

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: May 7, 2012

For the Community Development Committee meeting of May 20, 2013

Subject: Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail Extension Master Plan Amendment and Reimbursement Request for Trail Construction, Carver County

District(s), Member(s): MPOSC District B, Robert Moeller

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 Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail Extension Master Plan Amendment.
2. Consider reimbursing Carver County up to \$131,903 from its share of a future Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program for construction of a ¼ mile segment of the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail along County Road 40 between Jonathan Carver Parkway (CSAH 11) and the southern intersection of County Road 40 and Carver Bluffs Parkway. However, the Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.
3. Require that prior to initiating development of the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail, preliminary plans should be sent to Scott Dentz, Interceptor Engineering Manager (651-602-4503) at Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review in order to assess the potential impacts to the regional interceptor system.
4. Inform Carver County that only one alignment of the regional trail extension between downtown Carver and the southern intersection of County Road 40 and Carver Bluffs Parkway will be eligible for regional parks funding. Once the Metropolitan Council has granted funds for the development of a regional trail making this connection, any alternate alignments in the area will not be eligible for regional parks funding.
5. Notify Carver County that the proposed costs for paving Alternate Route 1 of the regional trail through the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge are not approved through this master plan amendment, since the US Fish and Wildlife Service has stipulated that the trail will remain a natural surface. If Carver County and the US Fish and Wildlife Service reach an agreement regarding paving this trail segment, the County shall submit the estimated costs and a copy of the agreement to the Metropolitan Council.

Background

The Metropolitan Council approved the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail Master Plan in April 2011. This master plan amendment proposes to extend the regional trail 1.8 miles southwest from downtown Carver to the border with Dahlgren Township. The trail will also connect to the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Bluff Park, a local park in the City of Carver. A ¼ mile segment of the regional trail is planned to be developed in 2013. Carver County has requested that the Metropolitan Council consider reimbursing the County up to \$131,903 from its share of in a future regional parks capital improvement program for construction of this trail segment.

Rationale

The Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail Extension Master Plan and request for reimbursement consideration are consistent with the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and other Council policies.

Funding

The estimated costs to implement the master plan are approximately \$1,259,000 to \$2,395,000 which includes \$124,000 for land acquisition and \$1,135,000 to \$2,395,000 for development. Funding based on this master plan and the future reimbursement for construction may be awarded through the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Council action is required to approve specific grants to Carver County.

Known Support / Opposition

The master plan includes a resolution of support for the master plan from the City of Carver and a letter of support from the US Fish and Wildlife Service for the proposed Alternate Route 1 that traverses the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, with the understanding that the trail will remain a natural surface, will be managed by Carver County, and will only be available for non-motorized use. There is no known opposition to the master plan.

Analysis

Master Plan: The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that destination regional trail master plans address the eleven items listed below.

1. Boundaries and Acquisition: The extension of the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail described in the master plan include two proposed segments that follow County Road 40 from Main Street at the south end of downtown Carver to the southern intersection of County Road 40 and Carver Bluffs Parkway. The majority of the regional trail corridor lies either within existing road right-of-way or along publicly-owned property. Carver County anticipates entering into cooperative agreements with the City of Carver and the USFWS for use of their land if needed.

Two alternate routes are also proposed; Alternate Route 1 travels through the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Alternate Route 2 is situated between Carver Creek and a bluff. The land through which Alternate Route 1 travels is owned by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). If this route is selected, Carver County anticipates needing an agreement with the USFWS to either utilize or acquire the property. A land exchange may be possible in which Carver County would purchase a parcel to swap with the USFWS for the property containing the trail location. At this time, no specific parcels for a land exchange have been identified, but it is estimated that approximately \$100,000 would be necessary for land acquisition.

A portion of Segment 2 and Alternate Route 2 is owned by the Carver Bluffs Homeowners Association and the City of Carver. The property owned by the City of Carver is the location of a wastewater treatment plant that is being decommissioned by the City of Carver and Metropolitan Council in 2013. A portion of the property owned by the Carver Bluffs Homeowner's Association may need to be acquired. The estimated acquisition cost is \$24,000.

