



ThreeRivers
PARK DISTRICT



Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail
community assessment team analysis

June 2010

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the **mission** of Three Rivers Park District is to promote environmental stewardship through recreation and education in a natural resources–based park system.

Three Rivers Park District was established in 1957 after legislation was enacted in 1955 allowing for the activation of park districts whose primary duties are “acquisition, development and maintenance of large parks, wildlife sanctuaries, forest and other reservations, and means for public access to historic sites and to lakes, rivers and streams and to other natural phenomena” (Minnesota State Statutes, Chapter 398.07).

Three Rivers Park District serves more than 7 million visitors each year with over 26,500 acres of park reserves, regional parks and special-use areas in Hennepin and six adjoining counties and 100 miles of regional trails. Current outdoor-recreation activities in regional parks include camping, hiking, cross-country and downhill skiing, tubing, bicycling, horseback riding, nature interpretation, golfing, fishing and swimming. Three Rivers Park District also operates a natural resources management program, which administers the restoration and perpetuation of both native wildlife and plants in order to provide a quality recreational experience for park visitors.



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Acknowledgements

Three Rivers Park District gratefully acknowledges the community members and other Community Assessment Team participants who assisted in the social, technical, and economic assessment of the alternative trail routes under consideration. The Park District extends a special thank you to the individuals listed below who provided guidance, time, questions, and critical insight throughout the process.

CAT Members / Neighborhood Representatives

Richard Johnson, Segment 1 Representative

Bob Lubar, Segment 2 Representative

Robert Schwartzbauer, Segment 3 Representative

Reid Kilberg, Segment 4 Representative

Eric Burfeind, Segment 5 Representative

Robert Peterson, Segment 5D Representative

Dave Henry, Segment 5E & 7 Representative

Michael Wolff, Segment 8 Representative

Harvey Johnson, Segment 9 Representative

Peter McCarthy, Segment 11 Representative

Kristine Thompson, Segment 13 Representative

Nancy Crain, Segment 19 Representative

Wendy Amundson, Segment 20 Representative

Edina Park Board

Joseph Hulbert, Edina Park Board

Bike Edina Task Force

Alice Hulbert, Bike Edina

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Annie Rexine, Planner

Heather Gates, Secretary

Alex Sharpe, Planning Aide

Randy Lehr, Water Resources Manager

Brent Christensen, Graduate Engineer

Guest Presenters

Kevin Bigalke, Nine Mile Creek Watershed District

Ciara Schlichting, Planner with Bonestroo, Inc.

Danny McCullough, Park District Police Officer

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Executive Summary

Project Background

The concept for Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail was established over ten years ago as part of a larger initiative to lay the foundation for development of multi-use regional trails in the first-ring suburbs. As currently proposed the regional trail provides a critical connection with the existing Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail in the Cities Hopkins and Minnetonka, runs east-west through the City of Edina, extends into the City of Richfield, and provides a connection to the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge in the City of Bloomington and Grand Rounds Trail System at Lake Nokomis in the City of Minneapolis via the planned Intercity Regional Trail.

The route for Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail through the Cities of Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Richfield is generally established and pending construction whereas the route through the City of Edina is not yet determined, resulting in a critical gap in the regional trail system and a community underserved by regional trail opportunities. Fourteen alternative trail routes were evaluated from a social, technical, and economical perspective as a part of this study. An environmental assessment was completed simultaneously through an independent initiative.

As currently proposed, Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail is estimated to traverse seven to eight miles and cost between \$17 to \$20 million to develop. As a fully developed community, implementation of a new regional trail in the City of Edina presents a set of concerns and challenges that are specific to the neighborhoods and greater community in which the trail is proposed and which must be considered throughout the planning and development process.

Route Assessment

Three Rivers Park District and the City of Edina are committed to identifying the concerns and challenges of implementing Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail, and therefore, coordinated a Community Assessment Team (CAT) to help identify the constraints and opportunities associated with each route, provide design suggestions/considerations for each route, and convey project information to other community members. Each of the fourteen routes under consideration was evaluated in respect to social, technical, and economic constraints and opportunities.

This document, as outlined on the following page, serves as a summary of the CAT's work.

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Overview

Each route under consideration is summarized in this document. The route summaries explain the general route layout, identify known potential permanent easement requirements, acknowledge if the route is proposed within parkland or public right-of-way, and identify locations where boardwalks, bridges, tunnels are proposed. Representative photos and a conceptual route map are also included.

Economic Assessment

The preliminary planning estimate for trail construction is included in each route summary. All trail construction related expenses including paving, grading, clearing and grubbing, bridges, boardwalks, tunnels, restoration, signage, and associated consulting services are included in the estimates. Costs for easement and wetland mitigation land acquisition are not included in the preliminary planning estimate.

Social Assessment

Approximately 20 items were studied and quantified as part of the social assessment. The CAT prioritized two items: adjacent residential yards and proximity of trail to homes as the two most important items. The corresponding findings are included in the route summaries.

Technical Assessment

Approximately 15 items were studied and quantified as part of the technical assessment. The CAT prioritized three items: space requirements (available right-of-way), road crossings, and driveway crossings as the three most important items. The corresponding findings are included in the route summaries.

CAT Design Recommendations

Design recommendations developed and proposed by CAT members are summarized for each route. The intent of the design recommendations is to provide future design guidance and minimize potential trail related impacts on adjacent property owners while maintaining a safe, continuous trail corridor. Design recommendations are generally broad in nature, applicable to the entire trail route, and not specific to a select property.

Additional CAT Member Narratives

Select CAT member representatives elected to provide an additional narrative to further express their views, opinions, and concerns for the route they represent and/or the role and process of the CAT. The narratives are included in the route summaries, are unedited, and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Park District.

Next Steps

The Park District is hosting two identical open houses within a 30-day public comment period between June 14, 2010 and July 14, 2010 to share the environmental, social, technical, and economic assessment findings as well as the CAT design recommendations and the additional CAT member narratives. Upon completion of the public comment period, the information available at the open houses and a summary of public comments will be forwarded to the Edina City Council and Park District Board of Commissioners for consideration in identifying the preferred regional trail route in late summer/early fall 2010.

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