

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: January 7, 2014

For the Community Development Committee meeting of January 21, 2014

Subject: Bruce Vento Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment, St. Paul

District(s), Member(s): MPOSC District G, Carrie Wasley

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statute 473.313

Staff Prepared/Presented: Jan Youngquist, AICP, Planning Analyst (651-602-1029)

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

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Bruce Vento Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment.
2. Notify the City of St. Paul that if the Metropolitan Council deems that signage along the regional trail realignment is needed for safety and security of the Green Line Operations and Maintenance Facility, the City of St. Paul will be required to provide and post the signage at its own cost.

Background

The Bruce Vento Regional Trail is jointly managed by the City of St. Paul and Ramsey County. St. Paul's portion of the regional trail corridor travels from the Lowertown area northeast through the city along a former Burlington Northern Railroad corridor to Larpenteur Avenue. North of Larpenteur Avenue, the trail travels through Maplewood to White Bear Township; this portion is managed by Ramsey County. The Bruce Vento Regional Trail Master Plan was amended by the City of St. Paul in 2008 to include the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary; Eastside Heritage Park; a connector trail to the Gateway State Trail along Phalen Boulevard; and a trail connection between Battle Creek-Indian Mounds Regional Park, the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and Lowertown. The Metropolitan Council approved the master plan amendment in May 2008.

Since the approval of the master plan amendment, the City of St. Paul has committed to constructing the Lowertown Ballpark, which will require the realignment of a portion of the Bruce Vento Regional Trail. A segment of the regional trail formerly followed John Street and 5th Street, southwest of I-94 and the Lafayette Bridge. These streets are being vacated for construction of the ballpark. This master plan amendment realigns the trail two blocks south of the ballpark, adjacent to the Metropolitan Council's Operations and Maintenance Facility for the future Green Line (Central Corridor Light Rail Transit).

Rationale

The Bruce Vento Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment is consistent with the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and other Council policies.

Funding

The estimated cost to implement the master plan is \$102,000 for trail development.

Approval of this master plan allows the development costs to be eligible for regional parks funding, but does not commit the Council to any funding at this time. Future funding based on this master plan amendment may be awarded through the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Council action is required to approve the CIP and to approve specific grants to the City of St. Paul.

Known Support / Opposition

The City of St. Paul passed a resolution approving and adopting the Bruce Vento Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment on December 4, 2013. There is no known opposition to the master plan amendment.

MASTER PLAN REVIEW ANALYSIS

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that master plans for regional linking trails address the nine items listed below.

1. Boundaries and Acquisition Costs

The Bruce Vento Regional Trail follows 4th Street southwest from the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary toward downtown St. Paul. Upon crossing under the Lafayette Bridge, the trail formerly traveled northwest on John Street and then southwest on 5th Street to Broadway Street. The Lowertown Ballpark project, which is currently under construction, required the vacation of 5th Street and John Street as well as realignment of the regional trail.

The master plan amendment proposes to remove 1,900 linear feet of trail from 5th Street, John Street and a portion of 4th Street. The realigned trail will travel south from 4th Street along Willius Street on the east side of the Lafayette Bridge and then southwest along Prince Street to Broadway Street for a distance of 2,000 linear feet. Both Willius and Prince Streets are planned streets that will be constructed by the City of St. Paul. The regional trail will be constructed as part of these roadway projects. The portion of the regional trail that follows Prince Street will be adjacent to the Metropolitan Council's Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) for the Green Line (Central Corridor Light Rail Transit). *Figure 1* shows the relationship between the regional trail, the proposed trail realignment, the Lowertown Ballpark and the Green Line OMF.

