

ACTION TRANSMITTAL

DATE: October 10, 2013

TO: TAC Funding and Programming Committee

PREPARED BY: Heidi Schallberg, Senior Planner (651-602-1721)

SUBJECT: Scope Change Request for the North Urban Regional Trail

REQUESTED ACTION: Dakota County requests a scope change to modify the scope of SP#019-090-015 to increase the length by 0.3 miles, add landscaping, change one underpass to an at-grade midblock crossing, narrow roadway for trail accommodations, and change the trail alignment. The change would also increase the budget to a total of \$1,600,000 with \$794,080 in Transportation Alternatives (TAP) funds and an increased local amount of \$805,920.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Recommend approval of the request to modify the scope for SP#019-090-015 to increase the length by 0.3 miles, add landscaping, change one underpass to an at-grade midblock crossing, narrow roadway for trail accommodations, and change the trail alignment. The change would also increase the budget to a total of \$1,600,000 with \$794,080 in TAP funds and an increased local amount of \$805,920.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION: In the 2007 solicitation, Dakota County received \$794,080 in Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding for the North Urban Regional Trail project. The project was originally programmed in 2013 and received a sunset date extension to 2014 in early 2014. The scope change request and supporting information are attached. A related TIP amendment request has also been submitted.

RELATIONSHIP TO REGIONAL POLICY: Projects that receive funding through the regional solicitation process are subject to the regional scope change policy. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the project is designed and constructed according to the plans and intent described in the original application. Additionally, federal rules require that any federally-funded project scope change must go through a formal review and TIP amendment process if the project description or total project cost changes substantially. The scope change policy and process allow project sponsors to make adjustments to their projects as needed while still providing substantially the same benefits described in their original project applications.

STAFF ANALYSIS: Staff reviewed the submitted scope change request after an initial consultation with staff from the county, Federal Highway Administration, MnDOT State Aid, and Metropolitan Council. The Minnesota Interagency Air Quality and Transportation Planning Committee determined that the project scope changes are exempt from air quality conformity analysis. The trail project originally scored 803 points

out of 1,000 and was ranked 7th out of 17 selected projects for Transportation Enhancements (now Alternatives). The cost increases would not have affected the scoring because cost effectiveness was not included in the criteria for Enhancements. Based on a review of the original application, the proposed scope changes would not have been likely to considerably change the project score. Detailed scoring notes were not available for this project from the 2007 solicitation. Based on the information provided, staff recommends approval of the requested scope change.

ROUTING

TO	ACTION REQUESTED	DATE COMPLETED
TAC Funding & Programming Committee	Review & Recommend	
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Approve	



Physical Development Division

October 17, 2013

Dakota County
Western Service Center
14955 Galaxie Avenue
Apple Valley, Mn 55124-8579

952.891.7000
Fax 952.891.7031
www.dakotacounty.us

Environmental Resources
Land Conservation
Groundwater Protection
Surface Water
Waste Regulation
Environmental Initiatives

Office of Planning

Operations Management
Facilities Management
Fleet Management
Parks

Transportation
Highways
Surveyor's Office
Transit Office

Karl Keel, Chair
TAC Funding and Programming Committee
Metropolitan Council
390 N. Robert St.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Re: Scope Change Request
North Urban Regional Trail
Federal Project No: 019-090-015
County Project No: 97-116

Dear Mr. Keel:

This letter summarizes Dakota County's request for a scope change to the Trunk Highway 110 (TH110) to Garlough Elementary segment of the North Urban Regional Trail (S.P. 019-090-015).

Background

The Dakota County Board of Commissioners approved the North Urban Regional Trail (NURT) Development Plan in 1996. The NURT is a 7.7 mile trail corridor across all of northern Dakota County, connecting the communities of Lilydale, Mendota Heights, West St. Paul, and South St. Paul (Attachment A: Location Map). The proposed trail will connect the existing Big Rivers Regional Trail to the Mississippi River Regional Trail at Kaposia Landing Park. In crossing these communities, this trail will link neighborhoods to schools, parks, retail/commercial areas, transit facilities, libraries and other public buildings.

Transportation Enhancement Funding

Dakota County was awarded \$709,000 in federal Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds to construct a 1.1 mile segment of the NURT from TH 110 to Garlough Elementary with a sunset date of March 31, 2014. A summary of the project objective as described in the TE funding application is as follows:

The proposed pedestrian greenway will provide the last segment of trail, completing the North Urban Regional Trail and providing the east to west connection between the Big Rivers Regional Trail and the Mississippi River Regional Trail across northern Dakota County. The NURT provides a critical pedestrian corridor that connects residential areas with parks, schools, libraries, government offices, recreational facilities, and commercial areas. The project will primarily be on the Dodge Nature Center property, creating a natural and scenic experience for trail users in a very urbanized area which will facilitate and encourage use.

Project Development

As the project development process began, concerns were expressed about the impacts of the adopted trail alignment across the Dodge Nature Center (DNC) property. Over a one year negotiation process, Dakota County and the DNC were unable to come to terms on the trail alignment described in the 2007 TE funding application. In January 2012, Dakota County received a letter from DNC expressing that they would not consent to the construction of the NURT north/south through the Marie property and it would be inconsistent with the core mission of DNC.

In order to advance the project, the County Board directed staff to evaluate all potentially feasible alignments for this segment of NURT, receive public input, and return to the County Board at a future meeting to select a preferred trail alignment. County staff initiated an alignment study as directed by the County Board in the fall of 2012. Dakota County hired an engineering consultant and formed a Project Management Team (PMT) consisting of primary stakeholders.

The PMT evaluated a total of five potentially feasible alignments including the original alignment option through the DNC, as described in the 2007 TE funding application (Attachment A: Location Map). The option along Warrior Drive, Marie Avenue and the Dodge Nature Center property were developed in close coordination with the Dodge Nature Center and School District 197 staff, including representatives of both Henry Sibley High School and Garlough Elementary.

Adopted North Urban Regional Trail Alignment

Aided by the study process and the resulting groundwork, the County Board adopted a final alignment along Warrior Drive, Marie Avenue and through the Dodge Nature Center Main property (Attachment B – Adopted Alignment).

Realignment Advantages:

- Agreement among all stakeholders including Dodge Nature Center and ISD 197.
- At-grade roadway crossings will be reduced from 3 in the original alignment to 2 in the revised alignment.
- New crossing of Delaware Avenue occurs at a more safe intersection location with the cross street of Marie Avenue versus TH 110.
- Approved alignment will utilize Dodge Nature Center open space to providing a good connection to DNC and user experience.
- The new alignment will provide more direct access for pedestrians to enter Henry Sibley High School.
- The alignment provides a good opportunity for landscaping and nature restoration near Henry Sibley High School and the portion on the DNC property aids in improving the overall aesthetic of the roadway and trail corridor.
- The proposed trail corridor can provide natural resource educational opportunities for the adjacent Henry Sibley High School.

Realignment Disadvantages:

- The length of trail required to establish the connection has expanded from approximately 1.1 miles to 1.4 miles.
- Implementing a 10' multi-use trail along Marie Avenue requires the narrowing of the roadway to fit all of the necessary design components into the roadway right of way. These roadway improvements would otherwise not be necessary.

Grade Separated Underpass

The original scope of work within the 2007 TE funding application included two grade separated underpasses at both Charlton Street and Marie Avenue to reduce conflict between non-motorized trail users and motorized vehicles on the roadway. Through the design development process, the Marie Avenue underpass was determined to be infeasible in all cases except for the original alignment through the DNC due to the property constraints and the site topography.

The total estimated cost in the 2007 TE fund application for each pedestrian underpass was approximately \$155,000. With a more thorough evaluation of the underpass, the current estimate for the underpass at Charlton Street is \$600,000. This is largely due to the need for a wider tunnel width to accommodate the Garlough

Environmental Magnet School’s student activities that regularly utilize the underpass to visit the Dodge Nature Center as part of their educational opportunities. In addition, an imprecise original estimate, followed by a number of grading, utility, and drainage concerns inflated the costs of the underpass to its current estimate.

Marie Avenue Accommodations and Pedestrian Activated Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons

The long range Capital Improvement Program for the City of West St. Paul contains the reconstruction of Marie Avenue which includes a reduction in the overall width of Marie Avenue from 44’ to 36’ wide. In order to collaborate with the City of West St. Paul’s reconstruction project and to provide a green space between the trail and the existing greenway, the County Board adopted an alignment for the NURT that allows for the reduction in width of Marie Avenue from Delaware Avenue to Chardel Court where it crosses into the Dodge Nature Center main property (Attachment B: Adopted Alignment). Reducing the width to allow for a boulevard and green space between the roadway and the trail is consistent with the intent of the 2007 TE funding application and the Dakota County greenway vision.

In order to provide similar safety enhancements to the removed Marie Avenue underpass, a mid-block pedestrian crossing on Marie Avenue just west of Chardel Court was evaluated. An enhanced mid-block crossing was deemed to be warranted based on the sight lines, posted speed limit of 30 mph, and potential crossing location. The enhanced mid-block crossing would include curb bump-outs and pedestrian activated rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB). The enhancements will increase pedestrian safety by reducing the pedestrian crossing distance, limiting pedestrian exposure to oncoming vehicles, enhancing existing sightlines by moving pedestrians closer to the travel lanes and the RRFB at the mid-block crossing location will notify drivers of a pedestrian in the intersection which will significantly increase the stopping compliance of drivers for pedestrians in the crossing.

Additional Landscaping

The 2007 TE funding application proposed a trail through the Dodge Nature Center to create a project that highlighted the natural character and enhance the outdoor education values of the greenway system. In order to meet the intent of the grant, additional landscaping of a natural character was evaluated along the entire length of the County Board adopted trail corridor (Attachment C: Landscape Overlay Plan). This additional landscaping provided not only a trail that was consistent with Dakota County’s greenway trail corridor vision, but also allowed for potential educational opportunities along the trail corridor for the adjacent Henry Sibley High School.

Impacts on Prioritizing Criteria

The proposed change in project scope does not reduce the cultural, aesthetic, or environmental aspects of the proposed bicycle and pedestrian use facilities described in the original 2007 TE funding application. This project supports the vision and adopted policies for implementation of the state’s intermodal transportation system.

Construction Costs

The total construction cost in the 2013 - 2016 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is \$992,600. During the project development process and stakeholder involvement a number of items have been added to adjust for the modification in alignment. The latest estimate for the project is 1,600,000 with the following major additional or revised elements.

Description	Estimated Cost
Pre-cast Arch Underpass	\$600,000
Marie Avenue Accommodations & Pedestrian Activated Flashing Beacon System	\$110,000
Additional Landscaping	\$280,000

Summary

The project with the modifications described herein, while deviating from the initial scope, still meets the project goal of providing a critical pedestrian corridor with a natural and scenic experience to encourage and facilitate use in a very urbanized area. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss our scope change and TIP amendment requests with the TAC Funding and Programming Committee on October 17th. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 952-891-7106.

Sincerely,

Dakota County

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Hartzell", written in a cursive style.