Segments 1 and 2 and Alternate Routes 1 and 2 are depicted on **Figures 1 and 2**. The property owned by the Carver Bluffs Homeowner's Association, a portion of which may need to be acquired for the regional trail, is outlined in black on **Figure 3**.

Figure 1: West Portion of Regional Trail Extension



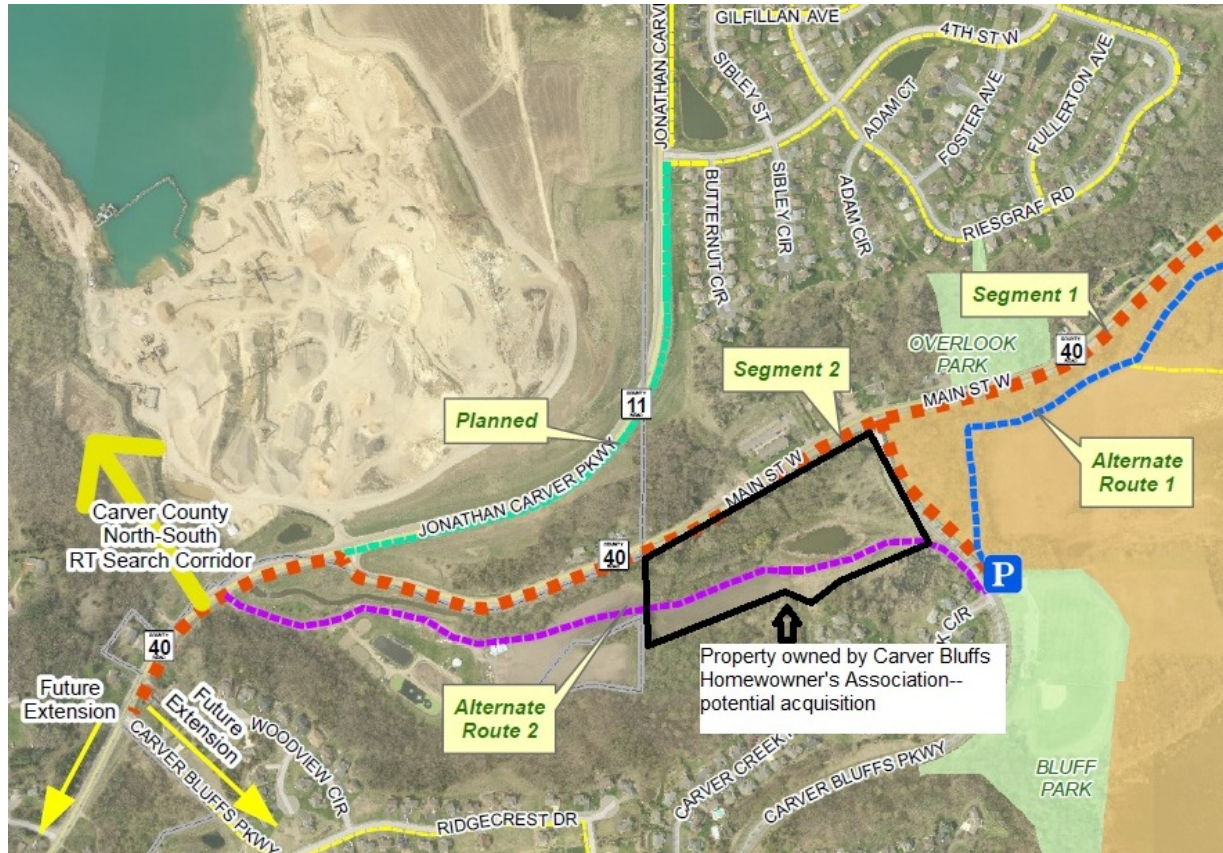
Corridor Map (2 of 2)
MN River Bluffs Regional Trail Extension

