

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: June 4, 2012

For the Community Development Committee meeting of June 17, 2013

Subject: Rum River Regional Trail Master Plan, Anoka County

District(s), Member(s): MPOSC District E, Tony Yarusso

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statute 473.313

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

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

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Rum River Regional Trail Master Plan.
2. Notify Anoka County that acquisition of land or easements to supplement the right-of-way along existing County roadways up to a total width of 120 feet is eligible for regional parks funding. If Anoka County acquires entire parcels along the corridor, the portion of the property that is not needed for the regional trail shall not be eligible for regional parks funding.

Background

Anoka County has submitted a master plan for the Rum River Regional Trail, which will travel from Akin Riverside Park near the confluence of the Mississippi and Rum Rivers in the city of Anoka, north to the border of Anoka and Isanti Counties. The trail will generally follow the Rum River and will provide connections to the Anoka Northstar Station, Anoka High School, St. Francis High School, as well as to several local and regional parks and trails along its 20 mile route.

Rationale

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

Funding

The estimated cost to implement the master plan is \$5,315,000 to \$6,885,000, which includes \$290,000 to \$1,860,000 for land acquisition and \$5,025,000 for development.

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

Known Support / Opposition

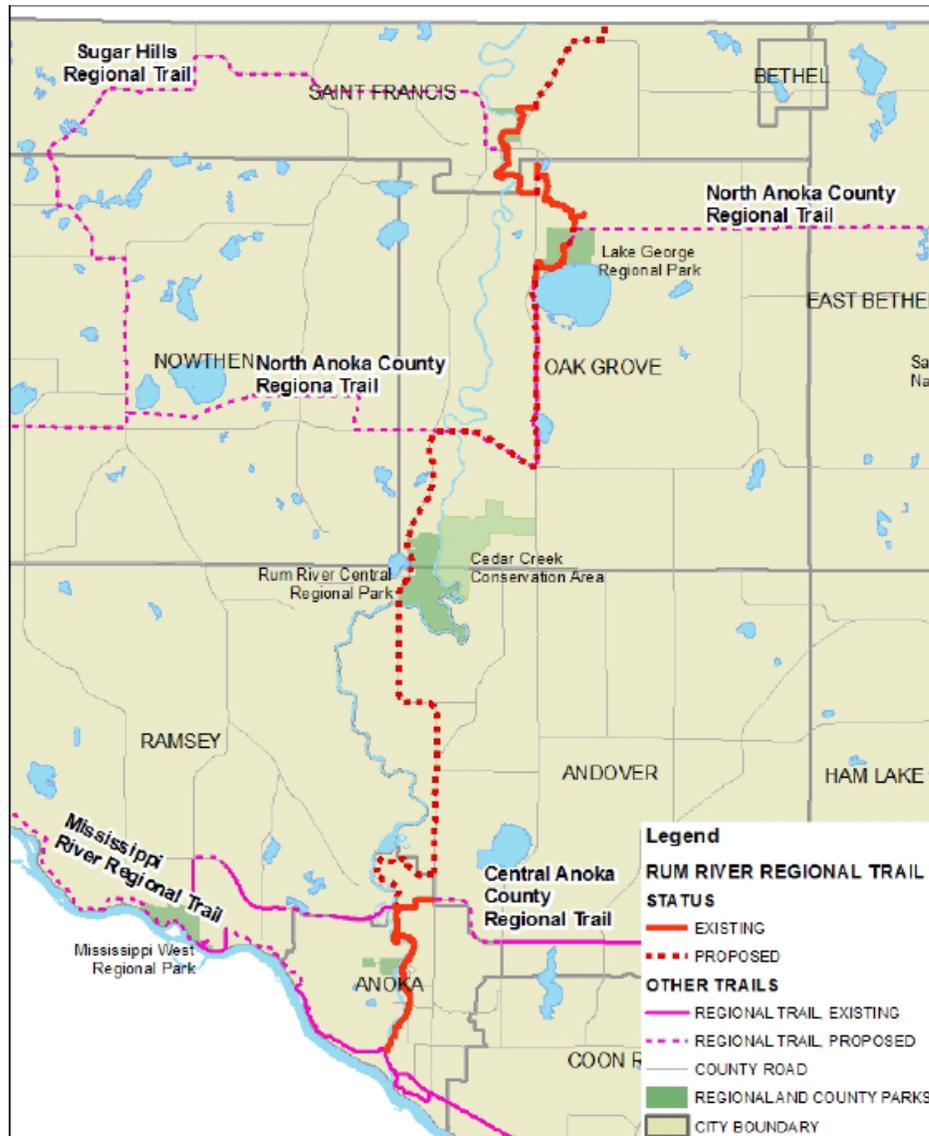
The Anoka County Board passed a resolution approving and adopting the Rum River Regional Trail Master Plan. The master plan also includes resolutions of support from the Cities of Anoka, Andover, Oak Grove and St. Francis. There is no known opposition to the master plan.

