

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Funding Report

General Section

Park or Trail Name: Sunrise Prairie Trail

Park ID: 14-014D Funding Application #: 15-046F

Date Designated: 2015-10-07 District4

Lead Organization: City of North Branch

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Project Name: Sunrise Prairie Trail Segment F and G

Project Description:

The proposed project would complete the construction of Segments F and G of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail master plan. (Please see attached master plan for summary and overview). The project would consist of the construction of approximately 3.7 miles of a 10' bituminous multi-use pathway that would connect the cities of North Branch and Harris. This would provide an additional 5 miles of contiguous trail by connecting to existing gaps in the trail network. The proposed trail segment would be located within existing Old Hwy 61 road right-of-way, except for a 100' segment of trail, located on the south side of Cedar Street in North Branch. This section would need to be acquired from the property owner and constructed as a sidewalk due to limited site considerations. The landowner has verbally committed to selling the fee title to the land. There is also a 500' section in Segment G adjacent to the Oak Grove Cemetery that would require use of the existing 8' road shoulder. Rumble strips and double striping would be placed in that location to help achieve separation. There is 75' of road right-of-way and every effort would be made to construct the maximum separation from the roadway as possible for the entire project. The project would also include trailhead improvements including benches, bike racks, signage and shelter facilities and native plantings at the trailhead in North Branch. This proposed trail segment is a portion of the Sunrise Regional trail that will eventually connect the Twin Cities to Duluth. The current missing link in the connection is from North Branch to Hinckley. The remaining phases include: (Segments H and I of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail and Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Willard Munger Trail. The grant funds would be utilized to complete the construction of the 10' bituminous trail along with the trail head improvements from North Branch to Harris. As an option, the project could be broken down to completing only Segment F, and the portion of Segment G that connects to Roger Johnson Memorial Park in North Branch and to complete the rest of Segment G in a future project to help reduce the overall cost of the project; however, ideally the entire phase would be completed to provide a safer environment with off-street parking. The completion of a multi-use trail from the Twin Cities to Duluth has long been the vision of outdoor enthusiasts along the corridor and

across the state. It is important that this project be completed to provide a safer and more appealing transportation mode between the cities of North Branch and Harris, while helping bridge the gap to providing one of the largest recreational opportunities in the state. The proposed trail is located in a regionally desirable setting. The trail passes along a variety of landscapes including farmlands, hardwood forests, deep marsh wetlands, creeks and the Sunrise River. Sightings of grouse, deer, wild turkey, waterfowl and the occasional bald eagle, as well as native prairie and wildflowers are common along the route. The proposed trail would serve as a destination, providing high quality recreational opportunities, attract regional clientele, draw tourists and generate economic impact from outside the local area. There is an Old Hwy 61 committee comprised of members along the old Hwy 61 (Co Rd 30) corridor that received funds through the Initiative Foundation. The Old Hwy 61 committee has identified the completion of the trail along this corridor as a top priority to meet all of the above mentioned items. The proposed project would connect to recently completed sidewalks in downtown Harris that would connect with local restaurants, businesses and other service related activities. This expansion of trail would draw outdoor enthusiasts from the region and around the state to explore the area and provide for additional visitors to each of the communities along the corridor. The proposed segment is a portion of the trail that will eventually connect the Twin Cities to Duluth. The current missing link in the connection is the portion from North Branch to Hinckley. When the proposed project is completed, it will connect downtown North Branch to downtown Harris. Consideration has been given to the intended trail users to provide a safer connection for adjacent residents and other outdoor enthusiasts to provide for a safer connection to the downtowns, Riverwalk, Northwood, Roger Johnson Memorial and Railroad parks. This also would provide a continuous trail connection to all of the North Branch Area schools for all kids from Harris to North Branch. The Adventure Cycles Northern Tier Bike Route across the United State (Seattle, WA - Boston, MA), goes through Harris and would provide a connection to the proposed trail segment. The proposed project would significantly increase the safety of pedestrians along the route, by providing a safer more appealing route. There is currently a large "gap" in the existing pedestrian/bicycle network from North Branch to Harris adjacent to County Road 30 along with poorly marked and unsafe road crossings. The proposed project would provide adequate separation from higher speed vehicle traffic by directing bicyclists, pedestrians and other trail users from road shoulders to trails. There would also be higher visibility signage and crosswalk markings at all intersections along the route. There have been several planning efforts over the past several years including; North Branch Safe Routes to School Plan, North Branch State Health Improvement Program (SHIP) Plan, Co Rd 30 Transportation Study and both the North Branch and Chisago County Comprehensive Plans, that have identified the need for a safer alternative for pedestrian and bicycle travel along this Co Rd 30 route. Several of the studies have indicated that parents would not allow their children bike or walk along the Co Rd 30 routes until safety enhancements (trail and crosswalk improvements) were completed. Overall, the completed project safety enhancements would increase the number of bicycle and pedestrian commuters to school, work or play by providing a safe and viable alternative transportation choice. Due to a timing issue, the required resolutions by the City of North Branch and City of Harris were not able to be provided in time of the grant application deadline. However, both of the Cities are in full support of the project and have provided resolutions in support of regional designation and funding support. The City's will be approving the required resolutions at their next meeting dates.

Funding Section

Project Cost Breakdown: Trail Construction - \$1,450,000 Trailhead Improvements (Shelter, Bike Racks, Benches, Landscaping and Signage) - \$50,000 Acquisition - \$10,000

Grant Funding Request: \$1,500,000.00

Local Match: \$10,000.00 Funder: City of North Branch

Local Match: 0 Funder: City of Harris

Local Match: 0 Funder:

Local Match: 0 Funder:

Local Match: 0 Funder:

Total Funding: \$1,510,000.00 Percentage of Local Match: 66.2%

Completion Timeframe: 12 - 18 Months