Figure 2: East Portion of Regional Trail Extension



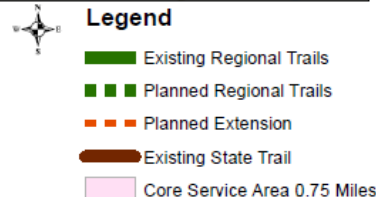
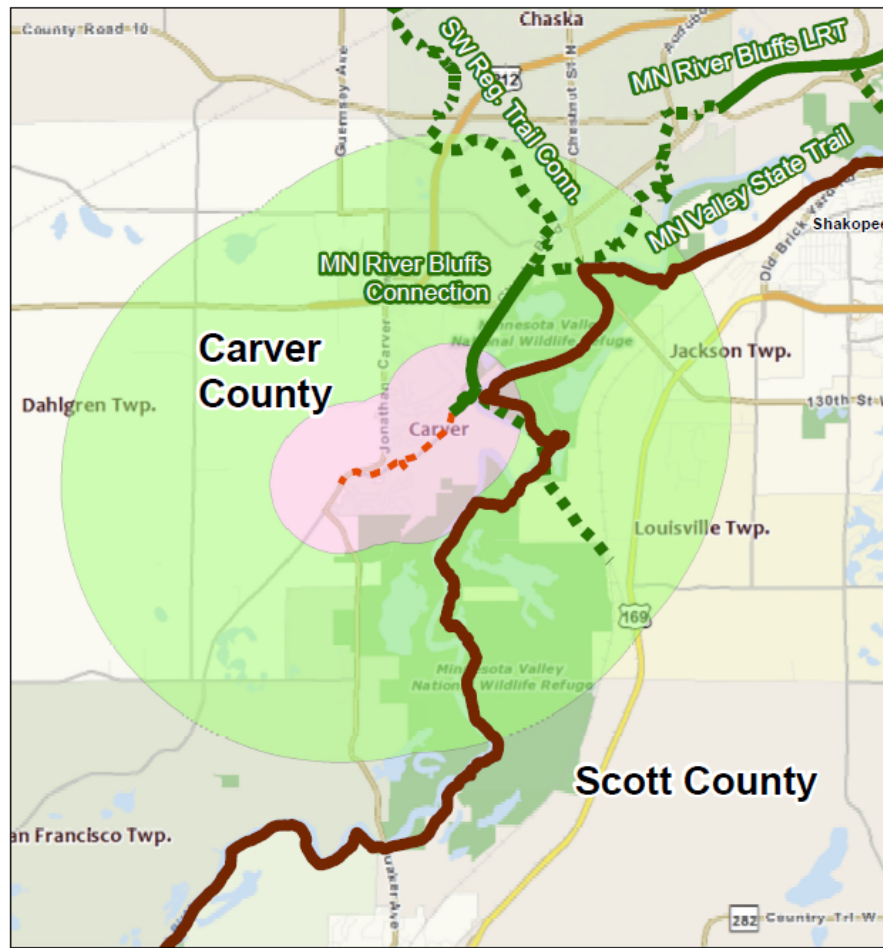
Corridor Map (1 of 2)
MN River Bluffs Regional Trail Extension

Figure 3: Privately Owned Property for Potential Acquisition



2. Demand Forecast: Fifty percent of regional trail users live within .75 mile of the trail, which is known as its core service area. The master plan indicates that the population of the core service area was 5,055 as of the 2010 US Census. Seventy-five percent of regional trail users live within 3 miles of the trail, which is known as its primary service area. The primary service area for the regional trail extension was 33,864 in 2010. Long term population forecasts indicate that 63,530 people will live in the communities that make up the primary service area of the trail by 2030. The development of planned connections to other regional trails and the trail bridge across the Minnesota River to Scott County, coupled with the projected population growth, will increase the demand for the regional trail. **Figure 4** depicts the core and primary service areas for the trail.

Figure 4: Core and Primary Service Areas



Primary Service Area
 MN River Bluffs Regional Trail
 Extension

3. Development Concept: The regional trail will be 10 feet wide with a minimum two-foot clearance on both sides. The trail will have a bituminous or crushed rock agricultural lime surface. A bituminous trail surface treatment is preferred in the long term since it is more cost effective over its life cycle. A crushed rock agricultural lime surface may be used as an interim trail improvement. The USFWS has indicated that if Alternate Route 1 through the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge is selected, that portion of the regional trail will remain a natural surface.