Analysis

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

1. Boundaries and Acquisition The Rum River Regional Trail will travel through the Cities of Anoka, Andover, Ramsey, Oak Grove and St. Francis along its 20 mile route, as shown in red on **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Location of the Planned Rum River Regional Trail



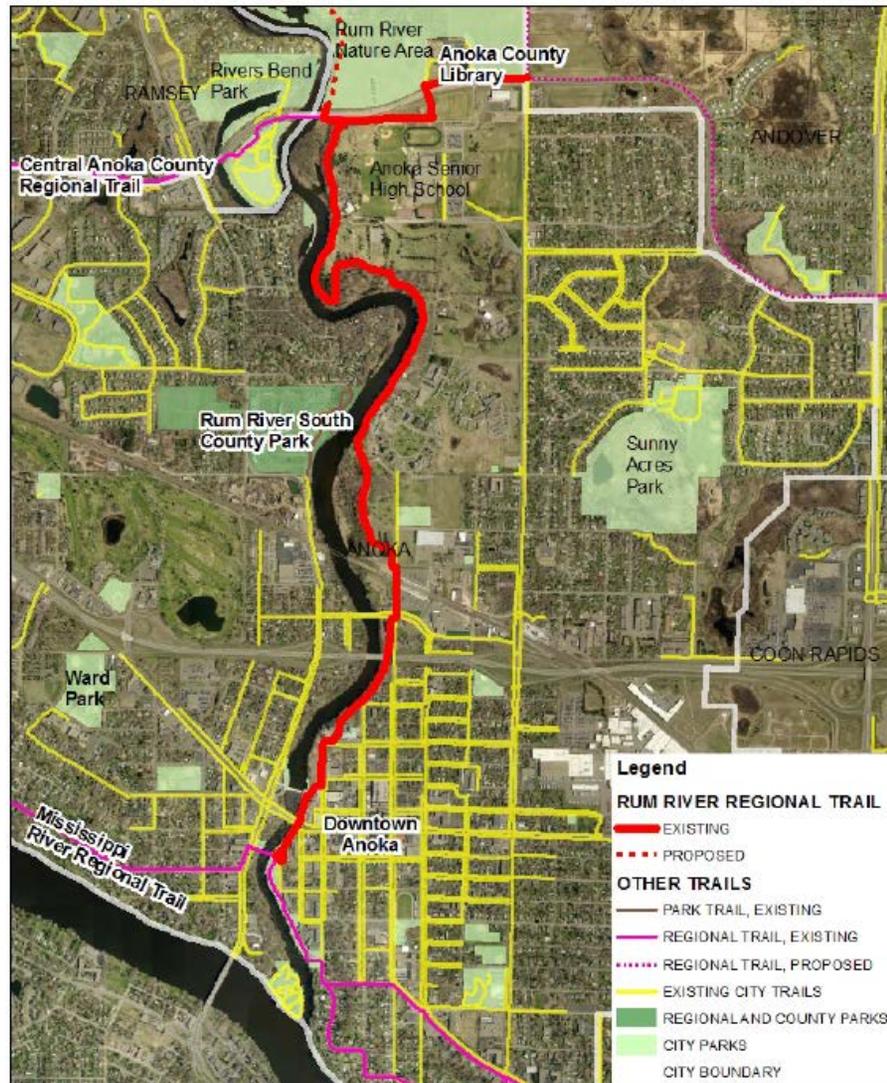
The regional trail will generally follow the Rum River and will connect to the following parks and trails along its route:

