

## Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: November 12, 2013

For the Community Development Committee meeting of November 18, 2013

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**Subject:** Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail Master Plan, Three Rivers Park District

**District(s), Member(s):** MPOSC District B, Robert Moeller and District C, Vacant

**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

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### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail Master Plan.
2. Require that if the MAC Alternative Alignment is selected as the preferred route for the regional trail, Three Rivers Park District should submit documentation of its compliance with Federal Aviation Administration regulations as well as the required approvals from the Metropolitan Airports Commission, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and the Cities of Richfield and Bloomington to the Metropolitan Council prior to seeking regional parks funding for this route.
3. Require that prior to initiating development of the Nine Mile Creek 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.

### Background

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* identifies a proposed regional trail between the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail in Hopkins and the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Bloomington. Three Rivers Park District has completed an extensive planning process to determine the alignment of the regional trail and has submitted a master plan for the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail, which will travel through Hopkins, Minnetonka, Edina, Richfield and Bloomington along its 15 mile route. The trail will generally follow its namesake, Nine Mile Creek, for several miles and will provide connections to existing and planned regional trails, local parks, schools, churches, commercial areas and employment centers. An alternative alignment extending east from Richfield through Metropolitan Airport Commission property is also proposed.

### Rationale

The Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail Master Plan 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 \$25,072,318, which includes \$1,613,715 for easement acquisition and \$23,458,603 for development.

Approval of this master plan makes the acquisition and development costs eligible for regional parks funding, but does not commit the Council to any funding. Future funding based on this master plan may be awarded through the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund. Council action is required to approve the CIP and to approve specific grants to Three Rivers Park District.

### Known Support / Opposition

The master plan includes resolutions of support from the Cities of Bloomington and Richfield and a letter of support from the Metropolitan Airports Commission. An executed cooperative agreement between the Cities of Hopkins, Minnetonka, Nine Mile Creek Watershed District and Three Rivers Park District for development of the regional trail is included in the master plan. Documentation of the City of Edina's support for the creek-based route of the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail is also included in the master plan. No opposition to the master plan was expressed to the Metropolitan Council.

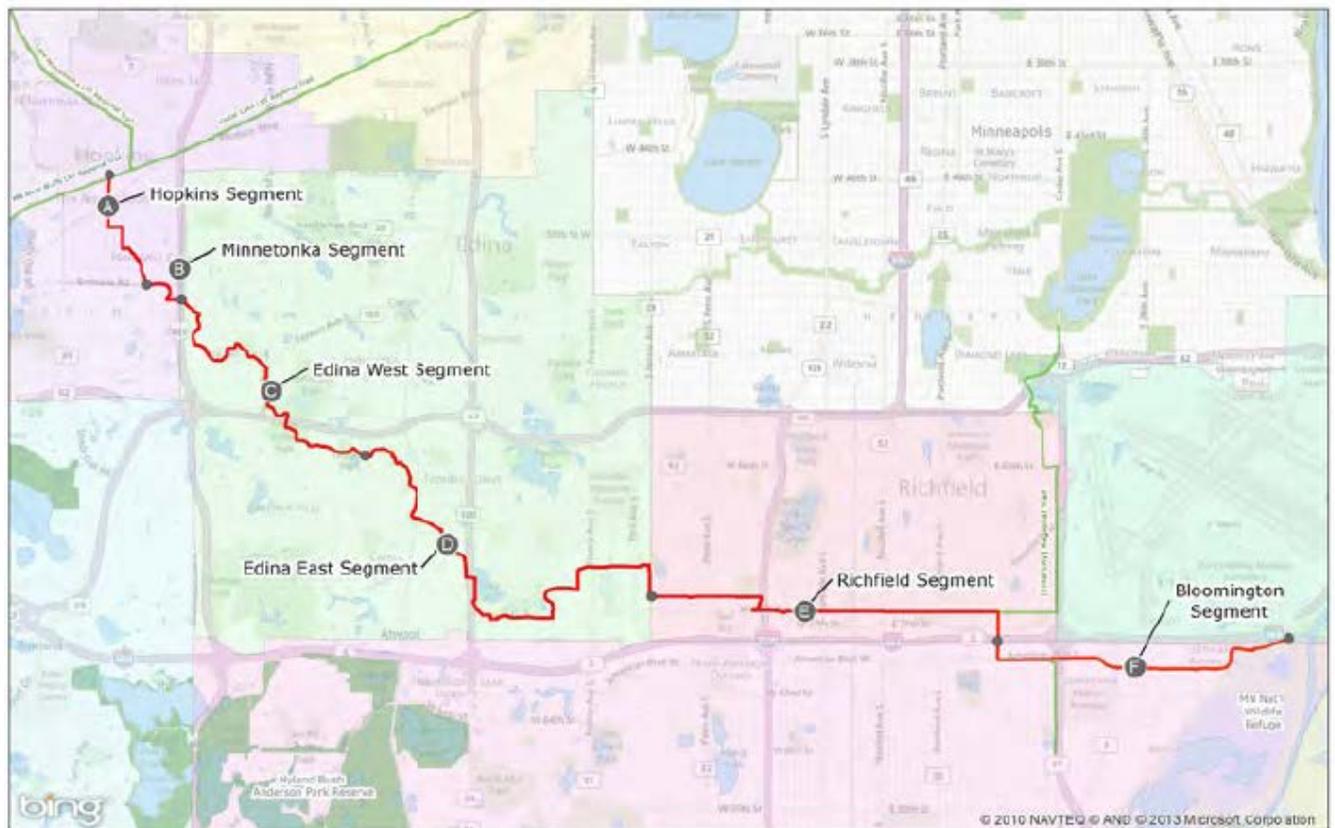
### MASTER PLAN REVIEW ANALYSIS

The 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan requires that master plans for regional destination trails address the eleven items listed below.

#### 1. Boundaries and Acquisition Costs

The Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail will travel through Hopkins, Minnetonka, Edina, Richfield and Bloomington along its 15 mile route. *Figure 1* shows the general alignment of the preferred route.

