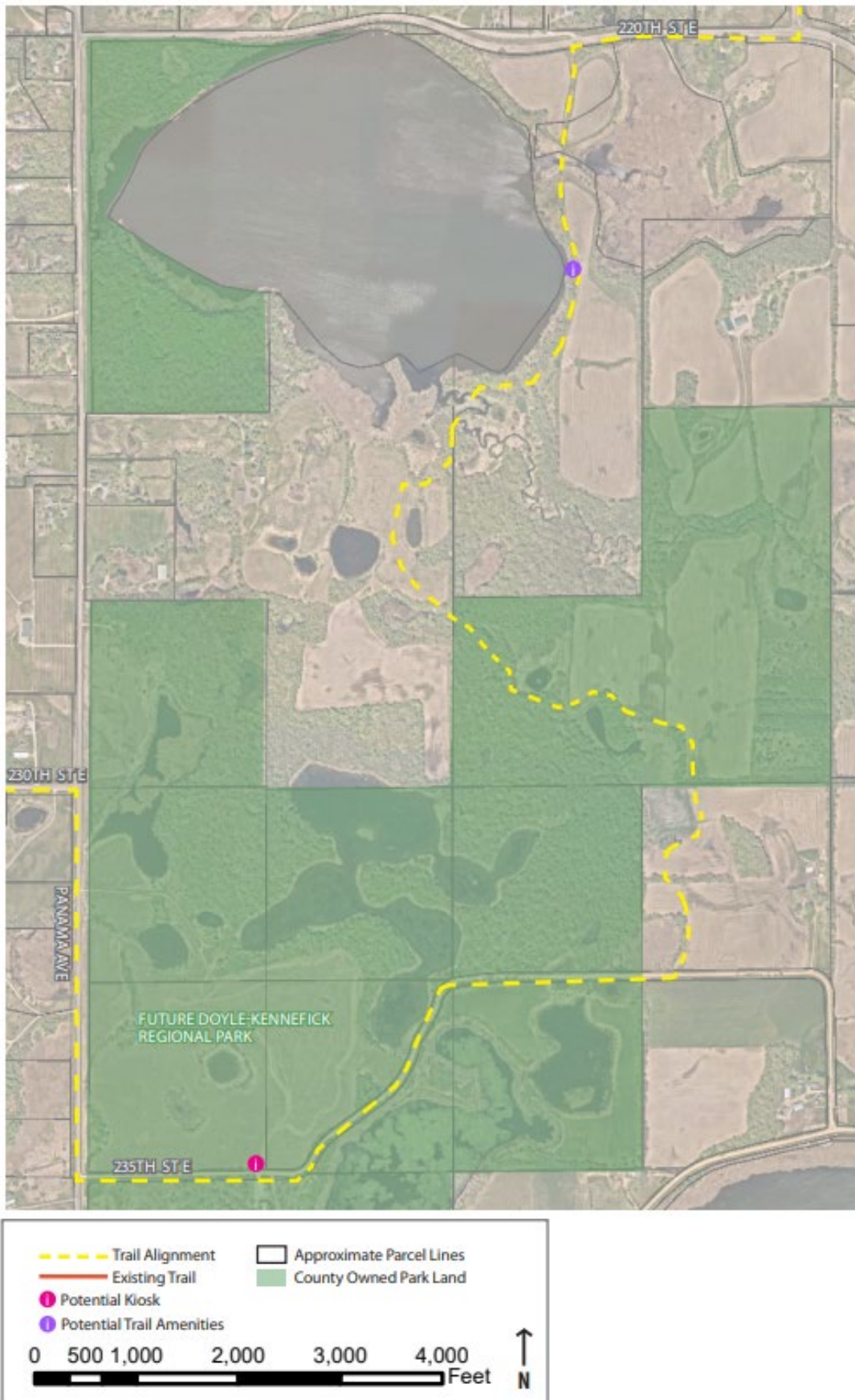
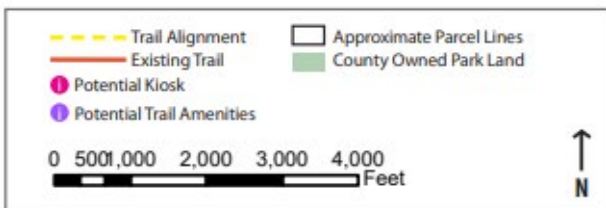
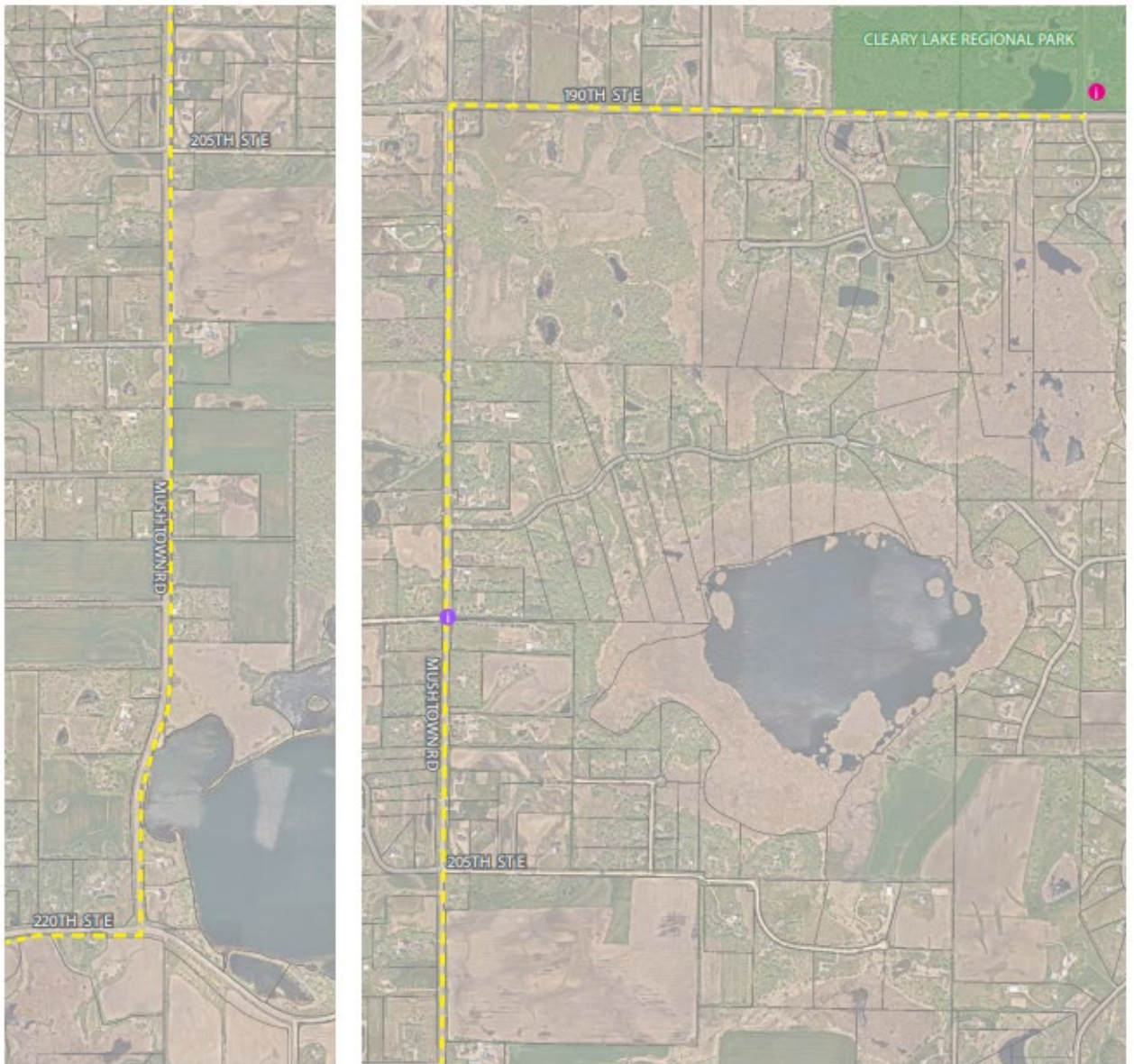