- Mississippi River Regional Trail
- Akin Riverside Park
- Central Anoka County Regional Trail
- Rum River Nature Area
- Hickey Lake Park
- Rum River Central Regional Park
- North Anoka County Regional Trail
- The Ponds Park
- Lake George Regional Park
- Dellwood River Park
- Rum River North County Park
- Sugar Hills Regional Trail

The planned alignment of the Rum River Regional Trail is shown in **Figures 2-5**, starting from the southern terminus of the trail in Anoka and heading north to the border of Anoka

and Isanti Counties in St. Francis. The alignment of the regional trail will generally follow the Rum River and some trail segments will parallel County roads.

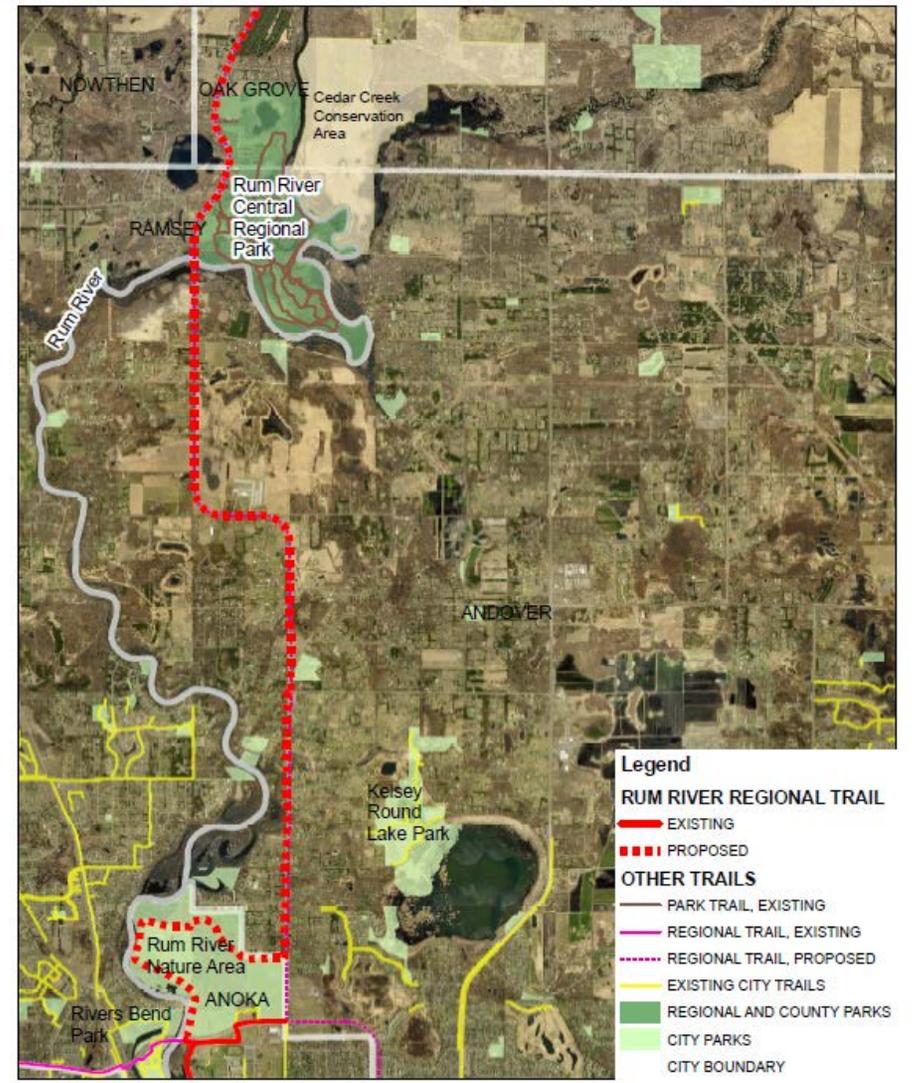
Figure 2: Rum River Regional Trail Anoka Segment