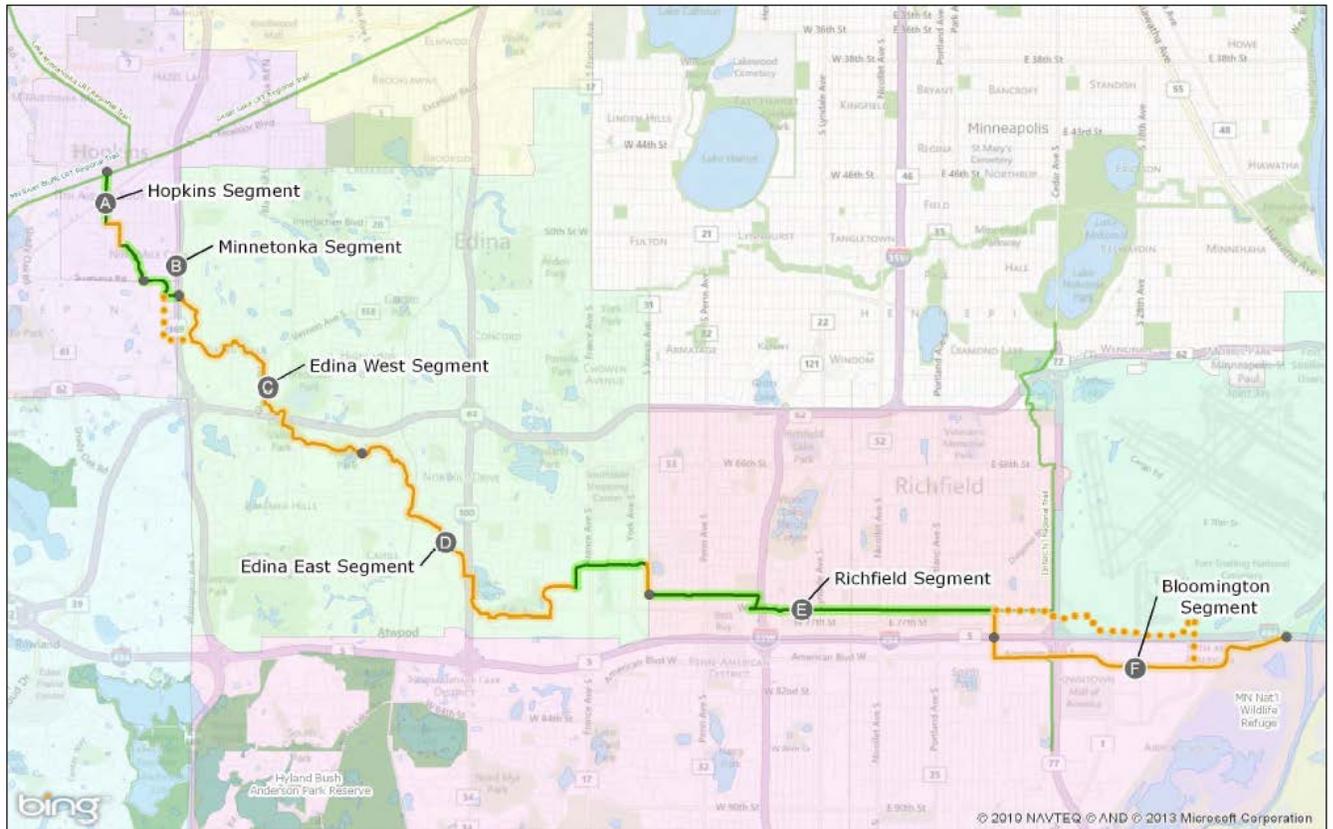
**Figure 1: Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail Preferred Route Segment Map**



**Hopkins:** In Hopkins, the regional trail will connect to the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail, which will provide access to the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail, the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail and the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail. The Hopkins segment of the regional trail is 1.15 miles. Currently, .85 miles of the trail exists; a .3-mile segment is planned to be developed in 2016 in association with future road improvements. A .43-mile stretch of the existing regional trail will require improvements to meet regional trail width standards of 10 feet.

Figure 2 depicts the development status of the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail segments.

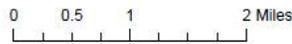
**Figure 2: Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail Segment Status Map**



**Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail | Segment Status**

Map prepared by Three Rivers Park District Planning Department - AR September 4, 2013

This GIS Data is provided "as is" without warranty of any representation of accuracy, timeliness, or completeness. The user acknowledges and accepts the limitations of the Data, including the fact that the Data is dynamic and is in a constant state of maintenance, correction, and update.



Open  
Current Planning



**Minnetonka:** The .38-mile segment of the regional trail in Minnetonka was constructed in 2012 as part of a Nine Mile Creek Watershed District and City of Minnetonka creek restoration project. The crossing at Trunk Highway 169 is not complete and is planned in conjunction with trail construction in Edina. If the TH 169 crossing is determined to not be feasible during the design phase, Three Rivers Park District will work with the City of Minnetonka to upgrade existing infrastructure along an alternate route and cross TH 169 at Londonderry Drive/Bren Road, which is shown by the dotted orange line in Figure 2.

**Edina:** The segment through Edina is 7.38 miles and has been divided into two segments, since it may be implemented in two phases. The west segment follows Nine Mile Creek and travels through several local parks and wetland complexes to Tracy Avenue, south of TH 62 between TH 169 and TH 100. The west segment has not yet been built. The east segment follows Nine Mile Creek to TH 100, where it will cross the highway at a new grade-separated pedestrian/bicycle bridge to connect to parkland at Lake Edina. From there, the trail will continue south then east to Fred Richards Golf Course. From the golf course, the trail will follow Gallagher Drive and head east across France Avenue. The Gallagher Drive segment of the trail was built in 2012 as part of a road reconstruction project. From France Avenue, the trail will continue east through the Edina Promenade and Yorktown Park. There are existing trails in this area that will serve as part of the regional trail corridor, but will remain under the jurisdictional control of the City of Edina.