Chris E. Hartzell, PE
Senior Project Manager

Enclosures: Attachment A: Location Map
Attachment B: Adopted Alignment
Attachment C: Landscape Overlay Plan

cc: Taud Hoopingarner, Dakota County
Mark Krebsbach, Dakota County
NURT – TH 110 to Garlough Elementary segment Project Management Team

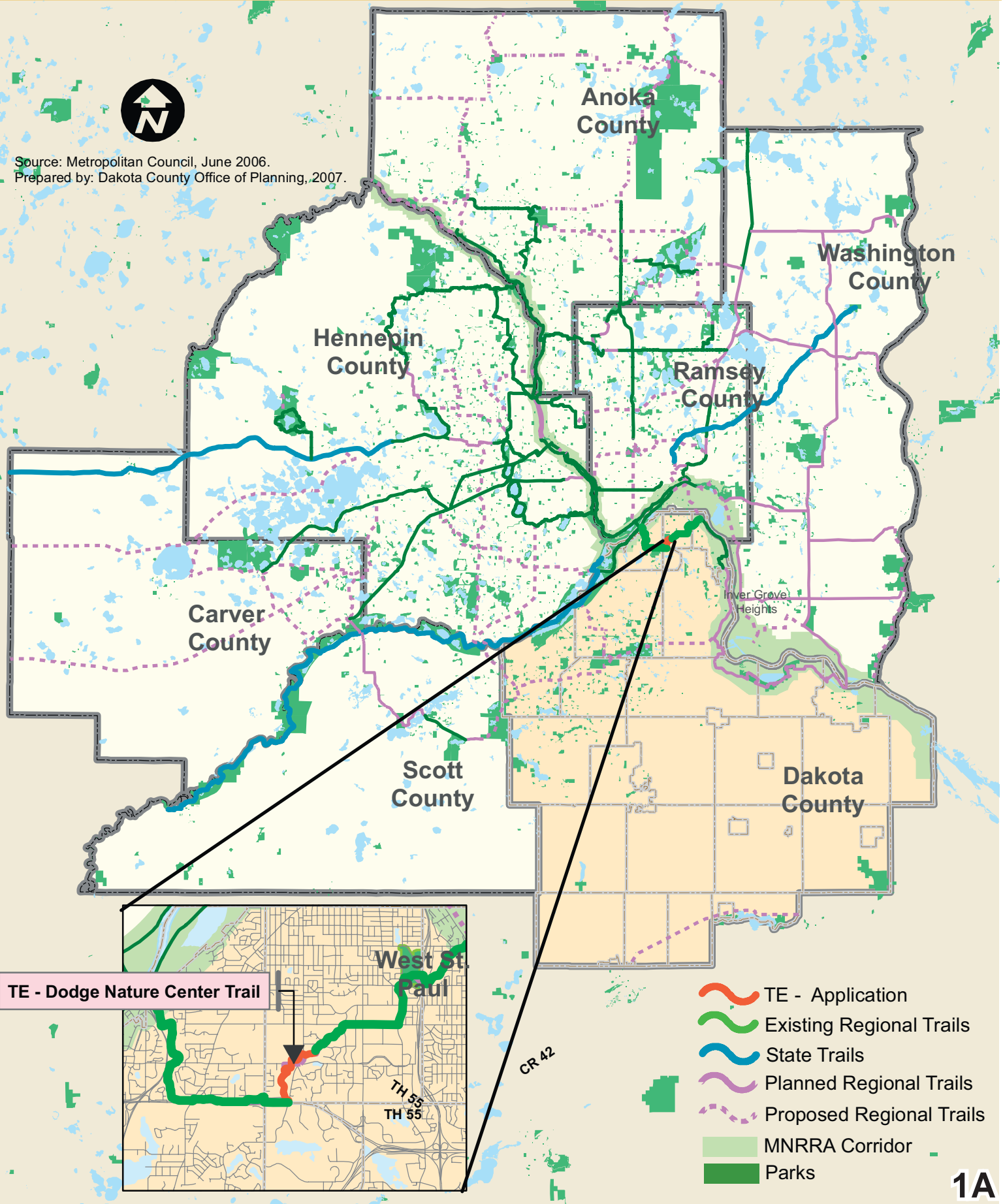
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Location Map
Attachment B: Adopted Alignment
Attachment C: Landscape Overlay Plan

North Urban Regional Trail (Dodge Nature Center) Regional Context - Map



Source: Metropolitan Council, June 2006.
Prepared by: Dakota County Office of Planning, 2007.





**Attachment B:
Adopted
Alignment**



Legend

- Option 1
- Option 4
- Connection Points to Existing North Urban Regional Trail
- Existing North Urban Regional Trail



NORTH URBAN REGIONAL TRAIL

**Dakota County Board
Adopted Alignments
2013**

Source: Bing Maps, Dakota County, Mendota Heights, West Saint Paul



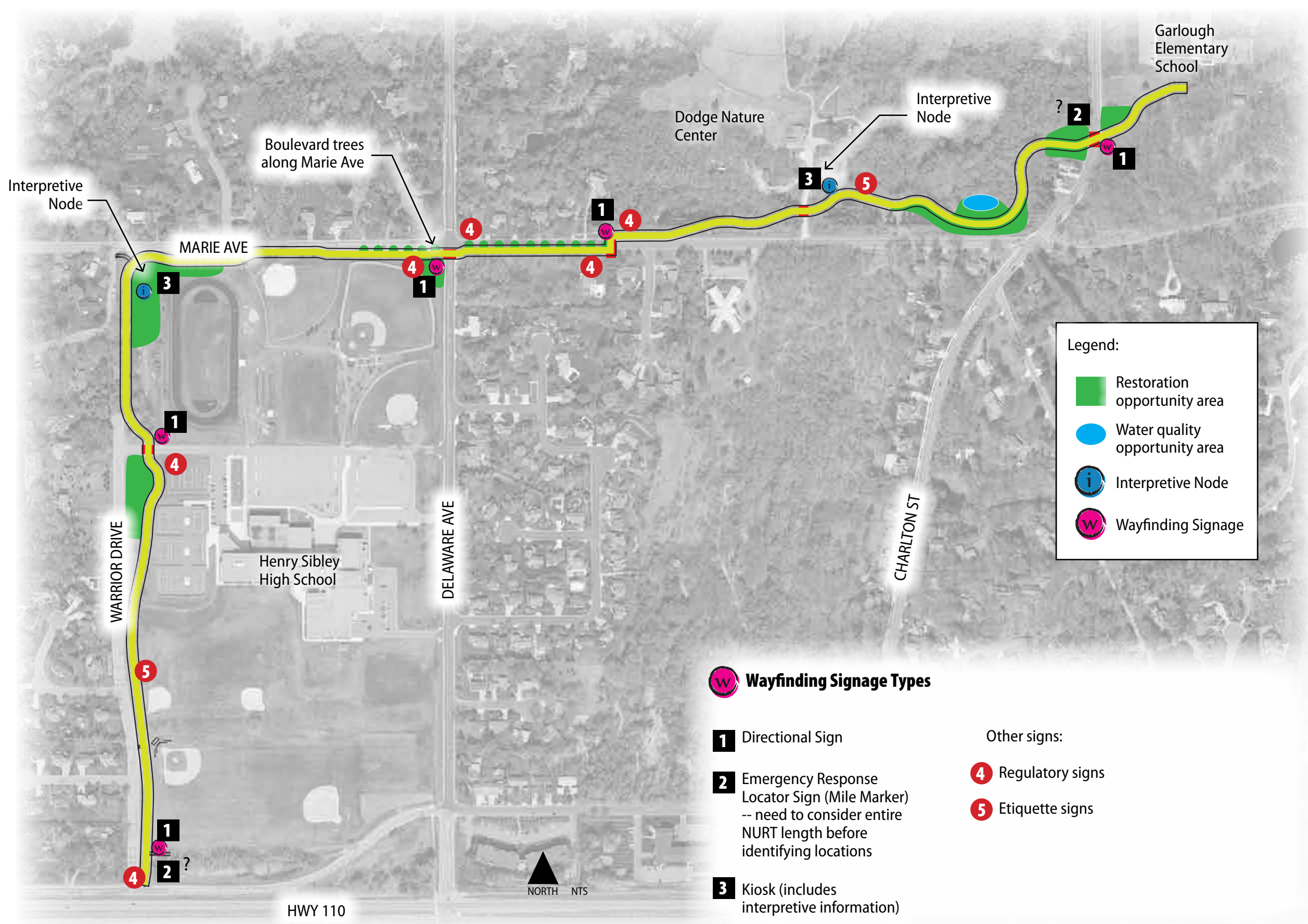
**NORTH URBAN
REGIONAL TRAIL**

Landscape
Overlay Plan

Preliminary

DRAFT

06.28.2013



Legend:

- Restoration opportunity area
- Water quality opportunity area
- i Interpretive Node
- w Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding Signage Types

- 1** Directional Sign
- 2** Emergency Response Locator Sign (Mile Marker) -- need to consider entire NURT length before identifying locations
- 3** Kiosk (includes interpretive information)

- Other signs:
- 4** Regulatory signs
 - 5** Etiquette signs



HWY 110

RECEIVED

Federal Transportation Enhancement Fund Application

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete and return completed application to Kevin Roggenbuck, Transportation Coordinator, Transportation Advisory Board, 390 North Robert St., St. Paul, Minnesota 55101. (651) 602-1728. Form 1 needs to be filled out electronically. Please go to Metropolitan Council's website for instructions. Applications must be received by 5:00 PM or postmarked on July 20, 2007. *Be sure to complete and attach the Project Information form. (Form 2)	Office Use Only TE-07-12
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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. APPLICANT: Dakota County Office of Planning			
2. JURISDICTIONAL AGENCY (IF DIFFERENT):			
3. MAILING ADDRESS: 14955 Galaxie Avenue			
CITY: Apple Valley	STATE: Mn	ZIP CODE: 55124	4. COUNTY: Dakota
5. CONTACT PERSON: John Mertens	TITLE: Senior Planner		PHONE NO. (952)891-7036

II. PROJECT INFORMATION

6. PROJECT NAME: North Urban Regional Trail - Dodge Nature Center Trail Segment

7. BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Include location, road name, type of improvement, etc... A more complete description must be submitted separately and described in Specific Requirement #3 on p.5):

This application seeks funding for the North Urban Regional Trail (NURT) Dodge Nature Center segment, a 1.1 mile section from TH 110 to Garlough Elementary School property north of Marie Avenue. This Transportation Enhancement request would complete the North Urban Regional Trail and connect the Big Rivers Regional Trail to the Mississippi River Regional Trail across northern Dakota County.

The project will primarily be on the Dodge Nature Center property, creating a natural and scenic experience for trail users in a very urbanized area. Included in the application are two separated midblock crossings of major city collector roads. Grade separations at Marie Ave and Charlton Ave will safely connect Garlough Elementary to the Dodge Nature Center and create 2 mile section of continuous regional trail through Marthaler Park and Dodge Nature Center.