Rum River Regional Trail
Existing Segment through the
City of Anoka

0 650 1,300 2,600 3,900 Feet

Figure 3: Rum River Regional Trail Andover Segment



Rum River Regional Trail
Segment 2 - City of Andover

0 1,400 2,800 5,600 8,400 Feet

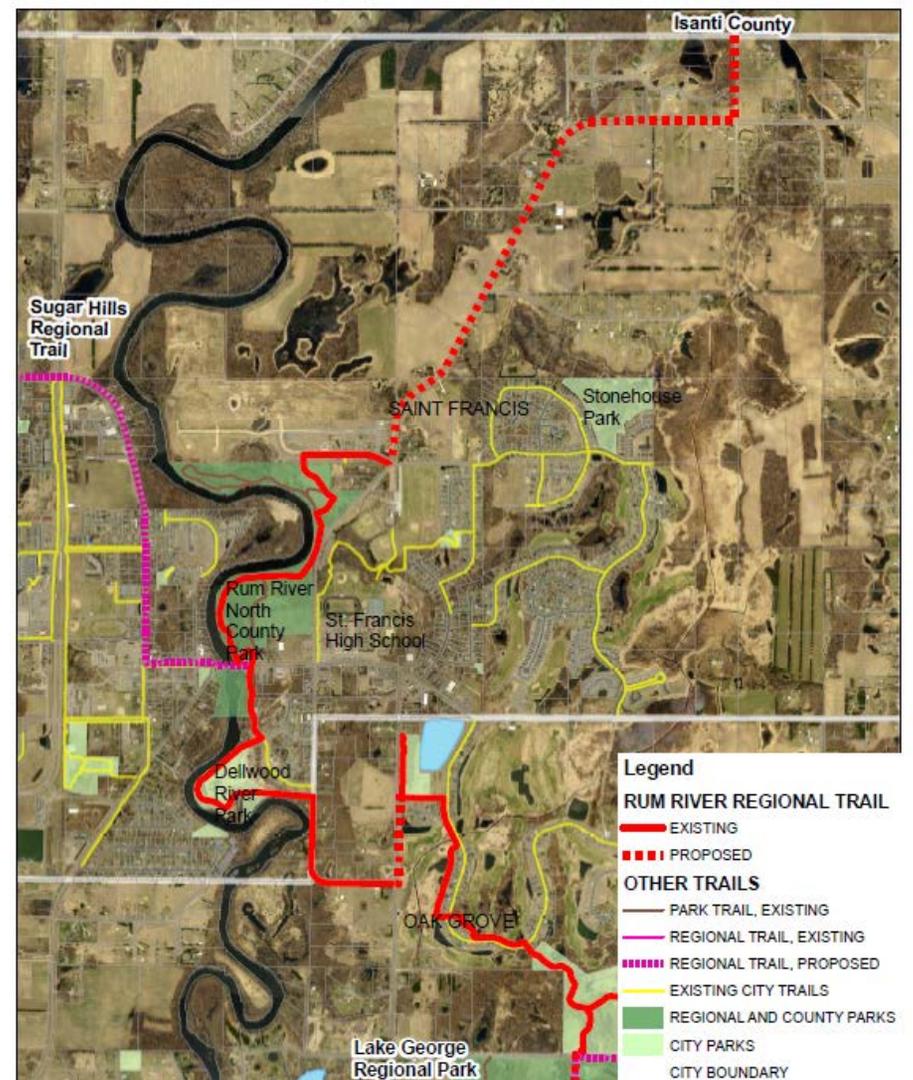
Figure 4: Rum River Regional Trail Oak Grove Segment