The Edina segments of the regional trail are primarily located within parkland, although easements will need to be secured at the following locations:

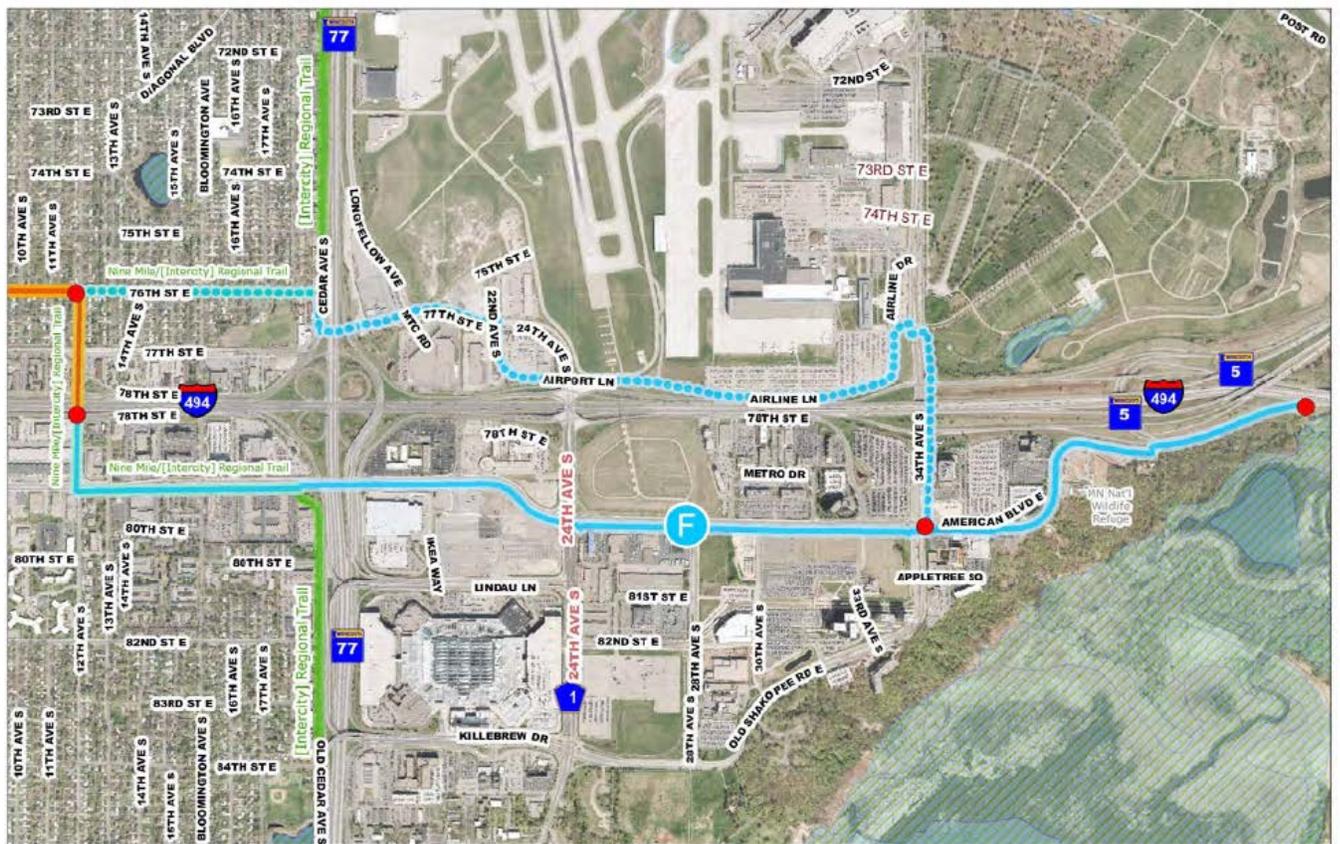
- Former United Health complex
- Edina Middle/High School
- Creek Baptist Church
- Burgundy Condos
- Fred Richards Golf Course area

**Richfield:** In Richfield, the 3.14-mile segment is complete and open to the public. The trail follows 75<sup>th</sup> Street to Humboldt Avenue, which is just east of I-35W. The trail extends south along Humboldt to 76<sup>th</sup> Street. The trail follows 76<sup>th</sup> Street east through Richfield to the planned Intercity Regional Trail at 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The Richfield segment of the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail was built as part of a Metropolitan Council Environmental Services project to extend and upgrade a regional sewer interceptor. Portions of the Richfield segment are less than the desired 10-foot width, due to limited right-of-way and the existence of adjacent bike lanes. If future trail use warrants a wider trail section, Three Rivers Park District will acquire additional right-of-way on a willing seller basis, as resources allow; however, the need for additional acquisition is not foreseen in the near future.

**Bloomington:** The 3.04-mile Bloomington segment will use a portion of the planned Intercity Regional Trail along 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, crossing over I-494 on a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge to American Boulevard, then heading east to Cedar Avenue. From Cedar Avenue, the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail will leave the Intercity Regional Trail corridor and head east to the existing trail crossing of the Minnesota River at I-494, adjacent to the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MVNWR) Visitor Center. Bloomington is undertaking a large-scale redevelopment project of the South Loop District, which is east of the Mall of America. The alignment of the trail through this area is intended to be flexible and responsive to the South Loop redevelopment efforts. The master plan indicates that the City of Bloomington, as a regional park implementing agency, will be responsible for developing and operating the segment of the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail through its jurisdiction. This segment is contingent on the City of Bloomington's ability to secure additional right-of-way, reconfigure the TH 77 underpass to better accommodate the regional trail and improve the existing sidewalk/trail. Given the complexities of these trail planning factors and the City of Richfield's support for an alternative route through Metropolitan Airport Commission (MAC) property, an alternative alignment is proposed.

**MAC Alternative Alignment:** An alternative alignment is proposed through Metropolitan Airport Commission (MAC) property adjacent to the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, as shown by the dotted blue line in *Figure 3*. This route will continue along the Intercity Regional Trail alignment at 76<sup>th</sup> Street from 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Cedar Avenue. From Cedar Avenue, it will cross TH 77 via a future underpass. The underpass will serve as a reliever to the I-494 corridor and is a high priority for the City of Richfield. The trail will follow 77<sup>th</sup> Street to 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue. After traveling south on 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the trail will follow Airport Lane to 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue through right-of-way that is under the control of MAC and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. At 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the trail will extend south under I-494 to American Boulevard through a new diverging diamond interchange that is currently under construction. The trail will then follow the primary alignment along American Boulevard to the MVNWR Visitor Center.