There will be two at-grade road crossings along the trail route, which will be on local streets with low traffic volumes. These road crossings will be designed with striping and signage that is consistent with the Minnesota Department of Transportation standards.

Trailheads will be located at Depot Park in the City of Carver, which was identified in the original master plan for the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail. A trailhead already exists at Bluff Park, a local park owned by the City of Carver. The City also has a planned park that can serve as a trailhead on the west side of Jonathan Carver Parkway (CSAH 11) at its intersection with County Road 40.

Waste receptacles, restroom facilities, benches, and bike racks may be provided along the route. Upon permit approval, each local community will be responsible for installing and maintaining these features long the regional trail route. Informational and directional signage will also be installed along the trail.

Each proposed segment of the regional trail and its estimated associated development costs are described below:

Segment 1—This segment is adjacent to County Road 40 and extends from downtown Carver to Bluff Park. Connection to the Bluff Park trailhead would require either improvement to the bridge that crosses Carver Creek or construction of a new bridge.

Item	Estimated Cost
Trail Construction	\$770,000
Bridge	\$300,000
Creek Restoration and Erosion Control	\$250,000
Landscaping and Vegetation	\$100,000
Miscellaneous Amenities (signage, benches, etc...)	\$25,000
Total for Segment 1	\$1,445,000

Segment 2—This segment extends from the northern intersection of County Road 40 and Carver Bluffs Parkway to the southern intersection of County Road 40 and Carver Bluffs Parkway. (Carver Bluffs Parkway is a looped street that has two access points to County Road 40). County Road 40 crosses over Carver Creek through an existing culvert. Preliminary engineering shows that the culvert is of sufficient size to accommodate the addition of a trail. However, the need for enhancement or changes to the structure may be identified when full engineering has been completed.

Item	Estimated Cost
Trail Construction	\$546,000
Creek Restoration and Erosion Control	\$150,000
Landscaping and Vegetation	\$100,000
Miscellaneous Amenities (signage, benches, etc...)	\$30,000
Total for Segment 2	\$826,000

Alternate Route 1—This segment extends from downtown Carver to Bluff Park, traveling through the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, which is owned and operated by the USFWS. An existing unpaved trail exists in this section and includes a bridge that crosses Carver Creek. The bridge may require some modifications to accommodate the trail. Further investigations and discussions between Carver County and the USFWS are needed to determine the feasibility of this trail route. The master plan includes a letter of support from the USFWS for the proposed route with the understanding that the trail will remain a natural surface, will be managed by Carver County, and will only be available for non-motorized use. The letter is included as **Attachment 1**. If Alternate Route 1 is selected, it would replace Segment 1 as the preferred alignment.

Item	Estimated Cost
Trail and Bridge Upgrades	\$250,000
Creek Restoration and Erosion Control	\$250,000
Landscaping and Vegetation	\$25,000
Miscellaneous Amenities (signage, benches, etc...)	\$10,000
Total for Alternate Route 1	\$535,000

The master plan includes estimated development costs for paving the existing trail through Alternate Route 1, which are not included in the table above. Council staff does not support these estimated costs as part of the master plan due to the stipulations outlined in the USFWS letter.

Alternate Route 2—This segment extends from the trailhead at Bluff Park, though land that is characterized by floodplain and is situated between Carver Creek and a bluff. If Alternate Route 2 is selected, it will replace a portion of Segment 2 as the preferred alignment.

Item	Estimated Cost
Trail Construction	\$475,000
Landscaping and Vegetation	\$100,000
Miscellaneous Amenities (signage, benches, etc...)	\$25,000
Total for Alternate Route 2	\$600,000

Depending on which trail routes are selected, the estimated trail development costs range from \$1,135,000 to \$2,395,000.