Rum River Regional Trail Segment 3 - Oak Grove

0 1,375 2,750 5,500 8,250 Feet

Figure 5: Rum River Regional Trail St. Francis Segment



Rum River Regional Trail Segment 4 - St. Francis

0 700 1,400 2,800 4,200 Feet

The trail corridor includes some existing segments. A four mile stretch of the trail follows the Rum River through downtown Anoka and provides access to the Anoka Northstar Station. A 1.2 mile segment of the trail exists in Lake George Regional Park, which connects to the existing beach and picnic area and also provides scenic views through wetlands. A third segment of the trail extends for one mile through The Ponds Park and a residential golf community in the city of Oak Grove. Finally, a 2 mile segment travels through Dellwood River Park and Rum River North County Park in Oak Grove. In total, approximately 8.2 miles of the 20 mile planned trail route are currently developed.

Anoka County anticipates that the remaining trail segments will be constructed as part of county road reconstruction, which is an efficient way to minimize right-of-way acquisition and construction costs. The majority of the current road right-of-way has sufficient width to accommodate future road expansion and the regional trail, which typically has a width of 120 feet. Approximately 2.4 miles would require additional right-of-way or easement acquisition to accommodate the trail. There are 30 parcels, with 26 individual property owners along the trail route that may require partial acquisition or an easement. If only the necessary right-of-way for the trail was purchased, the estimate acquisition costs are approximately \$290,000. If Anoka County was not able to purchase small strips of right-of-way, full acquisition of these parcels would be approximately \$1,860,000. The County would retain the portion of the parcels needed for the regional trail and would sell the remainder at fair market value. Therefore, the estimated acquisition costs for the regional trail range from \$290,000 to \$1,860,000.

2. Demand Forecast According to the 2004 Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey conducted by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, almost 82% of respondents indicated that outdoor recreation is “very important” or “moderately important” in their lives. Popular trail activities include walking, hiking, jogging, biking and inline skating.

Recreational visits to regional parks and trails in Anoka County have increased by 50 percent over the last 10 years. In 2011, there were an estimated 3.4 million visits to regional parks and trails in Anoka County. As the population grows, the need for additional recreational opportunities and amenities grows as well. The population of the communities through which the regional trail will travel is projected to steadily increase to 2030, as shown in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6: Projected Population of Communities along the Regional Trail Route