**Figure 3: Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail—Bloomington MAC Alternative Alignment**



Three Rivers Park District estimates that easement acquisition costs for the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail are approximately \$1,613,715. Three Rivers Park District’s portion of the acquisition costs within Hopkins and Edina are approximately \$1,092,425 and the Bloomington portion is approximately \$521,290.

*Figure 4* provides a summary of the regional trail segments and the acquisition needs.

**Figure 4: Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail Segment Summary and Acquisition Needs**

| Community   | Trail Length | Status   | Acquisition Needs  | Estimated Acquisition Cost |
|-------------|--------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| Hopkins     | 1.15         | .85 miles complete, .43 miles will need improvements to meet regional trail standards. The remaining .3-mile segment planned for 2016 construction | Easement needed along 11th Avenue  | \$ 30,000                  |
| Minnetonka  | 0.38         | Completed in 2012 with Nine Mile Creek Watershed and City of Minnetonka creek restoration project  | None for preferred route. Alternate route may include acquisition needs.   | \$ -                       |
| Edina       | 7.38         | Generally unbuilt, existing trail segments in the Edina Promenade and Yorktown Park  | Several new easements required.  | \$1,062,425                |
| Richfield   | 3.14         | Complete and open to the public  | Portions of the trail are less than 10' wide. If future trail use warrants a wider section, Three Rivers may acquire additional right-of-way, but this is not foreseen in the near future. | \$ -                       |
| Bloomington | 3.04         | Existing sidewalk along American Blvd  | May need easements for future expansion of trail width   | \$ 521,290                 |
|             |              |  | <b>Total</b>   | <b>\$1,613,715</b>         |

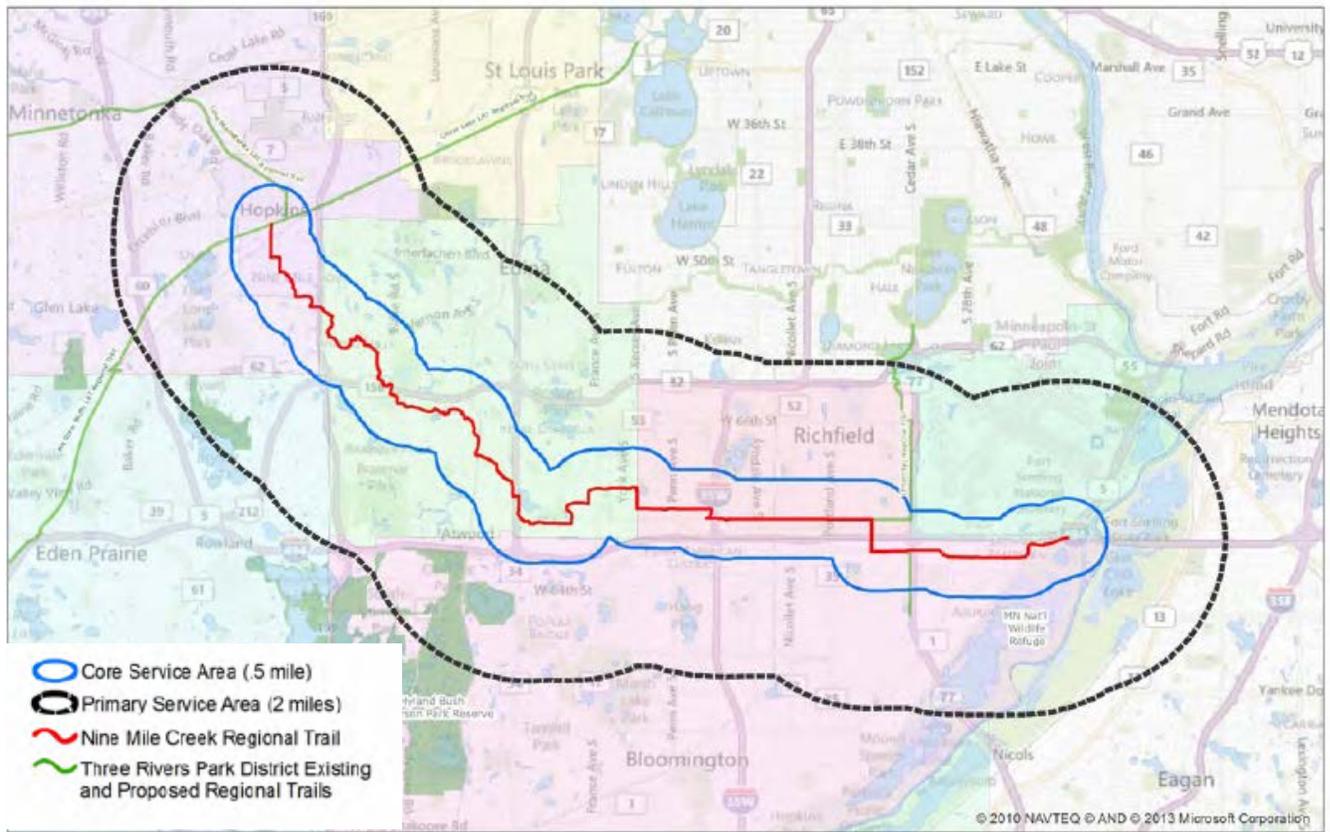
**2. Demand Forecast**

Three Rivers Park District estimates that once fully developed, Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail will generate approximately 426,000 annual visits. Significant use of the trail will occur in spring, summer and fall. Winter use of the regional trail will be dependent on weather conditions and the assistance of local communities in maintaining the trail.

The demographics of the area through which the trail will travel include a larger percentage of seniors as well as higher percentages of people of color than the general Twin Cities region. Based on the demographics of these communities and compared to the greater region, it is anticipated that Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail will see a greater percentage of persons 65 years or older, a slightly larger share of people walking on the trail as their primary activity, a great share of persons of color, and users with more diversified household income levels.