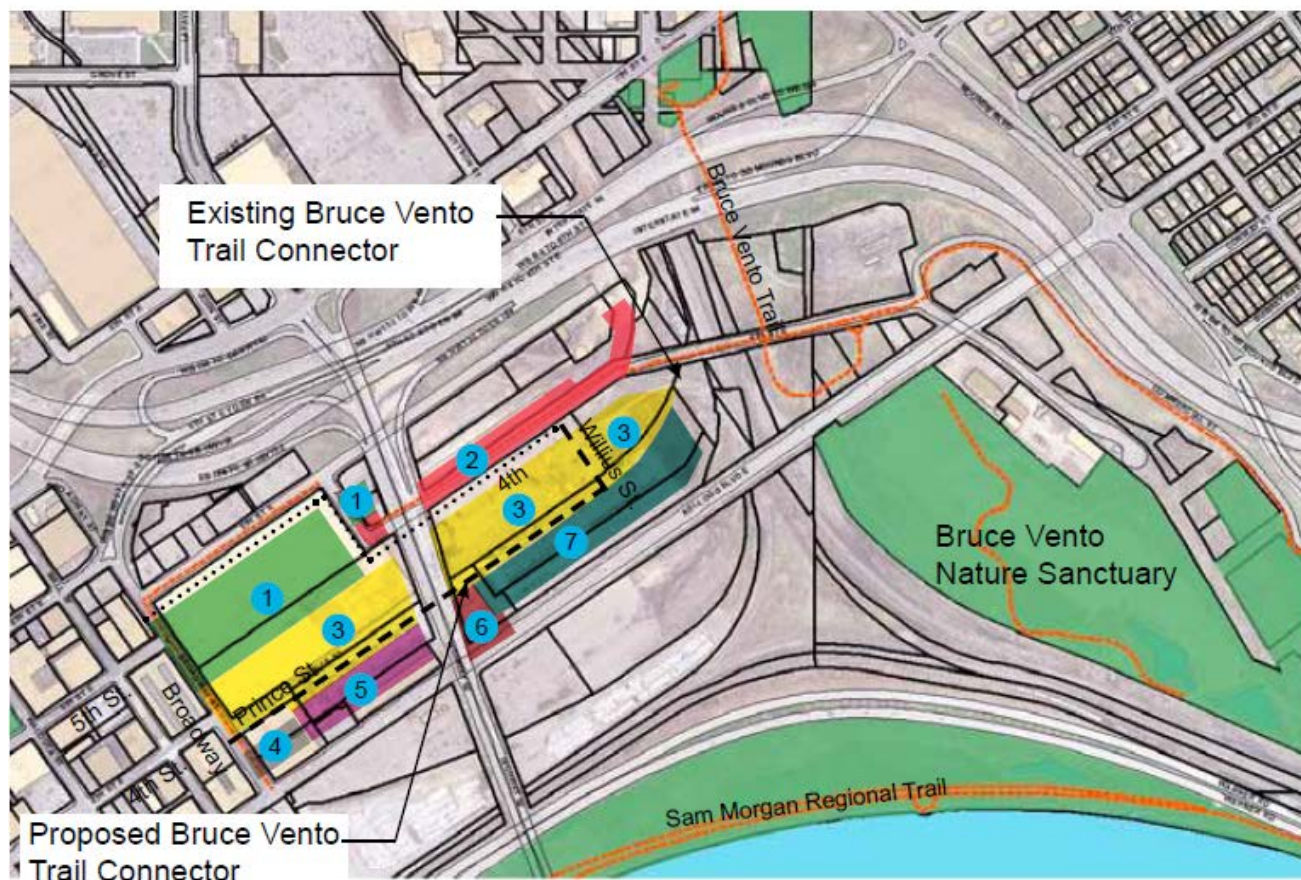
Figure 1: Bruce Vento Regional Trail Realignment Map



The Metropolitan Council has committed to dedicating right-of-way at no cost to the City of St. Paul for the construction of Willis Street, the northern portion of Prince Street and the regional trail realignment. The City of St. Paul acquired easements over three properties for the southern portion of Prince Street. *Figure 2* shows the relationship between the regional trail and property ownership in the area. The area in yellow and labeled as 3 on *Figure 2* is owned by the Metropolitan Council. The Green Line OMF is located on the portion of that property west of the Lafayette Bridge. The regional trail realignment is shown by the dashed black line on the south and east sides of the property.

There are no acquisition costs associated with the master plan amendment since the Metropolitan Council will dedicate right-of-way to the City of St. Paul. The costs incurred by the City of St. Paul for the easements on private property facilitate construction of Prince Street, but are not related to the regional trail.