8. TE PROJECT CATEGORY – Check only one project grouping in which you wish your project to be considered (see p. 85).

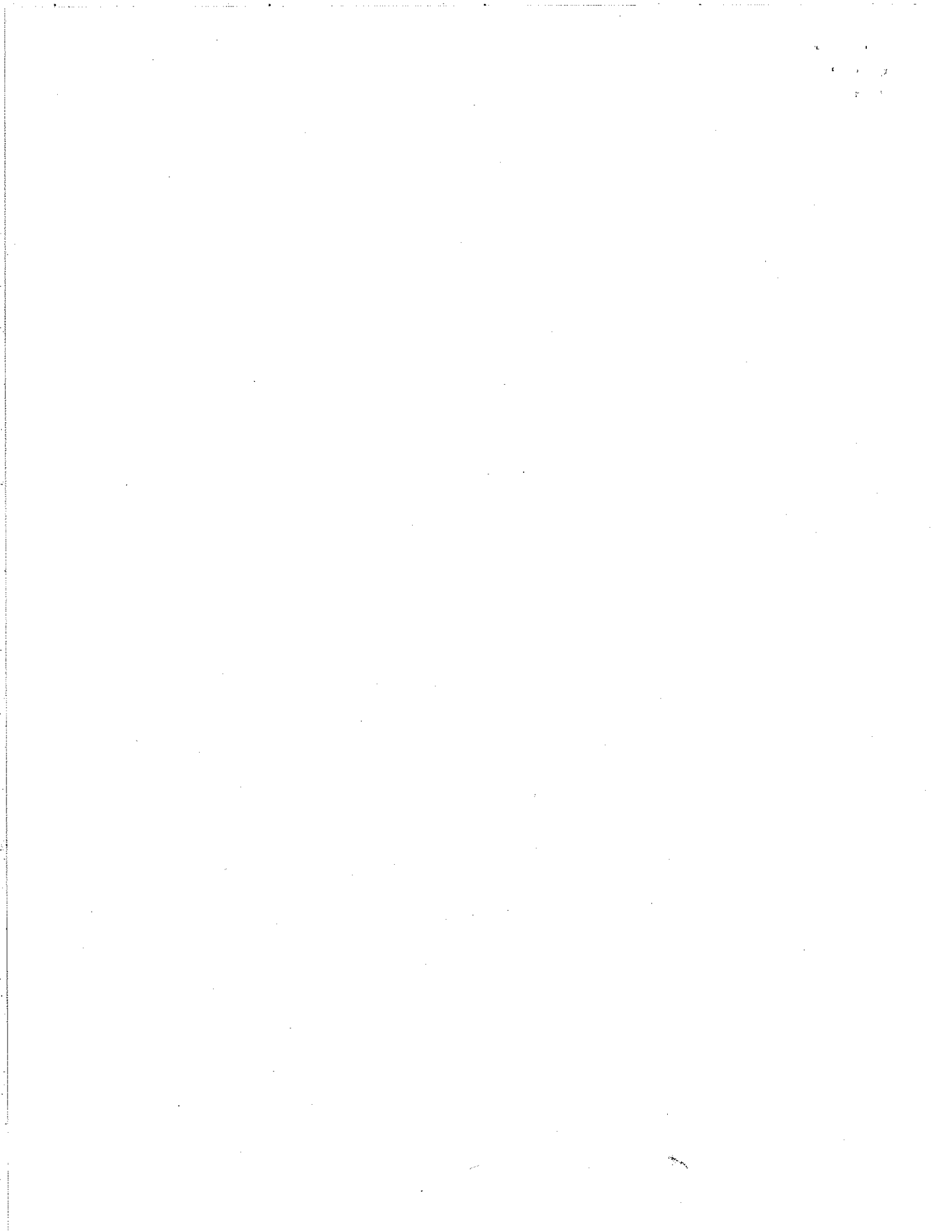
Scenic/Environmental Bicycle/Pedestrian Historic/Archaeological

III. PROJECT FUNDING

9 Are you applying for funds from another source(s) to implement this project? Yes No

If yes, please identify the source(s): Metropolitan Council Parks and Open Space Funds

10. FEDERAL AMOUNT: \$ 709,000	13. SOURCE OF MATCH FUNDS: Dakota County
11. MATCH AMOUNT: \$ 177,250	14. MATCH % OF PROJECT TOTAL: 20%
12. PROJECT TOTAL: \$ 886,250	15. PROGRAM YEAR: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2011 <input type="checkbox"/> 2012
16. SIGNATURE 	17. TITLE: Senior Planner, Dakota County Office of Planning





Physical Development Division July 19, 2007
Gregory J. Konat, Director

Dakota County
Western Service Center
14955 Galaxie Avenue
Apple Valley, MN 55124-8579

952.891.7000
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www.dakotacounty.us

Kevin Roggenbuck, Transportation Coordinator
Transportation Advisory Board
Metropolitan Council
390 N. Robert Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

Environmental Mgmt. Department
Farmland & Natural Areas Program
Office of GIS
Parks Department
Office of Planning
Surveyor's Office
Transit Office
Transportation Department
Water Resources Office

Dear Mr. Roggenbuck:

Enclosed please find a Transportation Enhancement Fund application for construction of the final segment of the North Urban Regional Trail. The segment of trail is approximately 1.1 miles within the City of West St. Paul connecting existing trails at TH110 and Marthaler Park through the Dodge Nature Center. This project is being submitted in the pedestrian and bicycle grouping.

Dakota County assures that it will operate and maintain the property and facilities of the project for the useful life of the trail and will not change the use of any right-of-way acquired without prior approval of the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Dakota County assures that a minimum 20 percent match will be available for the project. The match will be made in hard dollars from Dakota County and/or regional funding sources.

We are excited about the opportunity to complete the North Urban Regional Trail. If you have any questions pertaining to the enclosed materials, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,


Lynn Moratzka, AICP
Manager, Office of Planning





PROJECT INFORMATION (Form 2)

(To be used to assign State Aid Project Number after project is selected)

Please fill in the following information as it pertains to your proposed project. Items that do not apply to your project, please label N/A. **Do not send this form to the State Aid Office. For project solicitation package only.**

COUNTY, CITY, OR LEAD AGENCY: Dakota County COUNTY OR CITY NO.: 037

FUNCTIONAL CLASS OF ROAD: NA

ROAD SYSTEM: NA (TH, CSAH, MSAS, CO. RD., TWP. RD., CITY STREET)

ROAD NO.: NA

NAME OF ROAD: North Urban Regional Trail (Example; 1st ST., MAIN AVE)

LOCATION: From: TH 110

To: Garlough Elementary (DO NOT INCLUDE LEGAL DESCRIPTION)

SECTION-TOWNSHIP-RANGE OF ONE END OF PROJECT: 30-28-22

TYPE OF WORK: Construct 1.1 miles of 10ft. Bituminous trail: Bike Path includes GRADE, AGG BASE, BIT BASE, BIT SURFACE, PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS

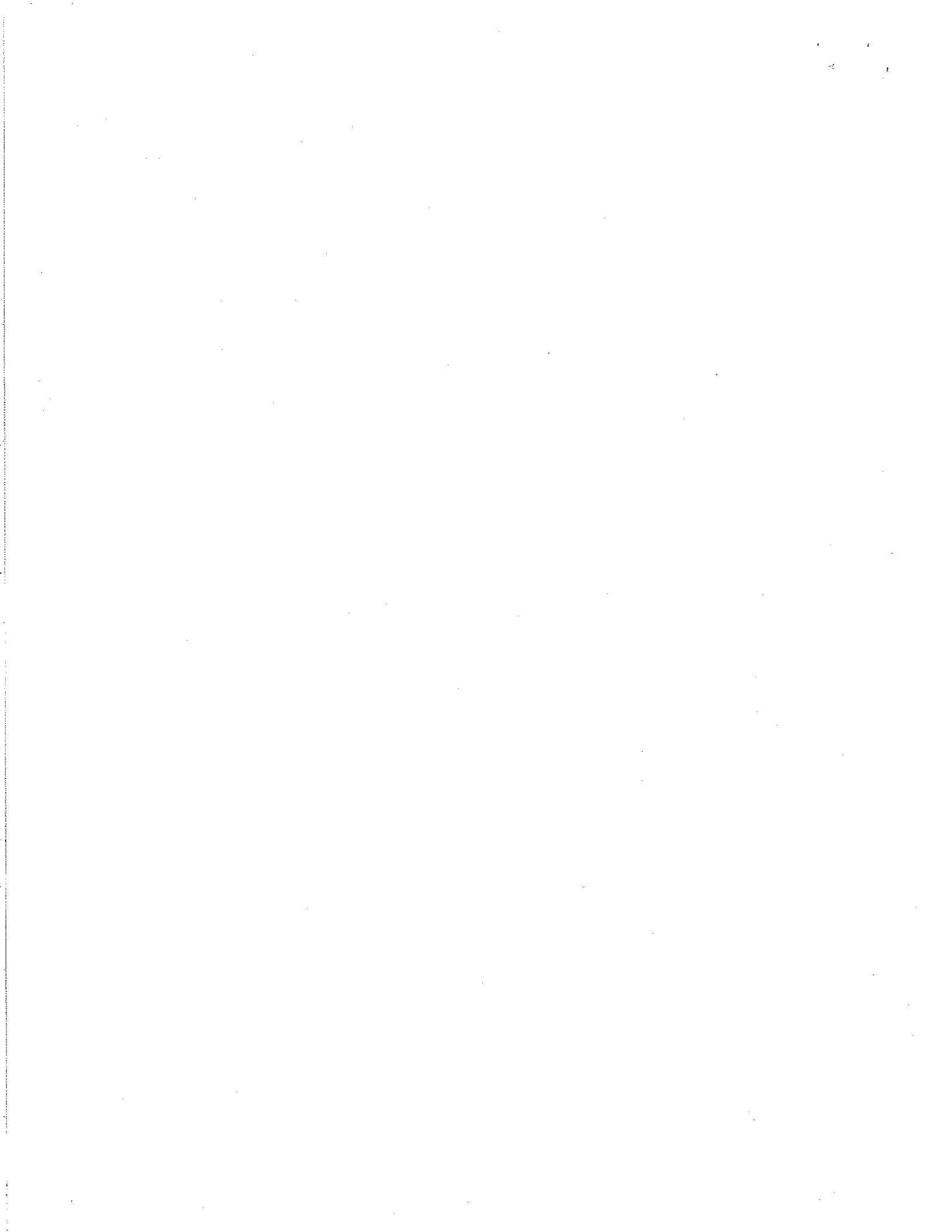
(Examples: GRADE, AGG BASE, BIT BASE, BIT SURF, SIDEWALK, CURB AND GUTTER, STORM SEWER, SIGNALS, LIGHTING, GUARDRAIL, BIKE PATH, PED RAMPS, ETC.)

BRIDGE/CULVERT PROJECTS

OLD BRIDGE /CULVERT NO. NA NEW BRIDGE/CULVERT NO. NA

STRUCTURE IS OVER NA

NAME OF TWP.: NA



Dakota County North Urban Regional Trail: Dodge Nature Center Segment

Project Summary

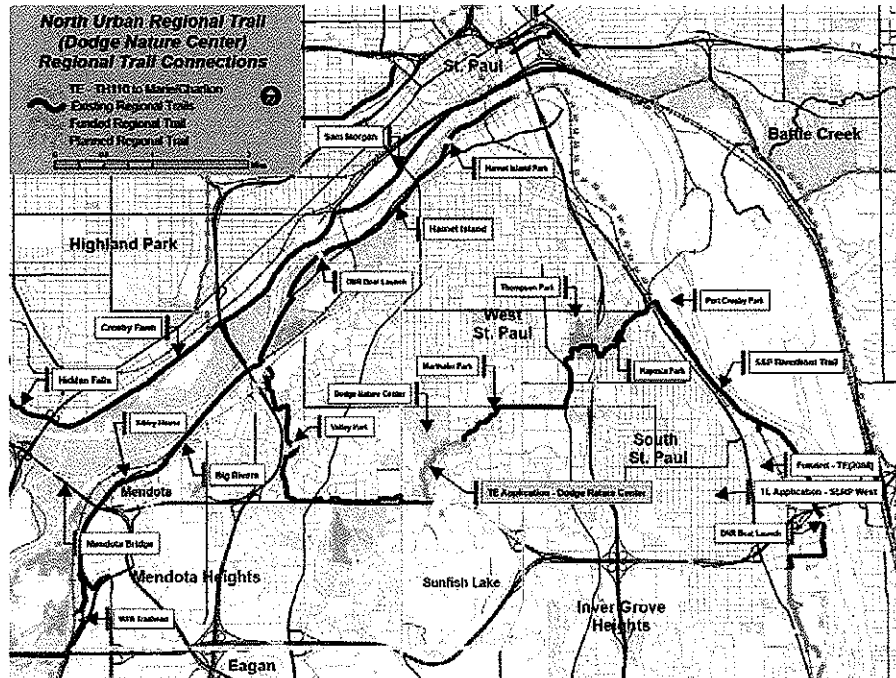
Highlights

- As final leg of North Urban Regional Trail, connects Big Rivers Regional Trail and Mississippi River Regional Trail

- Connects nature-oriented destination (Dodge Nature Center) to a primarily urban area

- Creates safe pedestrian connections to elementary school and high school

This application seeks funding for the North Urban Regional Trail (NURT) Dodge Nature Center segment, a 1.1 mile section (Appendix 1A) from TH 110 to Garlough Elementary School property north of Marie Avenue. (Appendix 1B). This TE request would complete the NURT and connect the Big Rivers Regional Trail to the Mississippi River Regional Trail.