- 4. Conflicts:** Much of the trail corridor is surrounded or bounded by public lands owned by the City of Carver and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The only privately owned parcel along the corridor is a homeowner’s association outlot that is undevelopable. Adjacent property owners have expressed support for the trail development.
- 5. Public Services:** The proposed regional trail corridor is located adjacent to public land that can provide access to the trail and provide services including parking, information and water. The trail will not require additional public services to be operational.
- 6. Operations:** Carver County’s Park Ordinance defines the rule and regulations of its regional parks and trails to provide for safe and peaceful use. The ordinances will be enforced for all users and activities. Public safety will be monitored by the Carver County Sheriff’s office, which will patrol the trail.

Ongoing trail maintenance will include mowing the shoulders, cleaning the trail surface, litter and debris cleanup, trash removal and safety inspections. Vegetation management will include weed control as well as trimming trees and shrubs to maintain clearance. Asphalt crack repair will occur every five years where needed, with seal coating every ten years. Signs and lane striping will be replaced or updated as needed.

The estimated annual maintenance costs of the regional trail extension are \$5,000 (in 2013 dollars). The County will explore collaborative opportunities with the City of Carver and the USFWS to find cost-efficient methods to provide operations, maintenance and public safety services within the regional trail corridor. A portion of the operations and maintenance funding will come from the State of Minnesota through the Operations and Maintenance Fund allocation administered by the Metropolitan Council.

7. Citizen Participation: Initial support for the trail was brought forward in the development of the County's *2030 Comprehensive Plan*. Opportunities for public comment on this master plan were provided at the following meetings:

Dahlgren Town Board	March 11, 2013
Carver County Park Commission	March 12, 2013
City of Carver Park Board	March 25, 2013
City of Carver City Council	April 1, 2013
Carver County Board of Commissioners	April 2, 2013

The City of Carver passed a resolution of support for the regional trail, which was included in the master plan.

8. Public Awareness: Carver County will notify residents of the trail development through press releases to the media, publications including the Carver County Parks Trailhead and City of Carver publications, as well as park-related mailings, brochures and newsletters. The trail will also be promoted on the County's website as well as active living and biking resources online, including GoCarverGo and Cyclopath.

9. Accessibility: The regional trail will be designed to meet or exceed the Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines. Carver County does not charge a fee to use the trail, making it accessible to all.

10. Stewardship Plan: Much of the trail is proposed to be developed within or adjacent to existing road right-of-way; therefore no applicable stewardship is needed for these segments. Alternate Route 1 travels through the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, which is managed by the USFWS. If Alternate Route 1 is selected, a Memorandum of Understanding that addresses stewardship of the corridor and formalizes each party's roles and responsibilities will be executed by Carver County and the USFWS.

11. Natural Resources: The planned alignment for Segments 1 and 2 follow CSAH 40 and are located within or adjacent to road right-of-way and do not contain natural resources. Natural resource lands are located within the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, through which Alternate Route 1 passes. Impacts to natural resources along the regional trail route will be avoided through the use of best management practices. The County will work with the USFWS to provide consistent management of vegetation and enhance native plant communities and habitat within the corridor.

Reimbursement Consideration: Carver County and the City of Carver plan to construct a ¼ mile segment of the regional trail along County Road 40 between Jonathan Carver Parkway (CSAH 11) and the southern intersection of County Road 40 and Carver Bluffs Parkway during the 2013 construction season. The estimated cost for this work is \$131,903. Carver County is requesting that these costs be considered for reimbursement in a future regional parks capital improvement program. The request for reimbursement consideration is consistent with Finance Strategy 6 from the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, which states:

Finance Strategy 6: Reimbursement

"...Reimbursement will be considered for development provided the project in question is consistent in timing, scale, type and cost with an approved master plan; that all information required for the development grant is submitted to the Council prior to the regional park implementing agency undertaking the project; and that the Council approves the project..."