Figure 2: Bruce Vento Regional Trail and Area Property Ownership



Current Land Owners

- 1 City of Saint Paul
- 2 401 E. 4th St. Bldg. Partnership
- 3 Metropolitan Council
- 4 Northern Warehouse

Recent Acquisitions

- 5 Larry Hyman
- 6 Donerly Inc.
- 7 D Oren B LLC

Legend

- Existing Trail to be removed
- - - Proposed Trail

2. Demand Forecast

In 2012, there were approximately 573,600 visits to the Bruce Vento Regional Trail, with 235,900 of those visits to the St. Paul portion of the trail corridor. Visitation to the regional trail increased more than 16% from 2011, when there were approximately 493,800 visits to the entire trail corridor and 194,600 to the St. Paul portion.

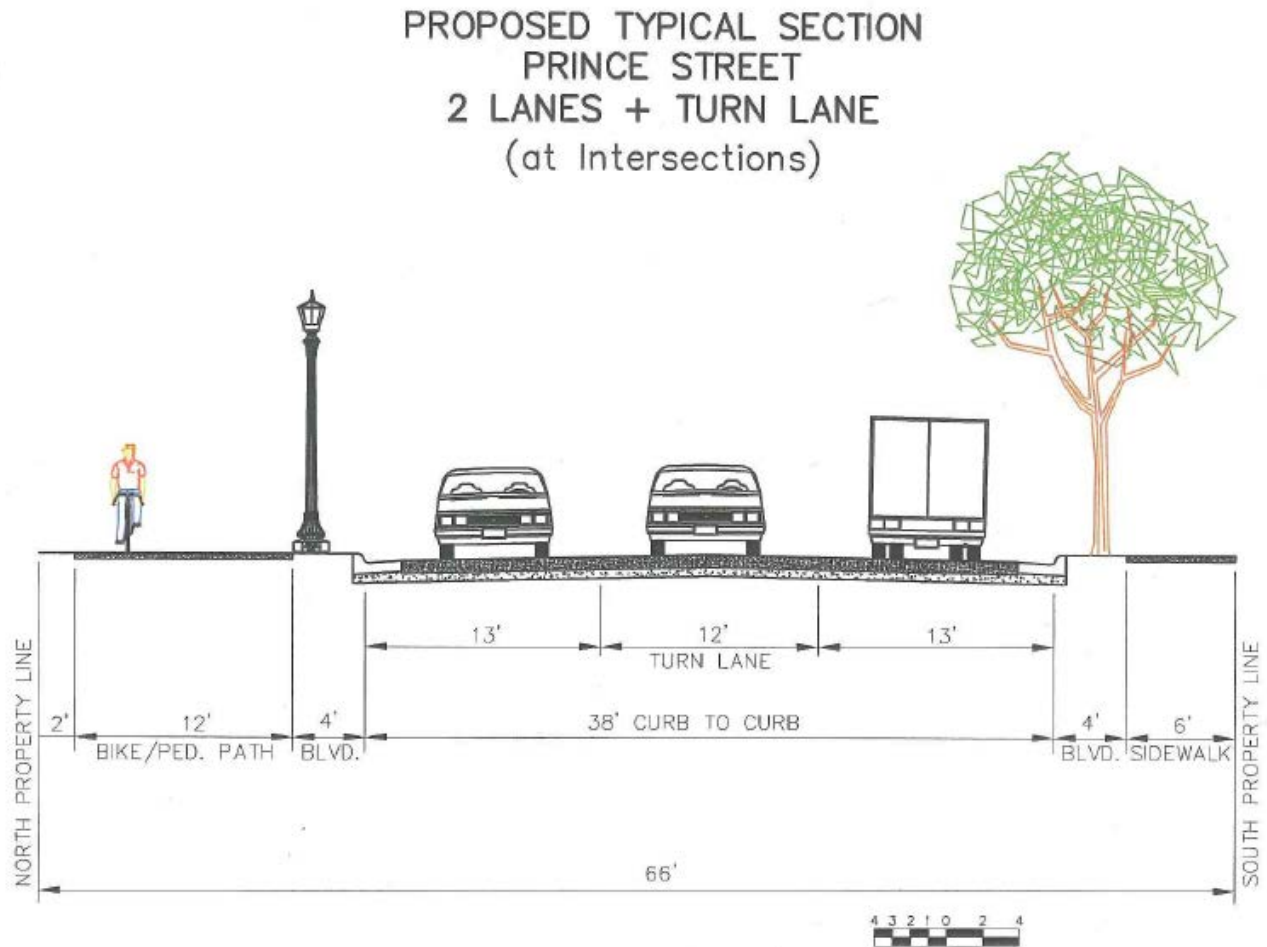
The Bruce Vento Regional Trail provides connections to the Gateway State Trail, Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, Battle-Creek Indian Mounds Regional Park and downtown St. Paul. The realigned trail segment described in the master plan amendment will provide additional connections to the Lowertown Ballpark and Union Depot, which is a regional hub for multi-modal transportation. Visitation to the Bruce Vento Regional Trail is anticipated to increase once the Lowertown Ballpark is open. The ballpark will be the official home of the St. Paul Saints baseball team and will host more than 100 non-baseball events annually. The