The NURT Dodge Nature Center segment will begin northwest of the intersection of TH 110 and Charlton Street, where it will meet a NURT segment currently under construction along TH 110. The segment then will turn north into Dodge Nature Center property for a large majority of its length. Existing nature trails (on Dodge Nature Center property) will supplement the NURT as it meanders through the wooded landscape. The nature center will continue its education mission adjacent the trail, creating a unique partnership opportunity to benefit trail users.

The trail will exit Dodge Nature Center to the east crossing under Charlton Street and continuing to the rear of Garlough Elementary, where it will connect with the existing Marthal Park section of the NURT.

The proposed segment includes an underpass at Marie Avenue and one at Charlton Street, creating a safe option for schoolchildren to walk or bike to Garlough Elementary at the northeast end of this segment and for high-schoolers at Henry Sibley High, about two blocks west of the segment's southern end.

Development of this trail involves constructing 1.1 miles of bituminous trail at a desired width of 10 feet. Trail construction includes site clearing, trailbed preparation and surfacing, orientation signage, and turf establishment. The NURT Dodge Nature Center segment is proposed for construction in 2011. Dakota County is committed to providing the local 20 percent match. Project cost estimates are in Appendix 2.

The NURT is a 7.7 mile trail across all of northern Dakota County, connecting the communities of Lilydale, Mendota Heights, West St. Paul, and South St. Paul. The trail will connect the existing Big Rivers Regional Trail along the northwest border of the County to the South St. Paul Riverfront Trail/Mississippi River Regional Trail along the northeast border of the County. In crossing these communities, this trail will link neighborhoods to schools, parks, retail/commercial areas, transit facilities, libraries and other public buildings. Its goal is to provide safe and convenient routes that encourage pedestrian and bicycle modes of transportation in Dakota County.



V. TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS

PURPOSE: Transportation Enhancements (TE) are transportation-related activities designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic and environmental aspects of the nation's intermodal transportation system. The TE program provides for the implementation of non-traditional transportation projects.

TE Purpose and Vision

TE funds are directed toward projects that preserve historic, archaeological, scenic and environmental resources related to surface transportation, and to facilitate bicycle and pedestrian use. Parks and open space preserve natural resources and provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities. Trail corridors are intended to provide for recreational travel along linear pathways throughout the metropolitan area. Preservation of historic features and protection of scenic areas permit appreciation of the natural resources that have influenced the region's development.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND RESTRICTIONS

The Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law in August 2005. Under SAFETEA-LU, Transportation Enhancement activities continue to be funded through a 10 percent set-aside from STP funds. All projects must relate to surface transportation. Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds may be used for the activities identified in Qualifying Criterion #1.

The region has allocated approximately \$85 million in TE funds for projects since the beginning of the program in 1991. Through this solicitation, approximately \$17 million in TE funds is expected to be programmed in Federal Fiscal Years 2011 and 2012.

The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) is responsible for the selection of projects that are to be financed in part with TE funds made available to the seven-county region. To implement this responsibility, the TAB has developed policies to define eligibility and prioritize eligible projects.

GENERAL POLICIES

1. TE funds are available to all Minnesota state agencies, the Metropolitan Council, other transit providers, Indian tribal governments, the seven counties, all cities and towns within the Twin Cities seven county region, and the ten Regional Park System Implementation agencies. Other local or special governmental agencies and private groups are also eligible, but must have a public agency sponsor. The agency sponsor is the local unit of government of record. The local unit of government is responsible for making arrangements with the project proposer to ensure all project requirements of the local unit of government are met.

An Agency Agreement is written between Mn/DOT and the local unit of government. The local unit of government will administer the project using the State Aid for Local Transportation (SALT) Delegated Contract Process (DCP) for federal aid projects.

2. Generally, TE funds are available for the activities listed under #1 of the Qualifying Criteria and incidental activities associated with them if the incidental work does not constitute more than 30% of the project costs. See Qualifying Criterion #1 for a description of what is meant by "incidental activities".
3. Generally, for projects that involve the construction of facilities, the TAB will provide TE funds for project construction and materials, right of way, and land acquisition. For TE-eligible projects that do not involve construction (e.g., bicycle and pedestrian safety education activities), the TAB will provide TE funds for program implementation and related activities. TAB will not provide TE funds

for study completion, preliminary engineering, design, construction engineering, or other similar costs.

4. A TE construction or reconstruction project must be a permanent improvement having independent utility. Temporary construction is defined as work that must be essentially replaced in the immediate future (within five years). Staged construction is considered permanent rather than temporary so long as future stages build on, rather than replace, previous work. All projects must comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Reconstruction of a bikeway/walkway facility is eligible as long as the facility is beyond its useful life.
5. TAB will not award more than \$1,000,000 in TE funds for a specific project. TAB reserves the right to partially fund any project. The local (nonfederal) match in funding for any project must be at least 20% of the total.
6. Projects will be added to the TIP only as a result of the TAB approval in response to this and subsequent solicitations.
7. Projects listed in the region's draft or adopted TIP are assumed to be fully-funded and to have independent utility from other projects. TAB will not consider projects already listed in the draft or adopted TIP, nor the payback of Advanced Construction funds for those projects, for funding through the solicitation process. Projects submitted that are related to projects listed in the draft or adopted TIP but that have independent utility from those projects are eligible for consideration.
8. The Technical Advisory Committee shall prepare an annual report on the implementation of regionally solicited TE projects for the review and approval of the TAB. This report, the Annual Implementation Report shall include updated program, system and project information. The TAC shall include such findings, recommendations and additional information, as it deems appropriate.
9. TAB will base the fundable amount of a project on the original submittal. The TAB must approve any change in the scope of an approved project. The TE federal fund participation for each project will be updated and reported in the Annual Implementation Report as the federal cost cap. The federal cost cap will be based on an inflation adjustment set by the Transportation Advisory Board upon inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program.
10. If a project is added to the TIP, the entire project is included even though a portion of that work extends beyond the period for which submittals were requested provided that a significant portion of the work is scheduled for letting within the request period.
11. Project approvals for projects in the TE element of the TIP are specifically limited to the federal fund amount identified in the Annual Implementation Report for purposes of plan specification and estimate (PS&E) approval as well as project authorization. The federal fund amount listed for each project may be used to fund 80% of any identifiable useable element of the project described or to fund the entire project with a flexible federal/non-federal participation. The federal fund amount listed in the Annual Implementation Report is the total that shall be authorized as PS&E approval for all advertisements of the project described. Any federal fund amounts authorized at PS&E approval in years prior to the current year shall be deducted from the amount identified in the TIP at the time of approval. As noted in Policy 5, TAB will not award more than \$1,000,000 in TE funds for a specific project.
12. A TE project will be eliminated from the program if it does not meet its sunset date. The sunset date for projects is March 31 of the year following the program year identified in the project proposal or as otherwise established by the TAB. Meeting the sunset date established for a project shall be governed by the TAB adopted Criteria for Meeting Sunset Date requirements, attached as Appendix D.

If the Criteria for Meeting Sunset Date requirements (as noted above) for a project have been met, but STP funds are not presently available, that particular project will be placed on a waiting list for funds, listed in order of date of approval, and the sunset date would not apply.

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS PROJECTS - QUALIFYING CRITERIA

Projects must be coordinated with all affected communities and other levels and units of government. The applicant must show that the project meets each of the following ten qualifying criteria to qualify for scoring under the prioritizing criteria. Answer each criterion in a numbered sequence. **Failure to respond to any of the qualifying criteria will result in a recommendation to disqualify your project.**

1. **Qualifying Activities.** The applicant must show that the proposed project falls under at least one of the following list of twelve qualifying activities and must state the specific category(ies) the project qualifies under. The list of qualifying TE activities provided in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(35) of SAFETEA-LU is intended to be exclusive, not illustrative. That is, **only** those activities listed therein are eligible as TE activities.
 1. Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles.
 2. Provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists.
 3. Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites including historic battlefields.
 4. Scenic or historic highway programs (including the provision of tourist and welcome center facilities).
 5. Landscaping and other scenic beautification.
 6. Historic preservation.
 7. Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals).
 8. Preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including the conversion and use thereof for pedestrian or bicycle trails).
 9. Inventory, control and removal of outdoor advertising.
 10. Archaeological planning and research.
 11. Environmental mitigation to address water pollution due to highway runoff or reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity.
 12. Establishment of transportation museums.

One or more of these activities must constitute at least 70% of the project cost. Unlisted ancillary activities such as paving a parking lot, constructing buildings or providing restrooms must constitute no more than 30% of the total project cost. Applicants whose project is part of a larger transportation project must provide a construction cost summary demonstrating that at least 70% of the project is eligible for Transportation Enhancement funds.

Many projects include a number of activities – some which are on this list and others that are not. Only those project activities that are on the list may be counted as TE activities. For example, a rest area might include a historic site purchased and developed as an interpretive site illustrating local history. The historic site purchase and development would qualify as a transportation enhancement activity.

Work that is made possible because a project presents an opportunity to improve and enhance the environment and or aesthetics in the vicinity of a project may be eligible for enhancement funding. For example, a construction project may present an opportunity to improve the condition of an

adjacent stream bed to improve water quality, construct a vital link for a community bikeway system and develop a landscaped green area to enhance the downtown environment.

Activities that are not explicitly on the list may qualify if they are an integral part of a larger qualifying activity. For example, if the rehabilitation of a historic railroad station required the construction of new drainage facilities, the entire project could be considered for TE funding.

RESPONSE: The North Urban Regional Trail (NURT) Dodge Nature trail segment is eligible for Transportation Enhancement Program Funds as designated in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(35) of SAFETEA-LU under the following qualifying activities:

Activity 1: Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles.

Activity 2: Provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Activity 3: Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites.

Activity 4: Scenic or historic highway programs (including the provision of tourists and welcome center facilities)

Activity 5: Landscaping and other scenic beautification.

Activity 1)

Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles: As an off-road regional trail, the N will serve pedestrian and bicyclists, as well as users of other modes of non-motorized transport for commuting and recreation. The Dodge Nature Center segment will include grade-separated crossings at Charlton Street and Marie Avenue.

Activity 2)

Provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists: Signage along the North Urban Regional route will provide direction and user safety information for trail users. Interpretive programming efforts will involve fixed educational materials, such as posted informational displays on natural and cultural resources, and presentation programming, including tours and classes. Programming will be developed in accordance with the policies and strategies identified in the Dakota County Parks and Open Space Policy Plan and in conjunction with Dodge Nature Center.

Activity 3)

Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites: The final design will avoid negative environmental impacts, focus on route safety, and provide a scenic experience for trail users. Scenic easements will be used to provide users with the optimal natural trail experience.

Activity 5)

Landscaping and other scenic beautification: Trail construction will include landscaping and/or restoration activities along the route to improve the aesthetic quality and natural resource value of the right of way and to prevent erosion near the trail.

Activity 10)

Archaeological planning and research (future effort): Dakota County has sought to research site history and cultural legacy throughout its parks and trails system from the standpoint of protecting sensitive resources and enriching visitor experiences through interpretive opportunities. A local cultural resources survey will be conducted prior to construction to ensure any significant archaeological sites are not disturbed. Data review has been requested from the State Historic Preservation Office through MN DOT for this segment.

The trail will be open to the general public. Activities 1 (provision of the trail) and 5 (landscaping) will constitute more than 70 percent of the project costs.