Figure 5 depicts the core and primary service areas for the regional trail. Typically, fifty percent of trail users originate from the core service area and 75 percent original from the primary service area.

**Figure 5: Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail Core and Primary Service Areas**

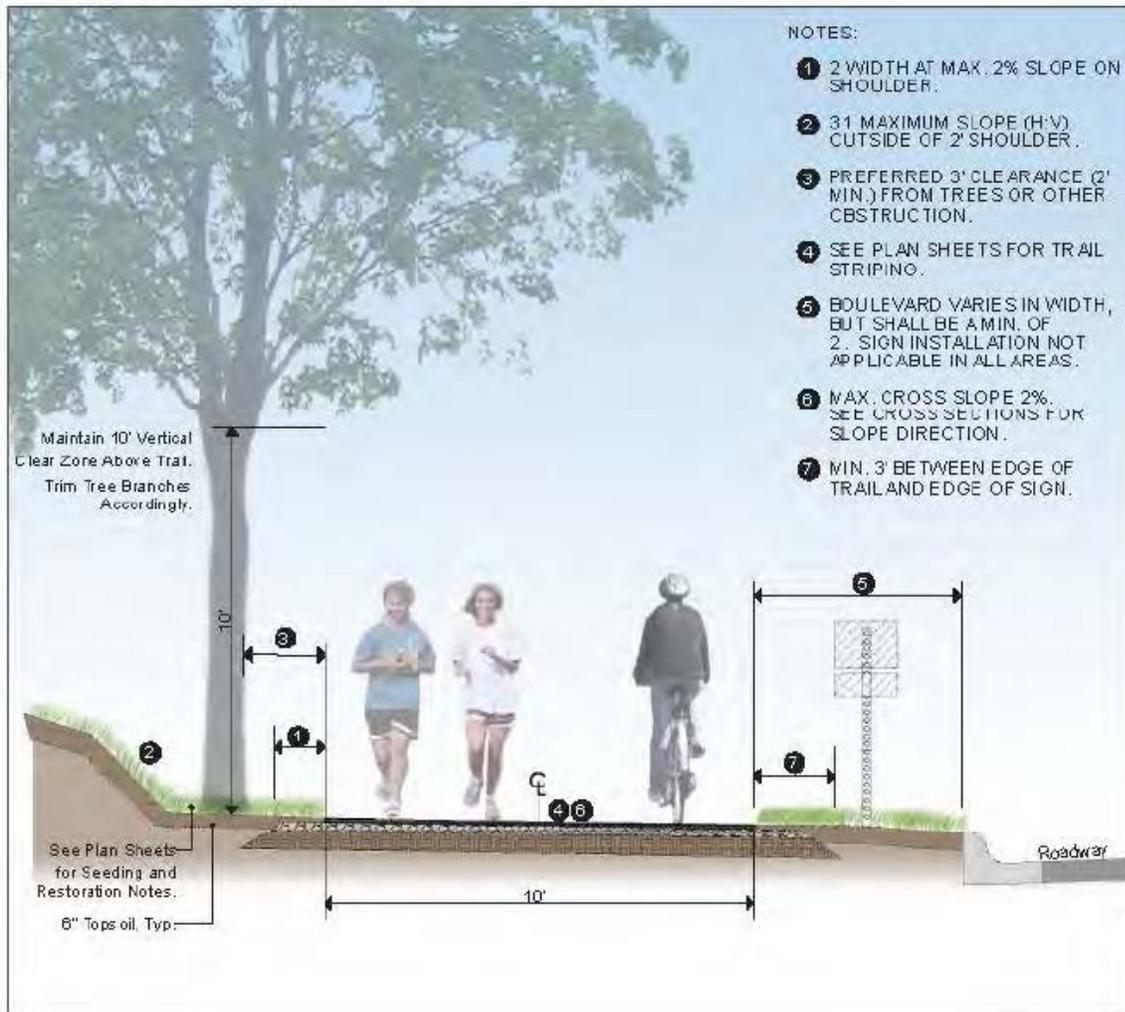


### **3. Development Concept**

The Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail will be designed as an off-road, 10-foot wide, non-motorized, paved multi-use trail. The width of the trail may be greater than 10 feet in some areas if forecasted user volume warrants additional width and if space is available. In areas with limited right-of-way, the trail is still planned to be off-road, but may have a narrower boulevard between the trail edge and the back of the curb. Portions of existing trail segments currently do not meet the preferred design and will be evaluated to determine the best long term solution, which may include improvements as funding, right-of-way or other opportunities present themselves. Implementation of the master plan also will require a new underpass at TH 169 and new trail bridge crossings of TH 62 and TH 100.

Figure 6 depicts a preferred typical cross-section of the regional trail.

**Figure 6: Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail Preferred Typical Trail Cross-Section**



Since portions of the regional trail corridor will cross wetlands and floodplains, boardwalks and bridges are anticipated in several locations to minimize potential impacts to natural resources and maintain a continuous trail corridor.

Additional supporting trail elements include wayfinding signage, rest stops and trailheads. The location of wayfinding signage placement will be coordinated with local communities and is often based on available public right-of-way. Rest stops will generally be provided every mile and will include amenities such as trash receptacles, benches and bike racks. Larger trailheads are not planned, since there are several large community parks and public facilities along the trail corridor. If additional improvements are needed at these trailheads to support the regional trail, Three Rivers Park District will collaborate with the local communities. The master plan indicates that the following existing public facilities will serve as key trailheads:

- Hopkins—Valley View Park
- Edina—Bredesen Park and/or Edina Promenade/Centennial Lakes Area
- Bloomington—Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center

Figure 7 includes the estimated construction costs of the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail.