ballpark will consist of approximately 7,000 seats and is expected to draw over 400,000 people per year.

3. Development Concept

The realigned regional trail segment will be constructed in conjunction with the Prince and Willius Street project. The trail will be 12 feet wide and separated from the street by a 4 foot wide boulevard, as depicted in *Figure 3*. The estimated development cost for the regional trail realignment and signage is \$102,000.

Figure 3: Bruce Vento Regional Trail Realignment Typical Cross-Section



4. Conflicts

The master plan states that there are no known conflicts with the regional trail realignment.

5. Public Services

Realignment of a portion of the Bruce Vento Regional Trail will not require any non-recreational public services or facilities to serve it. The adjacent roadway project will include any required public services such as water or sewer as part of its construction.

6. Operations

The City of St. Paul operates and maintains the Bruce Vento Regional Trail. Maintenance of the regional trail includes: turf maintenance, brooming, snow removal, litter pickup and

waste disposal, annual trail and asphalt maintenance, and sealcoating. Public safety services are provided by the St. Paul Police Department, which patrols the area. Existing city rules, regulations and ordinances for usage and operations of the regional trail will apply.

7. Citizen Participation

The Lower Phalen Creek Project is an active public-private group of citizens invested in the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and the Bruce Vento Regional Trail. This group has provided input on the regional trail and is in favor of the new alignment. The community input process for the Lowertown Ballpark project included discussions about the trail alignment. Design task force members were in favor of the alignment.

8. Public Awareness

The regional trail realignment will be updated in the maps and brochures produced by the City of St. Paul as well as on the City's website.

9. Accessibility

The trail and its access will be designed in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines. Parking areas will provide accessible parking with ramps to access the trail. 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.

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig 651-602-1119) – No comments.

Transportation Planning (Russ Owen 651-602-1724) – No comments.

Metro Transit (Steve Mahowald 612-349-7775) – This regional trail will provide a good connection to the future Green Line and numerous bus routes on Broadway Street and at the Union Depot. There are no concerns from a transit perspective.

Central Corridor (Green Line) Project Office (Alicia Vap 651-602-1961) The master plan is consistent with what has been discussed between the City of St. Paul and Central Corridor Project Office staff with regard to the Prince and Willius Street construction project. The trail should be located outside of the Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) current fencing, and if appropriate, "No Trespassing" or other signage requested by the Metropolitan Council on its right-of-way should be provided by the City at its expense. The Metropolitan Council and the City of St. Paul also need to formally complete the transfer of right-of-way for Prince Street, Willius Street and this trail, which has not yet been done.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The Bruce Vento Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment is consistent with the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.
2. The estimated cost to implement the master plan is \$102,000 for trail development.
3. A portion of the regional trail realignment will be adjacent to the Green Line Operations and Maintenance Facility. For safety and security reasons, the Metropolitan Council may require "No Trespassing" or other signage on its right-of-way. If signage is deemed appropriate and necessary by the Metropolitan Council, the City of St. Paul should provide and post the signage at its own cost.
4. Approval of this master plan does not commit the Council to any funding at this time. Future development funding based on this master plan will be done through the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Council action is required to approve the CIP and to approve specific grants to St. Paul.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Bruce Vento Regional Trail Master Plan Amendment.
2. Notify the City of St. Paul that if the Metropolitan Council deems that signage along the regional trail realignment is needed for safety and security of the Green Line Operations and Maintenance Facility, the City of St. Paul will be required to provide and post the signage at its own cost.