2. The funded activities must be accessible to the general public or targeted to a broad segment of the general public, and must be ADA compliant.

RESPONSE: The Dodge Nature Center trail segment will be ADA compliant.

3. Projects must relate to surface transportation.

Project Linkage (from federal guidance)

To comply with Federal guidelines for eligibility there are two basic considerations:

- Is the proposed action one of the listed activities in the TE definition in SAFETEA-LU?
- How does the proposed action relate to surface transportation?

The applicant must provide a clear statement describing this linkage.

The definition of TE activities includes the phrase, "transportation enhancement activities means, with respect to any project or the area to be served by the project, any of the following activities, if such activity relates to surface transportation:..."

The nature of a proposed TE project's relationship to surface transportation should be discussed in the project proposal that you submit. For example, where runoff from an existing highway contaminates an adjacent water resource and a transportation enhancement activity is proposed to mitigate the pollution caused by the run off a clear highway or transportation relationship exists. Another example might involve the acquisition of a scenic easement. The acquisition would be in connection with the preservation of a scenic vista related to travel along a specific route.

Where a TE activity is for acquisition for scenic preservation purposes, and proposes to contribute to the visual experience of the traveler, but is a substantial distance away with respect to a highway or transportation project, the TE activity must be determined to make a substantial contribution to the scenic viewshed.

Given the nature of the list of eligible activities, it is not necessary that each TE activity be associated with a specific surface transportation project to be eligible for funding. Examples which illustrate this include: the rehabilitation of a historic train structure, the provision of a bike or pedestrian path, or the establishment of a transportation museum.

Proximity to a highway or transportation facility alone is not sufficient to establish a relationship to surface transportation. Additional discussion, beyond proximity, is needed in the TE project proposal to establish the relationship to transportation. For example, an historic barn that happened to be adjacent to a particular highway facility would not automatically be considered eligible for TE funds simply because of its location; visibility to the traveler in a way that substantially enhances the traveling experience could qualify. Specific documentation of the enhanced experience is required; conversely, a historic structure, such as the barn in the above example, could not be disqualified from consideration because it was not adjacent to a particular Federal-aid facility, as long as some other relationship to surface transportation could be established.

It is not necessary to have a TE activity function as an active transportation facility, either past or current, to qualify as an eligible TE activity. For example, a scenic or historic site may have a relationship to transportation but not function as a transportation facility.

Once a relationship to surface transportation is established, TE activities can be implemented in a number of ways. For example, they can be developed as parts of larger joint development projects, or as stand-alone projects.

RESPONSE: The Dodge Nature Center Segment is the final piece of the North Urban Regional Trail, which provides east-west connectivity across northern Dakota County. The North Urban Regional Trail is a 10-foot wide regional bikeway and trail system traversing Lilydale, Mendota Heights, West St. Paul and South St. Paul. In addition to its local utility, the completed North Urban Regional Trail will enhance the regional bikeway and trail system by providing a critical link between two other regional trails: the Big Rivers Regional Trail and the Mississippi River Regional Trail.

The proposed segment connects residential areas to local destinations such as Garlough Elementary School, Garlough Park, Marthaler Park, and Wentworth Library, as well as regional destinations Sibley High School and Dodge Nature Center. Regionally, the North Urban Regional Trail serves as multimodal access to commercial corridors along Robert and Concord streets, regional recreation facilities at Thompson and Kaposia parks, and governmental centers including West St. Paul City Hall and Dakota County's Northern Service Center.

4. The project must be included in, be part of, or relate to a problem, need or direction discussed in: 1) a local or county comprehensive plan found to be consistent with Metropolitan Council plans; 2) a locally approved capital improvement program; 3) an officially adopted corridor study reflected in the local plan; or 4) the official plan or program of the applicant agency. The applicant must reference the appropriate comprehensive plan, CIP, corridor study document, or other plan or program and provide copies of the applicable pages. Because all communities in the seven-county Twin Cities region are currently in the process of updating their local comprehensive plans, applications in the 2007 Solicitation may be for projects included in the most recent local comprehensive plan that was found to be consistent with Metropolitan Council plans. It also must not conflict with the goals and policies in these adopted regional plans: the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan, the 2030 Regional Framework, and the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan

RESPONSE: The North Urban Regional Trail (NURT) will increase non-motorized access to schools, parks, civic institutions, and commercial areas along its route. The NURT also will increase the safety of recreational users and commuters. The Dakota County NURT responds to the need for a continuous regional east-west trail called for by several key plans and efforts at the federal, state, local, and non-profit levels:

- The Dakota County Board of Commissioners approved the North Urban Regional Trail Development Plan from Lilydale to South St. Paul in 1996.

- The NURT is documented as a planned trail system expansion in the 1999 Dakota County Comprehensive Plan, as approved by Metropolitan Council (Appendix 4).

- The NURT is identified in the 2001 Dakota County Park System Plan as an element of the Dakota County trail system (Appendix 3).

- The 2006-2010 Dakota County Capital Improvements Program identifies NURT segments as projects slated for construction in 2011 (Appendix 2).

- The trail is a regional trail and is part of the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan

5. Typically a transportation project involves mitigation, work in addition to immediate construction activities, that is negotiated with permitting agencies and local governments as a condition of obtaining permit approval. Activities that are normally part of the mitigation of a transportation project are not eligible.

NOT ELIGIBLE - Work that is required as a condition of obtaining a permit or concurrence for a different transportation project is **not eligible** for enhancement funding. For example, a city may require a highway expansion project to include streetscape enhancements in order to gain municipal consent. In that case, streetscape work performed to satisfy the municipal consent requirement is not eligible for Transportation Enhancement funding. Federal permitting and authorizing agencies may include the U.S. Forest Service, U. S. Corps of Engineers, and others. State permitting agencies may include the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office. Regional agencies may include watershed districts and metropolitan planning organizations. Local agencies may include counties and cities.

RESPONSE: The North Urban Regional Trail (NURT) Dodge Nature Center segment is a bicycle and pedestrian trail and is not a required mitigation activity for a transportation projects. The Dodge Nature Center segment pertains neither to obtaining a permit from state or federal regulatory agencies nor compensation for environmental damage. As a Transportation Enhancement project, the NURT is intended to provide an optimal route for visitors without causing adverse environmental impacts and will complete landscaping improvements along the trail corridor as part of project construction

5. The applicant must assure it will operate and maintain the property and facility of the project for the useful life of the improvement, and not change the use of any right-of-way acquired without prior approval from the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.

The FHWA requires that states agree to operate and maintain facilities constructed with federal transportation funds for the useful life of the improvement, and not change the use of any right-of-way acquired without prior approval from the FHWA. TAB has determined that this requirement will be applied to the project applicant. FHWA considers most physical constructions and total reconstructions to have a useful design life of 10 years or more, depending on the nature of the project. Bridge constructions and total reconstructions are considered to have useful lives of 50 years. The useful life of the project will be defined in the inter-agency maintenance agreement that must be prepared and signed prior to the project letting.

RESPONSE: Dakota County will be the owner and operator of the North Urban Regional Trail (NURT) from Lilydale to South St. Paul, for the useful life of the property, estimated to be more than 10 years. Dakota County will not change the use of the right of way without prior approval from the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.

6. Projects must have an estimated total cost of at least \$125,000. There are significant federal project processing requirements that come with federal funds. These requirements translate into expenditures of time and money on the parts of both the agency proposing/developing the project and the state agency administering the federal funds for the project. Project applicants can "bundle" projects together to meet this minimum. (Example: bundled projects could consist of signing and lighting a number of bike trails in several counties.) Communities may want to consider using joint powers agreements for implementing bundled projects.

RESPONSE: At \$886,250, the total estimated cost of the North Urban Regional Trail (NURT) Dodge Nature Center segment exceeds the \$125,000 minimum threshold established under SAFETEA-LU guidelines. See Appendix 3 – Cost Estimates.

7. TAB will not award more than \$1,000,000 in TE funds to a specific project. Other federal funds may be combined with TE funds.

RESPONSE: Dakota County seeks \$709,000 in TE funds for the North Urban Regional Trail (NURT) Dodge Nature Center segment. See Appendix 3 – Cost Estimates.

8. Projects must have an assured local (nonfederal funds) match of at least 20% of the estimated total cost of the proposed project. At the time of application, the applicant must assure the local match will be available when the project is authorized in the requested program year. If the applicant expects any other agency to provide part of the local match, the applicant must include a letter or resolution

from the other agency agreeing to financially participate. TAB will not award additional points for providing a match in excess of 20%.

The local match can be provided in the form of cash up front "hard dollars" or a "soft match". A "soft match" may include donated labor or construction materials if adequate documentation of its equivalent dollar value and availability can be provided. Donated labor must have expertise and experience in the type of labor required for the project and valued at rates consistent with rates ordinarily paid for similar work. Some type of time sheet must support donated labor. Donated materials, e.g., railroad ties, asphalt pavement, or wiring necessary to run a street car, must meet all standards and specifications. Caution in using a "soft match" should be taken to ensure the donated materials or labor during actual construction does not fall below the 20% non-federal match required to be able to receive 100% of the federal funds. Applicants wishing to use a soft match should first contact John Lindemer at Mn/DOT at 651-296-8480 to determine its value and eligibility.

RESPONSE: Dakota County assures it will provide at least 20 percent of the cost for the North Urban Regional Trail (NURT) Dodge Nature Center segment. These funds will be a "hard" match and will be included in the Dakota County Capital Improvements Program for 2011.

9. Proposed designs for bikeways and for combined bike/pedestrian facilities must meet MN/DOT State Aid standards. Exceptions to the State Aid standards may be granted during final design if warranted based on social, economic or environmental alternatives, **not** through this solicitation process. Failure to meet the standards or justify exemptions will result in the loss of federal funds.

RESPONSE: Dakota County assures the North Urban Regional Trail (NURT) Dodge Nature Center segment project will be designed to meet standards established under the MN DOT State Aid program and by AASHTO.

10. Projects must be coordinated with all affected communities and other levels and units of government. Coordination is defined as written communication from the applicant to all affected communities informing them of the project. The applicant must provide a copy of the written communication as proof of coordination.

RESPONSE: Every effort will be made to involve Dakota County residents, property owners, MN DOT, and the city of West St. Paul in the final design of the North Urban Regional Trail (NURT) Dodge Nature Center segment. Staff from the city of West St. Paul and Dodge Nature Center has been involved with preliminary planning of the trail segment. (Appendix 4)

Letters of support have been received from Dodge Nature Center, as well as the city of West St. Paul. The Metropolitan Council has acknowledged the project segment is consistent with the previously approved NURT master plan, as well as the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan. (Appendix 4)

TE PROJECTS - PRIORITIZING CRITERIA

Instead of the past practice of having general prioritizing criteria to which all projects must respond, the prioritizing criteria are now split into category and general/integrative criteria, as outlined on the following pages. Projects will be scored through the category and general/integrative criteria as follows:

- a) **Category Criteria.** All applications must be submitted in one of three categories: Scenic and Environmental; Bicycle and Pedestrian; and Historical and Archaeological. Applicants must submit their project under the proper category as outlined below. However, projects that incorporate more than one of the eligible TE activities will receive priority under the third category criterion,

Relationship Between Categories. If prospective applicants are uncertain which category most appropriately includes their project, they should contact Council staff.

The 12 Qualifying Activities (as listed and described in Qualifying Criterion #1 on previous pages) fall under those 3 categories as follows:

1. Scenic and Environmental:

- QA #3, Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites;
- QA #4, Scenic or historic highway programs;
- QA #5, Landscaping and other scenic beautification;
- QA #9, Inventory, control and removal of outdoor advertising; and
- QA #11, Environmental mitigation to address water pollution due to highway runoff or reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity.