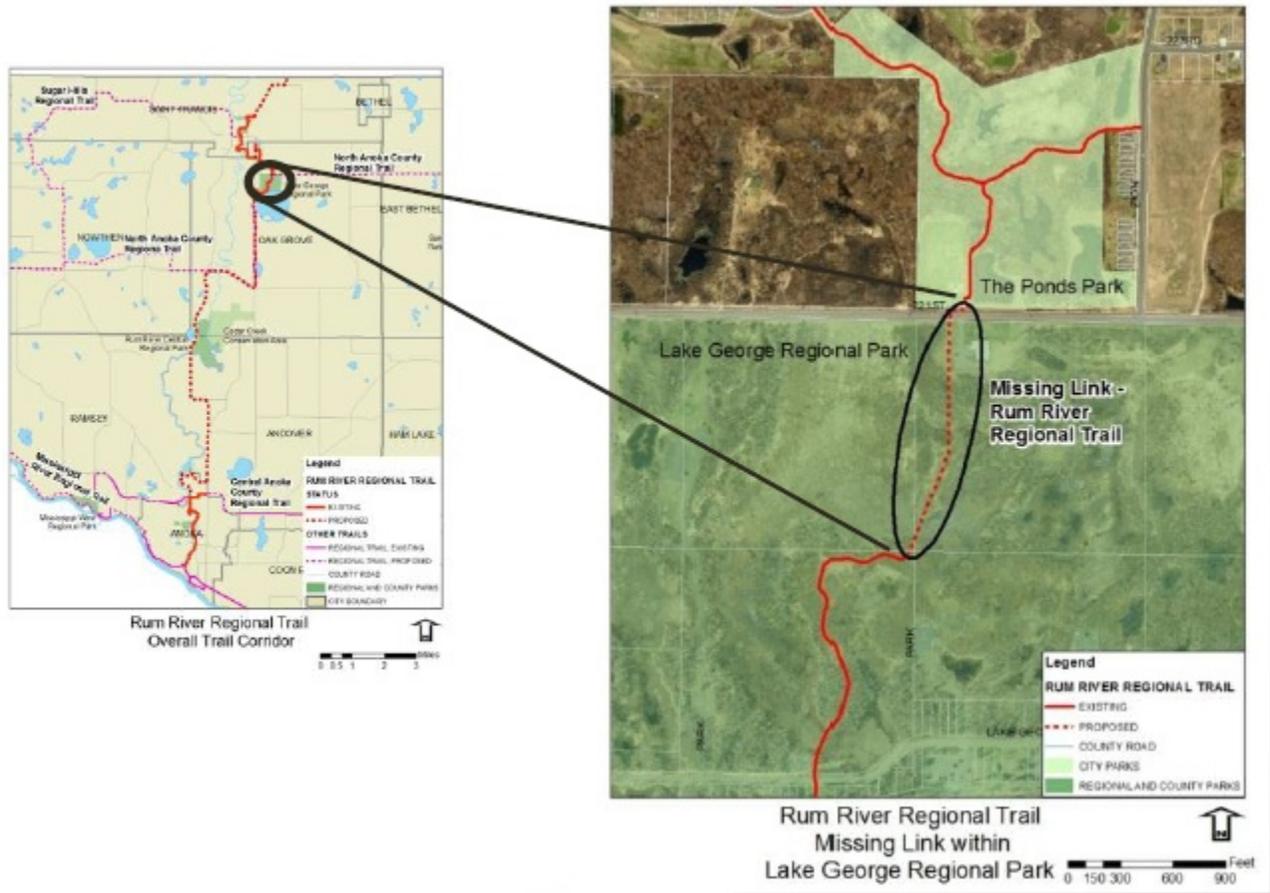
Year	Andover	Anoka	Oak Grove	Ramsey	St. Francis	Anoka County
2010	37,400	19,000	9,200	28,100	7,700	357,400
2020	42,000	19,800	10,300	35,600	10,400	407,070
2030	44,600	20,800	11,300	42,500	12,800	437,550
<i>Projected Increase 2010-2030</i>	<i>19.3%</i>	<i>9.5%</i>	<i>22.8%</i>	<i>51.2%</i>	<i>66.2%</i>	<i>22.4%</i>

The historical increase in recreational visits to regional parks and trails, coupled with the projected population growth of Anoka County and its communities, means that the demand for additional recreational facilities will increase, justifying the need for development of the Rum River Regional Trail.

3. Development The Rum River Regional Trail will be a 10 foot wide paved trail. The existing portions of the trail through the city of Anoka consist of a 10 foot wide trail with 2 foot clear zones on both sides. Approximately 2 miles of the trail through the Rum River Nature Area in Anoka has been cleared for the trail corridor and is maintained by the City as a mowed natural surface trail. As part of this master plan, the trail will be paved in the future.

