

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission

Designation Application

General Section

Designation Application #: 14-012D Date Submitted: 08/13/2015

Park or Trail Name: Beaver Island Trail

District #: 4 Map Coordinates (Latitude and Longitude): Latitude: 45.4887 Longitude: -94.1420

Location Description:

The trail corridor area is situated in the corporate City limits of southeast St. Cloud (just west of the Mississippi River) in Stearns County, MN. The county is approximately 1400 square miles in size with a population of 152,000. St. Cloud is the largest city in the county at 42 square miles with a population of 67,000. The cities of Sartell, Sauk Rapids and Waite Park are directly adjacent to St. Cloud, thus increasing the size of the St. Cloud metropolitan area. St. Augusta Township is approximately 39 square miles in size and has a population of 3,065, while Lynden Township is approximately 26 square miles in size and has a population of 2,000. The Mississippi River which has been designated a Wild and Scenic River Corridor, defines the eastern boundary of the county.

Lead Applicant Organization: St. Cloud

Lead Contact First Name: Scott Last Name: Zlotnik

Mailing Address: 400 2nd Street South

City: St. Cloud State: MN Zip: 56301

Phone: (320) 650-3170 Email: scott.zlotnik@ci.stcloud.mn.us

Joint Applicant #1 Organization: Stearns County MN

Joint Applicant #2 Organization:

Joint Applicant #3 Organization:

Joint Applicant #4 Organization:

Describe other project supporters:

Description Section

Classification: Regional Trail (Non-Motorized)

Total proposed length (mi):

Overview/Description of Park or Trail:

The Beaver Island Regional Trail is located within the corporate City limits of St. Cloud and areas of St.

Augusta and Lynden Township Stearns County, MN. The proposed trail corridor travels between commercial and natural areas and is immediately adjacent to the Mississippi River. The trail corridor contains environmentally sensitive land classification types and is also designated as "Mississippi River Wild and Scenic. The project corridor features commercial zoned properties, Regional Parks and community facilities. Natural features along the corridor include trees, river bluff views, significant landforms, topography and vacant lands. The development of future trail segments: 1. Will provide a trail connection between the existing southern terminus of the Beaver Island Regional Trail and River Bluffs Regional Park (Located at 42nd Street South in St. Cloud) to Stearns County Warner Lake Regional Park. 2. Provide opportunities for economic development related to trail use by City and County residents and by tourists from outside the County. 3. Increase public awareness of the natural and cultural/historic resources within the City/County such as the Mississippi River, River Bluffs Regional Park, Warner Lake Regional Park and provide natural resource interpretation at important features along the trail. Trail Way Section Termini: From: Beaver Island Regional Trail current southern termini To: Stearns County Park System jurisdiction (eventually construct to Stearns County Warner Lake Regional Park) Length: 3.4 miles proposed Horizontal/Vertical Alignment: The vertical alignment for the trail is predominantly flat along the proposed alignment. The existing grade for the proposed trail is planned to be 5% or less for the entire distance. The proposed trail is aligned to be located on public property but may require additional right of way (this will be determined as future segments are identified and surveyed for construction). The horizontal alignment is proposed to be contained within old railroad beds, public property and platted right of way. The intended future trail improvements will maintain ADA standards and will conform to all trail design speed requirements required by the State of MN. Adjacent Land Use: The land uses adjacent to the project is generally commercial or industrial zoning with some residential districts, community owned properties, natural areas and parkland: Railroad Crossing Location(s): None Airport Proximity: None Bike Path Type: Urban Path Width: 10.0 feet Path Surfacing: Bituminous Clear Zone: 2.0 feet Inslope, rise/run: 4:1 Design Speed: 20 MPH Maximum Grade: 5.0%

What is the Acquisition and Development Status?