2. Bicycle and Pedestrian:

- QA #1, Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists;
- QA #2, Provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists; and
- QA #8, Preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including the conversion and use thereof for pedestrian and bicycle trails).

3. Historic and Archaeological:

- QA #6, Historic preservation (with relationship to transportation, see Qualifying Criterion #2);
- QA #7, Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals);
- QA #10, Archaeological planning and research (with relationship to transportation, see Qualifying Criterion #2); and
- QA #12, Establishment of transportation museums.

Applications in a particular category will first be scored based on responses to questions pertinent to that category and subsequently will pass on to be evaluated under the general/integrative criteria.

- b) **General/Integrative Criteria.** All applications will then be evaluated against general and integrative criteria consistent with Metropolitan Council and Transportation Advisory Board goals and policies and federal program goals.
- c) **Final Ranking.** The Category Criteria scores will be added to the General/Integrative criteria scores to give final project scores. Projects will be ranked against other applications in their category to develop three ranked lists of TE projects, which will be evaluated all together by a multidisciplinary team of scorers, who will develop a single list of recommended projects..

Transportation Enhancements Category Criteria (500 points)

Each qualified project will be scored under four common category criteria within its TE project group: urgency; impact; relationship between TE categories; and relationship to intermodal/multimodal transportation. This will allow projects to be scored under these criteria relatively equally across the different categories while addressing the particular attributes of the project type. An explanation of each of the four common category criteria and reasons for their inclusion follows:

1. **Urgency.** This criterion measures how critical or time-sensitive the problem is that is being addressed by the project. Examples might include seizing an opportunity to preserve a scarce or endangered resource or addressing a critical need.
2. **Impact.** This criterion quantifies the benefit from the project, without specifically relating it to how the larger public will benefit (that calculation will be made in part 2. of the general/integrative criteria).
3. **Relationship between Categories.** This criterion is being presented under the assumption that the region recognizes that there is a value in having projects that provide more than one of the eligible TE activities. Examples might include the reconstruction of a bicycle/pedestrian trail leading to a historic transportation structure.
4. **Relationship to Intermodal/Multimodal Transportation System.** This criterion measures how the proposed project clearly and credibly relates to the surface transportation system. Surface transportation is defined to include all modes of travel with the exception of aviation and military transportation. Federal TE guidance states that proximity to a transportation facility alone is not sufficient to establish a relationship.

▪ **Scenic and Environmental Group (Qualifying Activities 3, 4, 5, 9, 11)**

1. **Urgency (250 points).** Discuss if/how the project proposes or addresses each of the following:
 - Takes advantage of a time-sensitive opportunity, e.g., a willing landowner, cost savings, affiliation with another project, competing development opportunities

RESPONSE: NA

- Significantly addresses a current or anticipated issue/problem/threat associated with contaminated land, erosion, water quality, rare or threatened plant or wildlife species, and/or obstructed or impaired scenic views

RESPONSE: NA

2. **Impact (250 points).** Discuss how the project addresses the applicable questions below (respond as appropriate to all questions except those specifically targeted at a different qualifying activity):

- For Qualifying Activity #3: What is the scenic or historic authenticity and integrity of the property or site, and how will these scenic or historic qualities be preserved or enhanced by the project?

RESPONSE: NA

- For Qualifying Activity #4: What is the scenic or historic authenticity and integrity of the highway, and how will these scenic or historic qualities be preserved or enhanced by the project?

RESPONSE: NA

- For Qualifying Activity #5: How does the project enhance the landscape or provide a pleasing visual experience for the traveling public?

RESPONSE: NA

- For Qualifying Activity #9: How many nonconforming, illegal and other off-premise signs are targeted for removal under the proposed project?

RESPONSE: NA

- For Qualifying Activity #11: If addressing water pollution; what pollutants are in the water, what natural resources do they harm, and how will the proposed project address the source of these pollutants? If the project concerns wildlife mortality and habitat connectivity; how would the project maintain, improve, or restore habitat connectivity, reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality, and what kinds of wildlife will benefit?

RESPONSE: NA

- For All Applicants: Provides more than a local benefit. Two examples of projects that provide more than a local benefit include mitigation of highway water runoff to a river that runs through several communities, and acquisition of a scenic easement and lookout area along a regional ("A" Minor or Principal Arterial) highway.

RESPONSE: NA

- For All Applicants: Provides an immediate benefit. Projects that are likely to show immediate results will receive more points over those that are part of a longer-term project.

RESPONSE: NA

- For All Applicants: Provides benefit to significant numbers of people. Staff will determine this by using the population density within one mile of the project area. **Applicants will need to supply a map showing the exact location of the project.** In the case of water pollution due to highway runoff, the location would be the impacted area even if the source of the pollution being addressed is not in the impacted area.

3. **Relationship between Categories (100 points).** Projects will score higher if they provide multiple benefits toward the purpose of the Transportation Enhancements program. Applicants should review the respective category criteria to determine the extent to which the project relates to the other two Enhancements categories:

- What is the relationship to the Bicycle and Pedestrian group? For example, how does the scenic/environmental project address bicycle and pedestrian access to the project location?

RESPONSE: NA

- What is the relationship to the Historic and Archaeological group? For example, how does the scenic/environmental project promote people's understanding of transportation in history or protect archaeological resources?

RESPONSE: NA

4. **Relationship to Intermodal/Multimodal Transportation System (100 points).** Discuss how the project will function as a component and/or enhancement of the transportation system:

- How will the project benefit the experience of users of the transportation system?

RESPONSE: NA

- How will the project benefit multiple modes of transportation?

RESPONSE: NA

▪ **Bicycle and Pedestrian Group (Qualifying Activities 1, 2, and 8)**

1. **Urgency (250 points).** Discuss if/how the project proposes or addresses each of the following:
- Takes advantage of a time-sensitive opportunity, e.g., a willing landowner, cost savings, affiliation with another project, competing development opportunities

RESPONSE: The Dodge Nature Center segment is the last "piece of the puzzle" to complete the North Urban Regional Trail (NURT), which traverses northern Dakota County from South St. Paul to Lilydale. The NURT provides a critical bicycle and pedestrian corridor that connects residential areas with parks, schools, libraries, government offices, recreational facilities, and commercial areas. The NURT also provides an east-west transportation link between the Mississippi River Regional Trail and the Big Rivers Regional Trail along the Minnesota River.

The Dodge Nature Center is a regional attraction with programs and activities that support environmentally responsible modes of transit. Recent cooperation between Dodge Nature Center and the Dakota County Parks Department has opened the door to locating a regional trail within the nature center. A route through the center's property has been the preferred alignment of the trail since the adoption of the NURT Development Plan in 1996.

- Significantly addresses a strong un-met need or area of concern/problem associated with the development of an integrated bicycle or pedestrian transportation network or providing a safe bicycle or pedestrian route

RESPONSE: A continuous North Urban Regional Trail was identified as a need in several plans and efforts at the national, state, regional, and county levels, including:

-The trail is a regional trail and is part of the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

-The NURT is documented as a planned trail system expansion in the 1999 Dakota County Comprehensive Plan, as approved by Metropolitan Council (Appendix 3).

-The Dakota County Board of Commissioners approved the Development Plan for the NURT from South St. Paul to Lilydale in 1996.

-The NURT is identified in the 2001 Dakota County Park System Plan as an element of the Dakota County trail system (Appendix 3)

-The 2006-2010 Dakota County Capital Improvements Program identifies NURT segments as projects slated for construction in 2011 (Appendix 2)

In crossing the communities of South St. Paul, West St. Paul, Mendota Heights and Lilydale, the NURT serves as a safe and convenient route that encourages pedestrian and bicycle modes of transportation in Dakota County. The Dodge Nature Center segment specifically addresses the safety and access needs of walkers and bikers along the busy collector streets of Charlton Street and Marie Avenue in West St. Paul. It also provides a safe route for children attending Garlough Elementary and Sibley High Schools.

2. **Impact (250 points).** Discuss how the project addresses each element below (respond as appropriate to A. or B., not both):

A. Bike/Ped Infrastructure (QA #1, and QA #8):

- Fills gaps, overcomes barriers, and/or connects system segments in pedestrian/bicycle network. **The applicant should provide a map showing the location of the project within the context of an existing and planned bicycle or pedestrian network.** If the project is removing a barrier, the applicant should demonstrate the magnitude of the barrier (number of lanes, average daily traffic, posted speed, etc.) and how the proposed project will improve travel across that barrier.

RESPONSE: The Dodge Nature Center segment is the last piece of the puzzle to complete the North Urban Regional Trail (NURT), which traverses northern Dakota County from South St. Paul to Lilydale. The NURT provides a critical bicycle and pedestrian corridor that connects residential areas with parks, schools, libraries, government offices, recreational facilities, and commercial areas. The NURT also serves a regional need by providing an east-west link between the Mississippi River Regional Trail and the Big Rivers Regional Trail along the Minnesota River.

The Dodge Nature Center segment specifically addresses the safety and access needs of walkers and bikers along TH 110 and the busy collector streets of Charlton Street and Marie Avenue in West St. Paul. Once complete, users will have off-road access and no longer have to rely on an indirect and unidentified route along city streets to bridge the current gap in the trail.

Completion of this segment is essential to the larger goal of a North Urban Regional Trail through Dakota County, as called for by:

-The trail is a regional trail and is part of the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

-The NURT is documented as a planned trail system expansion in the 1999 Dakota County Comprehensive Plan, as approved by Metropolitan Council (Appendix 3).

-The Dakota County Board of Commissioners approved the Development Plan for the NURT from South St. Paul to Lilydale in 1996.

-The NURT is identified in the 2001 Dakota County Park System Plan as an element of the Dakota County trail system (Appendix 4).

-The 2006-2010 Dakota County Capital Improvements Program identifies NURT segments as projects slated for construction in 2011 (Appendix 2).



- Project provides a high-demand facility or program. Relative levels of demand will be determined using population density and connections to significant travel attractors. Metropolitan Council staff will determine population density using 2000 residential population within one mile of the project. The applicant should also list below significant destinations that are near the facility or that the facility provides close connections to. Destinations can be recreation areas such as parks, beaches, rivers, lakes, etc; or commercial or mixed-use districts, major employment areas or other major cultural destinations.

RESPONSE: Bicycle trails are in high demand in Dakota County. Trails are consistently identified as one of the most desired recreational amenities in Dakota County resident surveys on recreation, quality of life, and County services. A recreation survey sent to 2,500 randomly sampled county households in 2004 identified the following activities as the top five recreation choices:

- 1) Walking/hiking
- 2) Loop trails around a lake
- 3) Picnicking
- 4) Visiting natural areas
- 5) Biking on paved trails

This segment of the North Urban Regional Trail would support several of these activities, including walking/hiking, biking, and visiting the Dodge Nature Center. Of note: residents taking

the 2004 survey also identified additional biking trails as the top recreation need for Dakota County.

Dakota County's regional trails are designed to accommodate a broad range of cycling needs and levels of skill, with a focus on rider safety, a high quality trail experience, and interpretive or outdoor education opportunities.

The 2004 Dakota County recreation survey also identified a strong interest in history-based programming, closely followed by an interest in nature programming. In cooperation with the Dodge Nature Center, future efforts in NURT implementation will include expansion of interpretive opportunities and programming to heighten visitor awareness of cultural and natural resources, and to encourage good stewardship of these resources. As an example, current offerings on Dakota County's Big Rivers Regional Trail include the program *Biking with a Historian*, which provides an opportunity for visitors to learn about the history of Mendota and Lilydale.

Dakota County estimates that when all portions of the NURT are substantially in place, ridership will significantly increase, especially considering the connections to the popular Big Rivers and Mississippi River regional trails.

- Addresses safety concerns. The applicant should describe how the project addresses an identified safety problem.