This request meets the terms of Finance Strategy 6 for the following reasons:

1. The timing, scale and cost for the construction of a segment of the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail along County Road 40 between Jonathan Carver Parkway (CSAH 11) and the southern intersection of County Road 40 and Carver Bluffs Parkway is consistent with the master plan that is concurrently being considered for approval with this reimbursement consideration request.
2. Sufficient information has been submitted in this request regarding what would be financed with a Council grant to meet the requirements of Finance Strategy 6. In this case, that information is contained in the County's letter **Attachment 2**.
3. Carver County is requesting Metropolitan Council approval for County expenditures on this project prior to undertaking it.

Review by Other Council Divisions

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig 651-602-1119) Metropolitan Council Interceptor (8038-1) is located within County Road 40 right-of-way. This project may impact the interceptor. The interceptor was built in 2010 and is a 36 inch PVC Pipe at a depth of approximately 8 to 16 feet. To assess the potential impacts to our interceptor system, prior to initiating this project, preliminary plans should be sent to Scott Dentz, Interceptor Engineering Manager (651-602-4503) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review and comment.

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

Transportation Planning (Ann Braden 651-602-1705) – No comments.

Conclusions

1. The Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail Extension Master Plan Amendment is consistent with the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and other Council policies.
2. The estimated costs to implement the master plan are approximately \$1,259,000 to \$2,395,000 which includes \$124,000 for land acquisition and \$1,135,000 to \$2,395,000 for development.
3. The regional trail route may have a potential impact on MCES facilities. In order to maintain the integrity of the regional sewer system, preliminary development plans for the regional trail should be submitted to Scott Dentz, Interceptor Engineering Manager (651-602-4503) at Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review and comment.
4. Approval of this master plan amendment does not commit the Metropolitan Council to any funding at this time. Future funding based on this master plan would be granted through the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Land Acquisition Opportunity Fund. Council action is required to approve the CIP and to approve specific grants to Carver County.
5. The proposed costs for paving Alternate Route 1 of the regional trail through the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge should not be approved through this master plan amendment, since the US Fish and Wildlife Service has stipulated that the trail must remain a natural surface.
6. The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that requests for CIP reimbursement consideration are consistent with the terms of Finance Strategy 6. This review concludes that Carver County's request for reimbursement consideration of up to \$131,903 for construction of a segment of the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail is consistent with the terms of Finance Strategy 6. The timing of when Carver County is reimbursed for any portion of the \$131,903 is dependent on when funds are provided in future Regional Parks Capital Improvement Programs.
7. The Council does not under any circumstances represent or guarantee that a reimbursement will be granted, and expenditure of local funds never entitles a park agency to reimbursement.

Attachment 1: Letter from the US Fish and Wildlife Service



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
and Wetland Management District
3815 American Blvd East
Bloomington, Minnesota 55425

In Reply Refer to:
FWS/R3/NWRS/MNV

Mr. Martin Walsh
Carver County Parks Director
Carver County Parks
11360 Hwy 212 West
Cologne, Minnesota 55322

Dear Mr. Walsh:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Master Plan Amendment for the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail. Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge is in support of the amendment to include a short section of the Refuge's *Carver Creek Loop Trail* as Alternative Route 1 of the River Bluffs Regional Trail. The section identified in Alternative Route 1 is a natural surface trail on Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge property that runs from Bluff Park (102 Carver Bluffs Parkway, Carver, MN) to Ash Street in the town of Carver, MN. The Refuge supports designating this section of trail as an alternative route with the understanding it will remain a natural surface trail, will be maintained by Carver County, and only non-motorized uses will be allowed on the trail. The Refuge is open to discussions on improvements to the natural surface, but does not support any type of paved surface for this section of trail.

Should the amendment be approved, the Refuge would seek to formalize the roles and responsibilities of each party through a signed Memorandum of Understanding. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself at 952-858-0722 or my staff member Beth Ullenberg at 952-858-0712.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Holler
Deputy Refuge Manager

Attachment 2: Letter from Marty Walsh, Carver County



Carver County Parks

Department of Public Works

11360 Highway 212
Suite 2
Cologne, MN 55322
Phone (952) 466-5250 Fax (952) 466-5223
www.co.carver.mn.us/parks

11360 Hwy. 212, Suite 1
Cologne, Minnesota 55322
Phone (952) 466-5200
Fax (952) 466-5223

April 29, 2013

Arne Stefferud
Metropolitan Council
390 North Robert Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Arne:

The Carver County Board of Commissioners acted on April 2, 2013 to approve the Minnesota River Bluffs Extension Regional trail Master Plan, Amendment No.1 contingent upon approval of the Metropolitan Council.