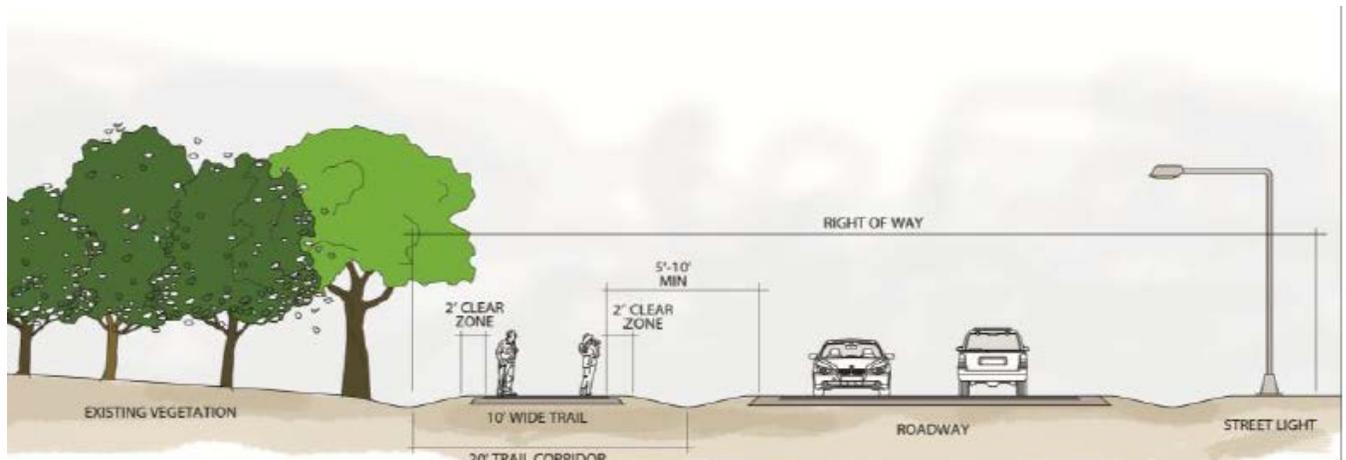
A portion of the regional trail through north end of Lake George Regional Park needs to be developed to make the connection to The Ponds Park in Oak Grove, as shown in **Figure 7**. The City of Oak Grove requested that this connection be designated as a priority in implementation of the master plan. Depending on the availability of funding, the County expects to construct this segment of the trail prior to 2018.

Figure 7: Trail Segment through Lake George Regional Park



Approximately 2 miles of the trail includes existing segments through Dellwood River Park and Rum River North County Park in St. Francis. The remainder of the trail corridor follows existing county roadways. The typical construction of these segments provides a 10 foot side paved trail separated from the roadway with an overall trail corridor of approximately 20 feet. This allows for a 5-10 foot buffer between the trail and the roadway and a 2 foot wide clear zone on both sides of the trail. The typical right-of-way cross section is depicted in **Figure 8**.

Figure 8: Typical Cross-Section for Development of the Rum River Regional Trail



Trailhead facilities are provided at the local and regional parks along the trail route. No new trailheads are proposed in the master plan. A comprehensive identification and wayfinding sign program will be implemented as the trail is constructed. Lighting will be installed at intersections and key points along the trail where existing lighting is not sufficient. Landscaping and restoration work will be integrated along the trail corridor and site furnishings such as benches will be located at key points along the route. The overall topography throughout the trail corridor is relatively flat. Trail grades will typically be between 2 to 5 percent and will be designed to meet ADA standards.

The estimated development costs for the regional trail are approximately \$5,025,000, as shown in **Figure 9**.

Figure 9: Estimated Development Costs of the Rum River Regional Trail

Description	Estimated Cost
Design/Engineering	\$450,000
Archeological Survey	\$150,000
Wetland Delineation	\$75,000
Topographic Survey/Construction Staking	\$200,000
Geotechnical Survey	\$75,000
Clearing and Grubbing	\$100,000
Utility Relocations	\$300,000
Bituminous Trail Construction	\$2,800,000
Lighting	\$100,000
Landscaping and Restoration	\$200,000
Signage and Striping	\$50,000
Site Furnishings	\$50,000
Contingency (10%)	\$475,000
TOTAL	\$5,025,000

4. Conflicts Anoka County will work to keep conflicts to a minimum through proper planning and community involvement in development of the regional trail. Common concerns among residents that live near a trail include the effect the trail will have on their

safety, security and privacy. Generally, regional parks and trails in the metropolitan area do not have high criminal activities related to use. The County provides park ranger patrols and works with local community police and the Anoka County Sheriff's Department to ensure that parks and trails are safe and secure. Since the majority of the trail will be located along county roads and will be developed when the roadways are upgraded, the County does not anticipate that there will be many conflicts. Land use and development patterns along the route are consistent with the development of a regional trail.