RESPONSE: The Dodge Nature Center segment specifically addresses the safety and access needs of walkers and bikers between TH 110 and the busy collectors of Charlton Street and Marie Avenue in West St. Paul. Once complete, users will have off-road access and no longer have to rely on an indirect and unidentified route along city streets to bridge the current gap in the trail.

The underpasses at Charlton Street and Marie Avenue are a key feature intended to improve safety and encourage use among Dodge Nature Center visitors and Garlough Elementary students. The preferred trail route calls for mid-block crossings where the potential for pedestrian/motor vehicle conflict is high. Grade separating these crossings is intended to facilitate the uninterrupted flow of increased pedestrian movement.

The proposed segment connects residential areas to local destinations such as Garlough Elementary School, Garlough Park, Marthaler Park, and Wentworth Library, as well as regional destinations including Sibley High School and Dodge Nature Center.

- Provides more than a local benefit. An example of such a project is a bicycle trail that is part of a county, regional or state trail system, or one that links different trail systems together.

RESPONSE: The North Urban Regional Trail (NURT), which traverses northern Dakota County from South St. Paul to Lilydale, serves a regional need by providing an east-west link between two other regional trails, the Mississippi River Regional Trail and the Big Rivers Regional Trail along the Minnesota River. Utilizing this system, users have access to downtown St. Paul, the Mendota and 35E bridges, Bloomington, the Wakota Bridge to Washington County, and the city of Hastings.

The Dodge Nature Center segment would be routed to provide proximity to parking facilities at the nature center, Garlough Elementary School, and Garlough Park. Non-local users could potentially access multiple business and recreational activities along the NURT corridor by utilizing these facilities.

- For Applications for Qualifying Activity #8 only: Who owns the railway corridor property and will there be an agreement to ensure the preservation and protection of the corridor?

RESPONSE: NA

B. Bike/Ped Programs (QA #2):

- Significantly improves safety/behavior of bicyclists and pedestrians

RESPONSE: NA

- Increases market share/use of bicycling and walking

RESPONSE: NA

- Fills gaps in existing programs. Describe the target audience in this program and how they would benefit from these activities or programs.

RESPONSE: NA

- Provides more than a local benefit. An example of such a program is a bicycle/pedestrian safety program conducted in several school districts.

RESPONSE: NA

3. Relationship between Categories (100 points). Projects will score higher if they provide multiple benefits toward the purpose of the Transportation Enhancements program. Applicants should review the respective category criteria to determine the extent to which the project relates to the other two categories:

- What is the relationship to the Scenic and Environmental group? For example, how does the bike/ped project provide a natural resource enhancement?

RESPONSE: Scenic & Environment:

The Dodge Nature Center segment and the overall North Urban Regional Trail (NURT) provide for several activities in the scenic and environmental group, including:

Activity 3: Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites. Specifically because of its natural beauty, a trail section through the Dodge Nature Center has been the preferred alternative since the adoption of the NURT development plan in 1996. Final design for the trail will focus on route safety, avoiding negative environmental impacts, and provision of a scenic and pleasant experience for trail users.

Activity 5: Landscaping and other scenic beautification. Trail construction will include landscaping and/or restoration activities along the trail route to improve the aesthetic quality and natural resource value of the right of way and to prevent erosion near the trail. Within Dodge Nature Center, additional care and consideration will be given to protection of natural and cultural resources. County staff will collaborate with nature center personnel on trail design and construction in this area.

- What is the relationship to the Historic and Archaeological group? For example, how does the bike/ped project take advantage of or enhance historic and cultural resources or provide orientation/interpretation to users?

RESPONSE: The Dodge Nature Center segment and the overall NURT provide for activities from the scenic and environmental group:

Activity 10: Archaeological planning and research. Dakota County has sought to research site history and cultural legacy throughout its parks and trails system from the standpoint of

protecting sensitive resources and enriching visitor experiences through interpretive opportunities. Prior to construction, a localized cultural resources survey will be conducted to ensure any significant archaeological sites are not disturbed. Data review has been requested from the State Historic Preservation Office through MN DOT for this segment.

4. **Relationship to Intermodal/Multimodal Transportation System (100 points).** Discuss how the project will function as a component and/or enhancement of the transportation system:
- How will the bicycle or pedestrian facility benefit the experience of users of the transportation system?

RESPONSE: The Dodge Nature Center segment is the last piece of the puzzle to complete the North Urban Regional Trail (NURT). This segment specifically addresses the safety and access needs of walkers and bikers along TH 110 and the busy collector streets of Charlton Street and Marie Avenue in West St. Paul. Once complete, users will have off-road access and no longer have to rely on an indirect and unidentified route along city streets to bridge the current gap in the trail. The segment also connects residential areas to local destinations such as Garlough Elementary School, Garlough Park, Marthaler Park, and Wentworth Library, as well as regional destinations such as Sibley High School and Dodge Nature Center.

The NURT, which traverses northern Dakota County from South St. Paul to Lilydale, serves a regional need by providing an east-west link between two other regional trails, the Mississippi River Regional Trail and the Big Rivers Regional Trail along the Minnesota River. Utilizing this network of trails, users have access to downtown St. Paul, the Mendota and 35E bridges, the 494 strip in Bloomington, the Wakota Bridge to Washington County, the city of Hastings, and eventually the city of Red Wing along the Mississippi River.

The NURT benefits commuters and recreational users. Several recreational destinations are spread along the trail, including Kaposia Park in South St. Paul, Thompson County Park, Dodge Nature Center, Thompson Oaks golf course in West St. Paul, and Valley Park and Sibley High School athletic fields in Mendota Heights. The trail also functions as a safe route to and from major employment centers along Concord Street in South St. Paul, Robert Street in West St. Paul, and TH 110 in Mendota Heights.

The trail will include interpretive opportunities on the natural and cultural resources of the area. Additionally, signage along the NURT route will provide direction and user safety information.

- How will the project benefit multiple modes of transportation? An example of a project that would do this would be a bicycle facility that connects to a transit center or a mixed-use pedestrian-oriented district, or a pedestrian project that is a component of a transit-oriented development.

RESPONSE: The Dodge Nature Center trail segment will be routed to provide proximity to parking facilities at the Dodge Nature Center, Garlough Elementary School, and Garlough Park. Users could access multiple business and recreational activities along the NURT corridor by parking their vehicles and using the paved trail. In addition, the paved trail segment would connect to the miles of unpaved nature trails throughout the Dodge Nature Center and Garlough Park.

Metro Transit's Route 75 travels along Marie Avenue and Charlton Street. Dodge Nature Center segment users would have direct access to bus service connecting downtown St. Paul, Signal Hills Shopping Center, Robert Street, and Mendota Plaza. Along its entire length, the NURT

provides connections to three local (68, 71, 75) and two express (417, 452) Metro Transit routes. Metro Transit is planning a new transit hub off of Mendota Rd. which connects via an existing connector trail to the North Urban Regional Trail. (Appendix 1b)

- How does the facility serve trips that could otherwise be made by motor vehicles?

RESPONSE: The Dodge Nature Center trail segment provides an off-road pedestrian and bicycle path from residential areas to local destinations such as Garlough Elementary School, Garlough Park, Marthaler Park, and Wentworth Library, as well as regional destinations, including Sibley High School and Dodge Nature Center. By completing this last section, it is expected that trail traffic will increase along the whole of the NURT, reducing the demand on nearby roads.

The design of the segment will address a range of needs, including user safety, scenic quality, and broad accessibility. The underpasses at Charlton and Marie Avenue are a key feature intended to improve safety and encourage use among Dodge Nature Center visitors and Garlough Elementary students.

- **Historic and Archaeological Group (Qualifying Activities 6, 7, 10, and 12)**

1. **Urgency (250 points).** Discuss if/how the project proposes or addresses each of the following:

- Promotes the preservation of an endangered historic or archaeological resource

RESPONSE: NA

- Takes advantage of a time-sensitive opportunity, e.g., a willing landowner, cost savings, affiliation with another project, competing development opportunities

RESPONSE: NA

2. **Impact (250 points).** Discuss how the project addresses each applicable element below:

- Protects or enhances a site on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places

RESPONSE: NA

- Provides opportunities for users to experience, appreciate, and understand a unique historic or archaeological resource or site

RESPONSE: NA

- Fits into the community's educational system, e.g., school curriculum, libraries, youth programs, archaeology week, etc.

RESPONSE: NA

- Provides more than a local benefit. Examples of projects that provide more than a local benefit include rehabilitation of an historic transportation structure in a busy state or regional park, or a project to establish a transportation museum that will be visited by people from outside the community where it is located.

RESPONSE: NA

- Provides benefit to significant numbers of people. Metropolitan Council staff will determine this by using the population and employment density within one mile of the project area. Applicants will need to supply a map showing the exact location of the project.

RESPONSE: NA

- Provides an immediate benefit. Projects that show immediate results will receive points over those that are part of a longer-term project.

RESPONSE: NA

- For Applications for Qualifying Activity #10 only: What is the archaeological integrity of the ruins, artifacts, structural remains, etc...showing significant historic or prehistoric human life or activity, and how will they be preserved or protected?

RESPONSE: NA

3. **Relationship between Categories (100 points).** Projects will score higher if they provide multiple benefits toward the purpose of the Transportation Enhancements program. Applicants should review the respective category criteria to determine the extent to which the project relates to the other two categories:

- What is the relationship to the Scenic and Environmental group? For example, how does the historic/archaeological project provide a natural resource enhancement?

RESPONSE: NA

- What is the relationship to the Bicycle and Pedestrian group? For example, how does the scenic/environmental project address bicycle and pedestrian access to the project location?

RESPONSE: NA

4. **Relationship to Intermodal/Multimodal Transportation System (100 points).** Discuss how the project will function as a component and/or enhancement of the transportation system:

- How will the project benefit the experience of users of the transportation system?

RESPONSE: NA

- How will the project be accessible by multiple modes of transportation?

RESPONSE: NA

- How will the project benefit multiple modes of transportation?

RESPONSE: NA

- In what way is the project/program associated with surface transportation through past, present, or future use as a transportation or transportation-related resource?

RESPONSE: NA

- How does the project facilitate an understanding of the relationship of an historic or archaeological resource to the role of surface transportation in significant historic and cultural events, movements, and contexts

RESPONSE: NA

General/Integrative Criteria (300 points)

The criteria in this section apply to all projects submitted under the TE program, regardless of the category submitted under or the TE-eligible activities included in the project. The federal TE guidance requires a demonstrated relationship to surface transportation, and the questions asked in the first criterion below come directly from the federal TE guidance. The second criterion will help determine how important the project or program will be to the region's residents, giving priority to those projects that benefit more than just local residents. The remaining criteria integrate the regional solicitation's criteria pertaining to all funding categories for supporting the integration of land use and transportation and maturity of project concept.

The *Development Framework* is the initial “chapter” and the unifying theme of the Council’s Metropolitan Development Guide. It is the umbrella statement of regional policies, goals and strategies that will inform the Council’s metropolitan system plans for airports, transportation, regional parks and wastewater service, as well as other policy plans adopted by the Council. Under state law, each city and township in the seven-country metropolitan area is required at least every 10 years to prepare and submit to the Metropolitan Council a local comprehensive plan that is consistent with the Council’s metropolitan system plans (Minn. Stat. 473.864). The next round of updated plans will be due in 2008. The *Development Framework* address how growth is accommodated and development occurs — such as the mix of land uses, the number of housing units per acre, the integration of transit and the connection of local streets, trails, bicycle and pedestrian pathways. Approximately 91% to 95% of new growth is forecast to be located in the urban area—in land use patterns that make efficient use of regional infrastructure—with the rest, 5% to 9%, in the rural area, particularly in small towns to be designated as Rural Growth Centers.