**Figure 7: Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail Estimated Development Costs**

| Segment     | Development Project                                | Estimated Costs |                          |
|-------------|--|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Hopkins     | Trail construction                                 | \$              | 327,250                  |
|             | Supporting trail elements                          | \$              | 60,404                   |
|             | <i>Hopkins Total</i>                               | \$              | <i>387,654</i>           |
| Minnetonka  | Trail construction                                 | \$              | -                        |
|             | Supporting trail elements                          | \$              | 11,691                   |
|             | <i>Minnetonka Total</i>                            | \$              | <i>11,691</i>            |
| Edina—West  | Trail construction                                 | \$              | 9,166,373                |
|             | Supporting trail elements                          | \$              | 72,615                   |
|             | <i>Edina—West Total</i>                            | \$              | <i>9,238,988</i>         |
| Edina—East  | Trail construction                                 | \$              | 12,473,852               |
|             | Supporting trail elements                          | \$              | 153,213                  |
|             | <i>Edina—East Total</i>                            | \$              | <i>12,627,065</i>        |
| Richfield   | Trail construction                                 | \$              | -                        |
|             | Supporting trail elements                          | \$              | 67,156                   |
|             | <i>Richfield Total</i>                             | \$              | <i>67,156</i>            |
| Bloomington | Trail construction                                 | \$              | 1,022,070                |
|             | Supporting trail elements                          | \$              | 103,979                  |
|             | <i>Bloomington Total</i>                           | \$              | <i>1,126,049</i>         |
| <b>All</b>  | <b><i>Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail Total</i></b> | <b>\$</b>       | <b><i>23,458,603</i></b> |

#### 4. Conflicts

The master plan does not identify conflicts between the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail and any existing or proposed projects or land uses. Several local plans provided guidance or influenced the master planning process for the trail, including:

- 2030 Comprehensive Plans—Cities of Hopkins, Minnetonka, Edina, Richfield and Bloomington
- 1997 Hennepin County Bicycle Plan and Biannual Map Updates
- 2007 City of Edina Comprehensive Bicycle Plan
- 2006 City of Edina Recreation Needs Assessment
- 2008 City of Bloomington Alternative Transportation Plan
- 2012 City of Bloomington South Loop District Plan

## **5. Public Services**

The development and operation of Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail is not anticipated to require any non-recreational public services or facilities such as roads or sewers.

## **6. Operations**

The Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail will be operated under Three Rivers Park District ordinances which define the rules and regulations for the use of its regional parks and trails. A copy of the ordinances is posted on the Three Rivers Park District website. Rules and regulations are also posted throughout Three Rivers Park District's properties and facilities. Posted information includes park hours, permitted and prohibited activities, fees, maps of the park and/or trail, and emergency contact information. Three Rivers Park District Police and Park Service Officers regularly patrol regional park and trail property and will enforce ordinances via citations when necessary. No additional staffing or operational costs are anticipated to provide public safety services along the trail.

Three Rivers Park District's maintenance of the trail will include mowing, sweeping, trash cleanup and noxious weed management as well as specialized services such as minor bridge and underpass repair. Three Rivers Park District will maintain its portion of the trail between April and November. Local municipalities may choose to operate and maintain the trail during the winter. A one-time cost of \$125,000 is anticipated for additional tools and maintenance equipment needed to maintain the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail.

Three Rivers Park District's portion of the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail will receive scheduled striping, sealcoating and redevelopment under the Park District's pavement management program. Three Rivers will seek opportunities to work with Hennepin County and local jurisdictions in conjunction with roadway projects to improve trail design and surfacing.

Annual operating costs are funded through Three Rivers Park District's general fund budget, with property taxes as the primary source of funds. Revenue is also received from the State of Minnesota as part of the Operations and Maintenance Fund allocation administered by the Metropolitan Council. Some of the costs associated with trail surface maintenance also may be funded from the Three Rivers Park District Park Asset Management Program, which includes revenues from the State of Minnesota as well as Three Rivers Park District's general obligation bonds.

The City of Bloomington will be responsible for its portion of the regional trail. Bloomington police officers will provide public safety services and will monitor the trail as part of routine patrols through the area. No significant increase in public safety staffing or operations costs is anticipated.

Bloomington's maintenance operations will include seasonal condition assessment and periodic inspections, followed by necessary maintenance. The trail will receive scheduled striping, seal coating and reconstruction under the Bloomington Sidewalk and Trail Pavement Management Plan. Bloomington will provide snow removal.

Operations and maintenance costs for the Bloomington portion of the regional trail corridor will primarily be funded through the public works and police budget.

## **7. Citizen Participation**

Three Rivers Park District undertook a lengthy and extensive planning and public engagement process to determine the alignment of the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail.

The City of Hopkins and Nine Mile Creek Watershed District held several public meetings for the creek restoration project and the associated regional trail proposal. Three Rivers Park District collaborated with these agencies to hold individual stakeholder meetings to help identify the trail route and a minor adjustment to the route was made based on feedback. Hopkins, Minnetonka, Nine Mile Creek Watershed District and Three Rivers Park District entered into an agreement establishing the preferred trail route and designating the planning, design, construction, operations and maintenance responsibilities for the regional trail.

Three Rivers Park District facilitated extensive community outreach and engagement for determining the Edina segment of the regional trail, including:

- An informal public open house was held for the Bike Edina Task Force in December 2008
- Two open houses were held in Spring 2009, which were attended by approximately 125 and over 250 people, respectively
- A voluntary Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) was prepared in 2009-2010
- A Community Assessment Team including adjacent property owners and representatives from Three Rivers, City of Edina, Bike Edina Task Force, Edina Park Board and Nine Mile Creek Watershed District held five meetings and several site visits in Fall 2009-Summer 2010
- Two open houses were held in June 2010, which were attend by approximately 250-300 people
- A joint workshop between the Three Rivers Park District Board of Commissioners and the Edina City Council was held in September 2010
- Trail planning work was presented to the Edina Park Board in October 2010
- A public hearing was held by the Edina City Council in December 2010. The City Council unanimously approved the creek-based route for the regional trail
- Three Rivers Park District approved the creek-based route for the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail as the preferred route through Edina at a public meeting in March 2011

The regional trail segment within Richfield was constructed as part of a larger initiative to extend and upgrade a regional sewer interceptor. Regional trail project information was available for public review at several public meetings, including a Metropolitan Council Environmental Services open house in January 2009 and a Richfield open house in June 2009.