Figure 7. Shallow Waters Regional Trail Segment 4



Metropolitan Council

Figure 8. Shallow Waters Regional Trail Segment 5



**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SCOTT COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

Date: February 6, 2024

Resolution No.: 2024-42

Motion by Commissioner: Tom Wolf

Seconded by Commissioner: Jody Brennan

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-42; AUTHORIZING SUBMITTAL OF COUNTY REGIONAL TRAIL LONG RANGE PLANS TO THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL FOR ADDITION TO THE REGIONAL PARKS POLICY PLAN

WHEREAS, The Scott County 2040 Comprehensive Plan identified the Southern Scott and Louisville Regional Trail Search Corridors; and

WHEREAS, staff conducted an extensive planning and community engagement process to identify trail routes within these search corridors; and

WHEREAS, the County Board approved the release of draft plans for the Louisville-Merriam Junction Regional Trail Long Range Plan and the Shallow Waters Regional Trail Long Range Plan on November 21, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the plans were posted for a 30-day comment period and affected cities, townships, and the community design team were notified via email; and

WHEREAS, comments were received and the plans were updated as appropriate; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of long-range plans by the County and approval by the Metropolitan Council will allow Scott County to work to preserve and develop the trail corridors through the land development process, road construction, and other opportunities and make Scott County eligible for regional and state funding for acquisition and development of the trails; and

WHEREAS, the Scott County Parks Advisory Commission recommended that the County Board authorize submitting the plans to the Metropolitan Council.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners in and for the County of Scott, Minnesota, that the Louisville-Merriam Junction Regional Trail Long Range Plan be submitted to the Metropolitan Council for Addition to the Regional Parks Policy Plan.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Shallow Waters Regional Trail Long Range Plan be submitted to the Metropolitan Council for Addition to the Regional Parks Policy Plan.

VOTE RESULTS:

Yes: Barb Weckman Brekke, Tom Wolf, Jody Brennan, Dave Beer, Jon Ulrich

No: None

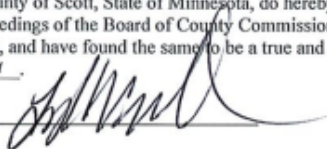
Absent:

Abstain: None

State of Minnesota)

County of Scott)

I, Lezlie A. Vermillion, duly appointed qualified County Administrator for the County of Scott, State of Minnesota, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of a resolution with the original minutes of the proceedings of the Board of County Commissioners, Scott County, Minnesota, at their session held on February 6, 2024 now on file in my office, and have found the same to be a true and correct copy thereof. Witness my hand and official seal at Shakopee, Minnesota, on February 6, 2024.



County Administrator