The *Development Framework* emphasizes the need for intensified development in centers with convenient access to transportation corridors and in rural centers that want to grow and that lie along major highways. Regional investments can create a transportation system that includes transit solutions that support attractive, walkable neighborhoods with homes, green space, public places and other amenities. It is vital that communities make efficient use of infrastructure and develop in a manner that conserves natural features and provides transportation options. By reinvesting in underused land and maintaining existing infrastructure, the region can accommodate growth on a smaller urban “footprint,” slow the rate of increase in traffic congestion, ease development pressures on rural land, save billions of dollars in local sewer, water and road construction costs, maintain the housing stock and strengthen the vitality of older areas. Conserving and restoring natural resources of regional or local importance contributes to a healthy natural environment and enhances our quality of life. Connecting regional and local features by natural-resource corridors helps sustain wildlife and plant habitat and shapes how development looks on the ground. In addition, a community in any part of the region may choose to develop and/or expand centers that work for their city. Centers vary in scale – from the downtowns of the region’s two central cities to small centers that provide services to neighborhoods or rural areas. Centers integrate land-use patterns, mixing jobs, housing, retail, services and – potentially – open space and connect them with streets, sidewalks and trails. They can be planned as part of new development or created incrementally by adding the “missing pieces” – be they housing, jobs, services or street connections-to existing places in all parts of the region.

Urban Area Projects

The applicant should describe and provide maps to indicate how the project will enhance:

- a. **Interconnections (0-60 points).** Project will improve connections between workplaces, residences, retail, services and entertainment activities and support the development of an interconnected system of local streets, pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Higher points for projects identified in community’s comprehensive plan.

RESPONSE: The project links existing portions of the North Urban Regional Trail through South St. Paul, West St. Paul, Mendota Heights and Lilydale. This segment is the final portion of the trail to be implemented. The completed trail will link South Robert Street intensified areas (high-density and life-cycle housing, employment, commerce) with The Big Rivers Regional Trail, the Mississippi River Trail,

Valley Park, Sibley High School and Dodge Nature Center. This trail connection is identified in the county's current comprehensive plan.

The trail connection also extends the pedestrian and bicycle transportation network beyond communities that have good pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to ones that have less. This expands the area served by alternative transportation to such destinations as Sibley High School, Dodge Nature Center and the Mendota Heights new mixed use development at TH10 and Dodd.

- b. Intensification (0-60 points).** Project supports intensification of area served and integration of land uses – increased housing, jobs, mixed use or transit oriented development. Project supports or serves redevelopment or reuse of historic structures. Higher points for projects supporting higher numbers of new housing units and jobs consistent with adopted local plans. Higher points for projects supporting redevelopment, reuse of historic structures, activity centers, transit oriented developments at stations/stops along transitways or 2020 Local Arterial Corridors.

RESPONSE: The project supports intensification by connecting existing higher-density housing and mixed use with amenities that make such areas more attractive places to live. The trail invests in already developed areas, supporting redevelopment and infill that concentrates and intensifies land uses.

The link also will provide single-family home residents toward the west side of the trail with access to South Robert Street, supporting the more intense land use along that corridor and encouraging healthful activity habits in residents. The connection increases potential for pedestrian traffic that supports pedestrian-scale, mixed use along South Robert Street.

- c. Natural Resources (0-40 points).** Project does not adversely affect natural resources identified in the regional Natural Resources Inventory (Natural Resource Digital Atlas) or a local natural resource inventory identifying features of local significance including archeological and historic features (include natural resource map with project area shown). Higher points for projects describing best management practices to be used in project implementation that will abate, prevent and remove point and nonpoint source pollution; reduce soil erosion; protect and improve water quality; and maximize groundwater recharge through surface water infiltration.

RESPONSE: The trail and facilities will be sited and constructed with the most environmentally sensitive means feasible. None of the proposed trail alignment is within a 2030 Framework Regional Natural Resource Area. The project will run through Dodge Nature Center — the County will work with the center to suite the local natural character and enhance the outdoor education values of the trail. The trail will include two box culverts, one each under Marie Avenue and Charlton Street, which will facilitate animal crossings.

This segment of the North Urban Regional Trail will provide a naturally attractive destination that will encourage recreational and functional bicycle and pedestrian travel. This trail segment through Dodge Nature Center will encourage natural resource education and reinforce appreciation for natural resources.

- d. Life-cycle and Affordable Housing (0-40 points).** Project serves existing affordable and life-cycle housing or improves access land planned/zoned for affordable and life-cycle housing. Project improves quality of life and/or connects an amenity to the life-cycle and affordable housing around the project. Life-cycle housing refers to varied housing options that meet people's preferences and circumstances at all of life's stages and, in particular, options other than the predominate larger-lot,

detached, single-family home. For example, life-cycle housing includes smaller homes, apartments, townhomes, condominiums, senior housing for independent living or with a range of assisted-living services.

RESPONSE: The trail segment will provide adjacent multifamily housing with access to a school, library, recreation and shopping. The City of Mendota Heights is developing a large mixed use development containing affordable senior housing, at TH10 and Dodd Road. North Urban Regional goes through this development and provides great pedestrian access to the many destinations along NURT. The trail will run through a portion of Dodge Nature Center, creating an amenity for residents and meeting local transportation needs without additional motorized access.

Rural Area Projects

The applicant should describe and provide maps to indicate how the project will enhance:

Interconnections (0-60 points) Project will improve connections that serve current rural residents or improve access to county and regional parks by residents residing in the urban service area and rural growth centers. The objective is to provide connections without encouraging new development.

Intensification (0-60 points) Project supports intensification of rural growth centers or supports rural cluster development that results in permanent rural/agricultural uses. Project supports or serves redevelopment or reuse of historic structures.

Natural Resources (0-40 points) Project does not adversely affect natural resources identified in the regional Natural Resources Inventory (Natural Resource Digital Atlas) or a local natural resource inventory identifying features of local significance including archeological and historic features (include natural resource map with project area shown). Higher points for projects describing best management practices to be used in project implementation that will abate, prevent and remove point and nonpoint source pollution; reduce soil erosion; protect and improve water quality; and maximize groundwater recharge through surface water infiltration.

Life-cycle and Affordable Housing (0-40 points) Project supports existing life-cycle and affordable housing in rural growth centers and improves connections to existing life-cycle and affordable housing in the urban service area access to county and regional parks.

Affordable/Life-cycle Housing Goal

Affordable/lifecycle housing goals for the community or communities served by the project (Livable Communities Act and comprehensive plan goals 1996-2010), contact Metropolitan Council staff, Linda.milashius@metc.state.mn.us for numerical community goals and community contact.

Project relationship to affordable/lifecycle housing goals

Narrative description of how project serves existing affordable/lifecycle housing and addresses planned/potential locations for affordable/life-cycle housing (medium to high density housing or mixed use areas with medium to high density residential densities permitted/planned). The narrative should include estimates of existing affordable/lifecycle housing (single-family, townhouses, and multifamily apartments or condominiums) in project area and estimates of land planned for medium and high density residential development or mixed use development (includes residential as a permitted use). This information should be recorded through adopted comprehensive plans or adopted small area/redevelopment/corridor studies. For community

affordable/lifecycle housing goal assessment and estimates contact the city's community development department.

DATA Sources:

To quantify intensity of existing and future development, bolster new or strengthened linkages, illustrate natural resource preservation, or demonstrate affordable/lifecycle housing applicants may wish to use a variety of GIS data including existing land use data, census data, data from comprehensive plans, approved corridor studies, master or redevelopment plans, or TAZ data. Applicants wishing to integrate their proposals with existing data resources in a GIS can download several useful datasets at www.datafinder.org including:

- Metropolitan Council's 2005 Generalized Land Use
- Regional Planned Land Use data
- 2030 Development Framework Natural Resource Areas
- County and municipal boundaries
- Development staging as a part of the Comprehensive Plan Composite
- 2000 Census data with regional forecasts for 2010, 2020, and 2030 by TAZ
- Major Highways
- TLG Street Centerline data
- 2005 MARKHURD aerial photography

[NOTE: Both the TLG Street Centerline data and the 2005 MARKHURD aerial photography are licensed datasets that are available to qualifying agencies (MetroGIS participants) free of charge. Please read Ordering Instructions for each dataset at www.datafinder.org for further information.]

Additional GIS data sets can be acquired from other governmental agencies that could be helpful in supporting your project, in particular, the Natural Resources criteria. Consider the Minnesota DNR (<http://deli.dnr.state.mn.us>) and the Land Management Information Center (<http://lmic.state.mn.us/chouse/metalong.html>) among others.

Applicants are also encouraged to contact local community or county authorities for additional GIS data, corridor studies, master plans or redevelopment plans.

Applicants can alternately use the Council's new online mapping application to illustrate information in your project area and create PDF map documents to attach to your application (<http://gis.metc.state.mn.us/mapsdata/onlinemapping>).

2. Maturity of Project Concept. 150 points

Projects selected through this solicitation will be programmed for construction in 2011 or 2012. That is a fairly long time but it takes several years to complete preliminary engineering, environmental studies and acquire right-of-way. The region must manage the federal funds in each year of the TIP. Projects that are not implemented in their original program year create problems. Proposed projects that have already completed some of the work is a plus. A schedule is important to know what kind of work might be needed. Large projects that need right-of-way require more work than others that do not.

0-150 points Applications involving construction must complete the project implementation schedule found in Appendix K. A detailed schedule of events is expected for all phases of the project. Applications involving non-construction projects must include a detailed discussion of the timeframes involved for initiating and completing each phase of planned activities. Points under this criterion are

assigned based on how many steps have been taken toward implementation of the project. These steps reflect a federally funded project development path.

RESPONSE: A development plan for the Dakota North Urban Regional Trail (NURT) was completed and adopted by the Dakota County Board of Commissioners and the Metropolitan Council in 1996. The planning process included extensive public engagement, especially with the communities along the trail route (South St. Paul, West St. Paul, Mendota Hts., and Lilydale). Since adoption, the NURT has been recognized in numerous local and county comprehensive, transportation, and park plans. The NURT has also been recognized as a regional trail in the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan.

Currently, the TH 110 section of NURT is under construction. This leaves the Dodge Nature Center Segment as the final 1.1-mile piece of the 7.7-mile trail. Finishing this segment is crucial to the trail's east-west connectivity. Once complete, South St. Paul residents could bike to Fort Snelling, or Mendota Heights residents could skate to the Mississippi River Regional Trail.

Recent discussions between Dakota County and the Dodge Nature Center have centered on mutual conservation goals and how the trail segment will enhance efforts in these areas. Both parties will agree to a route that fulfills a range of needs, including user safety, scenic quality, and broad accessibility.

Attached is Appendix K

TOTAL: 1000 POINTS



APPENDIX K

Project Implementation Schedule

Please check those that apply and fill in anticipated completion dates

1) Project Scope

- Stake Holders have been identified
 Meetings or contacts with Stake Holders have occurred

2) Layout or Preliminary Plan

- Identified Alternates
 Selected Alternates
 Layout or Preliminary Plan started
 Layout or Preliminary Plan completed
Anticipated date or date of completion 1996

3) Environmental Documentation

- EIS EA PM
Document Status
 Document not started
 Document in progress; environmental impacts identified
 Document submitted to State Aid for review (date submitted _____)
 Document approved (need copy of signed cover sheet)
Anticipated date or date of completion/approval 2010

4) R/W

- No R/W required
 R/W required, parcels not identified
 R/W required, parcels identified
 R/W has been acquired
Anticipated date or date of acquisition 2011

5) Railroad Involvement

- No R/W required
 R/W required, parcels not identified
 R/W required, parcels identified
 R/W has been acquired
Anticipated date or date of acquisition _____

6) Construction Documents/Plan

- Construction plans have not been started
 Construction plans in progress
Anticipated date or date of completion 2010
 Construction plans completed/approved

7) Letting

- Anticipated Letting Date 2011