Potential conflicts between pedestrian and vehicular traffic will be kept to a minimum by collaboration with local cities and the Anoka County Highway Department to ensure safe crossings at road and driveway intersections with the trail. These crossings may include signage, striping and signalization. Signage along the trail corridor will alert trail users of these crossings and will provide wayfinding and interpretive information.

5. Public Services No public services are needed for the development concept that is outlined in the master plan. Local and regional parks along the trail route will provide services for trail users, including parking, restrooms, drinking fountains and benches.

6. Operations The use of Anoka County's parks and trails is regulated through the Anoka County Park Ordinance, which is dated January 24, 2012. Education and enforcement along the trail will be provided by the Anoka County Park Rangers, Anoka County Sheriff and the local police departments.

Anoka County partners with local communities to maintain its regional trails. The County typically enters into a Joint Powers Agreement or a Memorandum of Understanding with the affected Cities. These partnership agreements describe the roles and responsibilities of each agency with regard to maintenance and capital improvements along the trail corridor. Anoka County will provide routine maintenance for portions of the regional trail that travel within county or regional parks. Maintenance activities will include mowing, sweeping, plowing, clearing and debris removal. The local city will provide general routine maintenance for the portions of the regional trail that are not within these parks. Anoka County will inspect the trail annually and will provide any necessary capital improvements or long term maintenance.

Annual maintenance costs for the Rum River Regional Trail are estimated to be approximately \$30,000, which will include sign replacement, minor bituminous repair and crack-sealing. Annual operating costs are funded through Anoka County's budget, which receives its funding from picnic shelter rentals, room rentals, programs, park entrance fees and the County's general fund. Supplemental funding is received from the State of Minnesota as part of the Operations and Maintenance Fund allocation administered by the Metropolitan Council.

7. Citizen Participation Anoka County worked with stakeholders including local units of government and regulatory agencies during the development of the master plan. An open house was held on August 21, 2012 to receive comments from the public. The master plan was presented to the local communities for review and comment. The Cities of Anoka, Andover, Oak Grove and St. Francis passed resolutions of support for the master plan. Additionally, the Anoka County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution of approval and adoption of the Rum River Regional Trail Master Plan.

8. Public Awareness Anoka County Parks and Recreation provides public information and education about its facilities through maps, websites, social media, publications and brochures.

9. Accessibility The facilities and amenities along the trail will be developed in accordance with ADA standards and guidelines. Anoka County strives to provide equal access to its parks and trails. There will not be a fee for use of the regional trail, which eliminates economic barriers for trail users. A portion of the trail corridor is located along public transportation routes and Anoka County's "Traveler" program provides transportation services for a minimal fee to County citizens who are in need.

Review by Other Council Divisions

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

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

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

Conclusions

1. The Rum River Regional Trail Master Plan is consistent with the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and other Council policies.
2. The estimated cost to implement the master plan is \$5,315,000 to \$6,885,000, which includes \$290,000 to \$1,860,000 for land acquisition and \$5,025,000 for development. Anoka County anticipates acquiring right-of-way or easements for development of the trail, which is estimated to be approximately \$290,000. If the County is unable to acquire the strips of right-of-way or easements, acquisition of full parcels is estimated to be approximately \$1,860,000. The County would retain the portion of the parcels needed for the regional trail and would sell the remainder at fair market value. Acquisition of land to supplement the existing road right-of-way to create a total right-of-way width of 120 feet should be eligible for regional parks funding. Acquisition of land not needed to accommodate the regional trail as described in the master plan should not be eligible for regional parks funding.
3. Approval of this master plan does not commit the Council to any funding at this time. Future development funding based on this master plan would be done through the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Land Acquisition Opportunity Fund. Council action is required to approve the CIP and to approve specific grants to Anoka County.