The Bloomington segment is generally consistent with the City's 2008 Alternative Transportation Plan and the 2012 South Loop District planning. As part of these planning processes, the City of Bloomington conducted a variety of public outreach efforts including online surveys, open houses, stakeholder interviews and public presentations.

The master plan includes resolutions of support from the Cities of Bloomington and Richfield and a letter of support from the Metropolitan Airports Commission. An executed cooperative agreement between the Cities of Hopkins, Minnetonka, Nine Mile Creek Watershed District and Three Rivers Park District for development of the regional trail is

included in the master plan. Documentation of the City of Edina's support for the creek-based route of the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail is also included in the master plan.

## **8. Public Awareness**

Three Rivers Park District uses a number of tools to promote its regional parks and trails, including a District-wide map, the website, direct mail, press releases, brochures, and on-site promotion. Three Rivers Park District also collaborates with community, business and government organizations to promote its facilities, programs and services.

## **9. Accessibility**

The Three Rivers Park District facilities associated with this master plan will be developed in accordance with ADA standards and guidelines. All unconstructed and reconstructed segments of the regional trail and trail amenities such as rest stops, parking, restrooms and water access will be designed to accommodate individuals with disabilities.

The trail passes through a variety of neighborhoods with varying demographics, providing access to people with diverse range of social and cultural backgrounds. Three Rivers Park District does not charge entrance fees to its regional parks, park reserves or regional trails, making its facilities available for users regardless of their financial status.

## **10. Natural Resources**

The Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail corridor will be 16-20 feet wide, which will primarily consist of a 10-foot wide trail with a 3 to 5 foot mowed shoulder on each side. The regional trail is classified as a destination trail based on the high-quality natural resource value of the adjacent landscape on the eastern and western ends of the trail corridor.

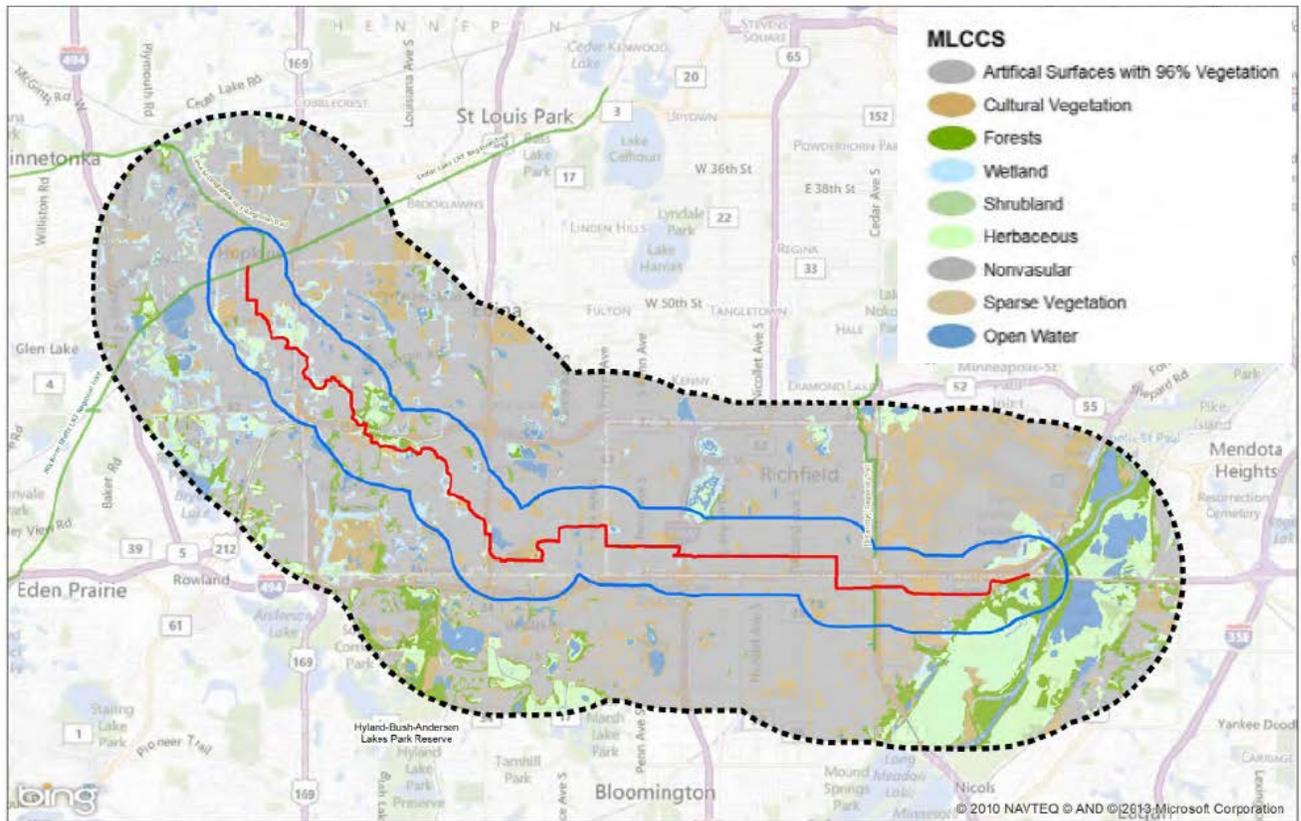
In Hopkins and Minnetonka, Nine Mile Creek and its associated floodplains, wetlands and dedicated open space are the natural resources that complement the regional trail corridor. Nine Mile Creek was restored in 2012 in these communities. Restoration efforts included shoreline stabilization, the addition of native vegetation and re-meandering of the creek channel.

The regional trail corridor through Edina is a mix of both wooded and open areas, upland and lowland, developed and undeveloped areas. The areas immediately adjacent to the regional trail and to Nine Mile Creek are classified as forests, wetlands, open water, shrublands and herbaceous landcovers by the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS).

The Bloomington section of the regional trail is planned to terminate at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, which is over 14,000 acres in size and includes a wide variety of both upland and lowland plant communities and a great diversity of wildlife. The refuge is managed specifically for wildlife and is home to coyotes, bald eagles, trout, and numerous waterfowl and migratory birds.

The Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS) Map is shown in *Figure 8*.

**Figure 8: Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail MLCCS Map**



**11. Stewardship**

Three Rivers Park District will maintain the 16-20 foot wide regional trail corridor. Although Three Rivers will not be responsible for managing or improving the natural resources of the adjacent greenway corridor, it will promote environmental stewardship through its own operation and maintenance practices, recognizing that the health of the greater landscape plays an important role in the regional trail corridor.

**REVIEW BY OTHER COUNCIL DIVISIONS:**

**Community Development – Environment and Surface Water Management** (Jim Larsen Park 651-602-1159) – The Master Plan indicates that the completed trail will receive scheduled seal coating of the trail surface following its construction to enable the trail surface to reach an estimated lifespan of 30 years. Sealcoat products, whether coal-tar based (scheduled to be banned statewide in Minnesota effective January 1, 2014) or asphalt-based, can contribute significant amounts of PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) to stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces following their application. (see the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s website recommendations regarding sealcoats at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-types-andprograms/stormwater/stormwater-management/great-lakes-coal-tar-sealcoat-pah-reduction-project/moving-to-safer-alternatives-to-coal-tar-sealcoats.html> )

Nine Mile Creek continues to be listed on the MPCA’s Section 303(d) Final 2012 Impaired Waters list, in part due to impaired biota resulting in low fish Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) scores. In concert with the Park District’s stated stance (on page 35 of the Master Plan) that it ‘recognizes that the health of the greater landscape plays an important role in the value of the corridor’, and ‘will promote environmental stewardship through its own operation and maintenance practices’, Council staff recommends that the District

utilize methods or products other than periodic asphalt-based seal coating to prolong the expected life of the planned trail (particularly in trail sections adjacent to Nine Mile Creek) that will not exacerbate an existing water quality problem. Trail sections in segments A through D in close proximity to Nine Mile Creek won't be able to rely on the benefit of stormwater management basins or other similar best management practices to provide runoff pretreatment prior to polluted runoff's infiltration and migration into the Creek that other trail sections further from the Creek might experience elsewhere along the corridor.

**Three Rivers Park District response:** *For several years, the Park District has used sealcoat specifications that specifically forbid the use of any sealcoating product that contains coal tar. In addition, many of the contractors that the Park District hires for sealcoating projects have joined the MPCA pledge to not sell or apply any products that contain coal tar. The Park District already employs many of the practices outlined by the MPCA in their guidance document "Choosing alternatives to coal-tar based pavement sealcoats: Guidance for property owners, associations and managers." This document encourages the use of asphalt-based sealants in lieu of coal-tar based sealants, as the asphalt-based product contains about 1/1000<sup>th</sup> of the PAHs of typical coal-tar based sealants. Using carefully planned and executed treatments of asphalt-based sealants is currently the most cost-effective practice for maximizing the life of trail pavement and minimizing the need for costly and environmentally disruptive full pavement reconstruction. As newer technologies evolve, including bio-based sealant products, the Park District will continue to evaluate their longevity and overall cost effectiveness and modify pavement management practices accordingly in order to maximize pavement life and minimize impacts on the natural environment.*

**Environmental Services – Sewers** (Roger Janzig 651-602-1119) – This project extends 15 miles through the communities of Hopkins, Minnetonka, Edina, Richfield, and Bloomington. The construction of any new or updating of existing trails may have an impact on multiple Metropolitan Council Interceptors in multiple locations. To assess the potential impacts to our interceptor system, prior to initiating any proposed project, preliminary plans should be sent to Scott Dentz, Interceptor Engineering Manager (651-602-4503) at the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review and comment.

**Transportation—Aviation** (Russ Owen 651-602-1724) – The master plan shows an alternative trail alignment across Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) property. Three Rivers Park District should work with MAC and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to obtain the necessary approval for a trail through airport property. New FAA regulations in and around Runway Protection Zones (RPZs) prohibit many new roads and congregation points, which could make the MAC alternative extremely difficult to obtain.

Metropolitan Council staff sought feedback from the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) on the proposed alternative trail alignment. MAC staff indicated that the 77<sup>th</sup> Street/Airport Lane alternative will require approval from MAC, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and the Cities of Richfield and Bloomington.

**Transportation Planning** (Russ Owen 651-602-1724) – The master plan states that the MAC alternative alignment of the trail will travel under I-494 at the Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) with 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which will be helpful from a safety perspective. If for some reason, that is not feasible, safety needs to be addressed in and around the DDI, until drivers understand the DDI. In addition to an interchange that will be busy with vehicles, there will also be light rail transit (LRT) operations along that road.

**Metro Transit** (Steve Mahowald 612-349-7775) – No concerns.

## **CONCLUSIONS:**

1. The Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail Master Plan, Three Rivers Park District (Referral No. 50040-1) is consistent with the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.
2. The estimated cost to implement the master plan is \$25,072,318, which includes \$1,613,715 for easement acquisition and \$23,458,603 for development.
3. The master plan proposes an alternative alignment for the regional trail across Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) property. This route will need to comply with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations in and around Runway Protection Zones and will require approval from MAC, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and the Cities of Richfield and Bloomington. If this alternative option is chosen as the preferred route for the regional trail, Three Rivers Park District should submit documentation of its compliance with FAA regulations and the appropriate approvals to the Metropolitan Council prior to seeking regional parks funding for this segment of the regional trail.
4. The regional trail route is located in the vicinity of several MCES facilities. Construction of trail segments may have an impact on MCES interceptors in many locations. In order to maintain the integrity of the regional interceptor system, preliminary development plans for the regional trail should be submitted to Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for review and comment.
5. 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 Three Rivers Park District.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail Master Plan.
2. Require that if the MAC Alternative Alignment is selected as the preferred route for the regional trail, Three Rivers Park District should submit documentation of its compliance with Federal Aviation Administration regulations as well as the required approvals from the Metropolitan Airports Commission, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and the Cities of Richfield and Bloomington to the Metropolitan Council prior to seeking regional parks funding for this route.
3. Require that prior to initiating development of the Nine Mile Creek 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.