The proposed master plan amendment adds an additional 1.8 miles of planned regional trail in the City of Carver. I have attached a copy of the proposed master plan amendment for review and consideration by the Parks and Open Space Commission on May 7, 2013.

Related, the City of Carver and Carver County plan to construct a section of the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail consistent with the proposed master plan amendment during the 2013 construction season. This section of trail is approximately 1/4 mile in length and lies along Jonathan Carver Parkway/County Road 11 between the intersections of County Road 40 and Carver Bluffs Parkway. The estimated cost to construct this planned segment of proposed regional trail is \$131,903. The attached map further identifies the project area for the trail to be constructed. Carver County requests that construction costs for the above described trail be eligible for reimbursement in a future CIP of the Metropolitan Council.

Please contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martin J. Walsh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Martin J. Walsh
Parks Director

Attachments:



Corridor Map (2 of 2)

MN River Bluffs Regional Trail Extension



- P** Trailhead
- Existing Trails/Sidewalks
- Existing Regional Trails
- Planned Regional Trails
- Planned Extension
- Existing State Trail
- Alternate Route 1
- Alternate Route 2

Part 2 - Trail Improvements from CSAH 40 to Carver Bluffs Parkway (10' Wide)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Unit Price</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>
Mobilization	LS	1	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00
Traffic control	LS	1	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Clear and grub	LS	1	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
New tree	EA	0	\$400.00	\$0.00
Trim trees	LS	0	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Salvage and reinstall sprinkler system	LF	0	\$8.00	\$0.00
12" CMP storm sewer	LF	24	\$50.00	\$1,200.00
12" CMP flared end section	EA	2	\$300.00	\$600.00
18" RCP storm sewer	LF	10	\$50.00	\$500.00
18" RCP flared end section	EA	1	\$300.00	\$300.00
Adjust Sanitary Manhole	EA	3	\$250.00	\$750.00
Rip rap, class 3	CY	4	\$100.00	\$400.00
Remove existing catchbasin	EA	0	\$600.00	\$0.00
Construct structure over existing pipe	EA	0	\$4,000.00	\$0.00
Remove and replace concrete curb and gutter	LF	105	\$30.00	\$3,150.00
Patch bituminous street	SY	25	\$100.00	\$2,500.00
Common excavation (EV)	CY	250	\$20.00	\$5,000.00
Aggregate base, Class 5	TN	580	\$22.00	\$12,760.00
Bituminous base course, Type LV 4 (B)	TN	190	\$100.00	\$19,000.00
Bituminous wear course, Type LV 4 (B)	TN	145	\$100.00	\$14,500.00
Improved trail foundation	TN	60	\$60.00	\$3,600.00
Concrete pedestrian ramp	SF	348	\$13.00	\$4,524.00
Truncated domes	SF	64	\$50.00	\$3,200.00
Seed and mulch	AC	0.65	\$2,500.00	\$1,625.00
Sod	SY	0.0	\$4.00	\$0.00
Erosion control blanket	SY	475	\$5.00	\$2,375.00
Street sweeper with operator	HR	2	\$125.00	\$250.00
Crosswalk - zebra striping (paint)	SF	250	\$7.00	\$1,750.00
Adjust existing sign	EA	3	\$300.00	\$900.00
Signage	SF	27.8	\$40.00	\$1,110.00
Silt fence, regular	LF	1,210	\$3.00	\$3,630.00
Subtotal - Construction				\$91,624.00
+ 20% Contingencies				\$18,325.00
Total - Construction				\$109,949.00
+ 20% Indirect Costs (rounded)				\$21,954.00
Total Estimated Project Costs - Part 2				\$131,903.00