New Park or Trail (no land acquired or developed)

Existing Park or Trail

Land Acquisition

Status: May need additional ROW or trail easements

Percentage of Land Acquired: 95%

Development Status

No Development

Some Development, but more Proposed

New Facilities Proposed

Existing Facilities to be Upgraded

Fully Development

Facility Listing Section

Classification: Regional Trail (Non-Motorized)	
Existing Facility List	Proposed Facility List
Asphalt paved trail (10 feet or more), Trailhead information kiosks, Trailhead restrooms, Benches along trail, Picnic shelters at trailhead	Asphalt paved trail (10 feet or more), Trailhead information kiosks, Benches along trail, New bridge construction crossing of Johnson Creek

Master Plan Status Section

Master Plan Status: Master Plan meeting requirements of strategic plan is available

Describe Other Supportive Information:

Scarcity of trail resources and making trail connections has been a priority for the St. Cloud regional area for some time. This proposed project has been determined to be regional priority by many planning studies and reports which include: 1. 2011 St. Cloud Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Plan 2. 2005 Central Minnesota Regional Parks & Trails Plan 3. 2030 Area Transportation Authority Bike and Pedestrian Plan (projected need in year Twenty-Thirty) 4. 2003 City of St. Cloud Comprehensive Plan 5. 2015 City of St. Cloud Capital Improvement Plan 6. 2015 City of St. Cloud Strategic Plan 7. The proposed project has also been determined to be a bicycle route on the newly designated Mississippi River Trail Bikeway system (MRT), whereby a bike route exists from Minnesota to Louisiana along the Mississippi River. The route is currently signed and bear the MRT designation.

Classification Details Section

Classification: Regional Trail (Non-Motorized)

Criteria #1 Provides a High-Quality "Destination" Trail Experience: The proposed trail corridor setting can be described as one of high natural resource value. Immediately adjacent to the corridor are many high quality natural areas categorized in both the Minnesota County Biological Survey for Stearns County (Dry Prairie and Oak Woodlands) and Environmentally Sensitive Areas, which range from priority natural areas to rare ecotypes. The trail corridor would intend to exist within or immediately adjacent to the Mississippi River Wild and Scenic River designation area. The proposed trail project will provide many considerations, such as a safe and scenic venue for trail users to enjoy the outdoors and enjoy being active. Trails are highly regarded by the City of St. Cloud public as well as the regional voter. The aesthetic quality of the trail location will be one which is very scenic, incorporating elements of green infrastructure. The landscapes that the trail intends to cross are mainly upland high bluff river bank areas with minimal slope (typical of old abandoned rail corridors) and are adjacent to existing green spaces and woodlands. The proposed trail meets many requirements and objectives of the Minnesota Recreational Trail Users Association, the 2008-2012 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, The Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Strategic Plan and, most importantly, appeals to our local/regional community goals and strategic direction. Most recently, as part of the St. Cloud Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Master Plan, an effort has been made to establish a community-based vision and

implement a strategy to maintain the Mississippi River as a regional asset through sustainable utilization and stewardship. Based upon previous planning initiatives, this plan serves as a guiding document for development, redevelopment, natural resource enhancement, preservation, and promotion of the river corridor within the St. Cloud urban area

Criteria #2 Well-located to Serve Regional Population and/or Tourist Destination: The Beaver Island Regional Trail focuses on providing a high quality recreational trail experience that is readily accessible from the populated and rapidly growing regional center of St. Cloud, which is also the County Seat of Stearns County. The trail also focuses on connecting St. Cloud State University (SCSU) and its many students and faculty to a vast network of interconnected local and regional trail systems constructed by the City and Stearns County. This project is a continuation of bicycle/walking trail construction connections that have been determined to be a high priority for the City of St. Cloud and its community members. The proposed trail route will connect to the current Beaver Island Regional Trail and the Scenic River Regional Trail; then intends to head south paralleling the Mississippi River from River Bluffs Regional Park, a Clean Water Land & Legacy Amendment improvement project, constructed in 2011, located at 38th Street South. River Bluffs Regional Park, located just minutes from Interstate 94, is a 175 acre park with significant access to the Mississippi River. The park can best be described as a high quality natural area with many attractions and facilities located in the Mississippi Wild and Scenic River Designated Area. The development of pedestrian and bicycle trails are listed as a priority in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan both statewide and regionally. The proposed trail corridor is also listed and inventoried as a future asset through the Minnesota Parks and Trails Legacy Plan process. The benefits of this proposed project for regional access, recreational opportunities and high quality natural areas are endless.

Criteria #3 Enhances Connectivity to Regional Destinations: This project is one piece of the puzzle that must be accomplished in order to fulfill the broader plan. This trail project, parallel to the mighty Mississippi River, can provide far greater than just one hour of recreational opportunity; it connects to several other major regional hubs that provide dozens of hours of regional, recreational, economic, social, educational and community based opportunities, as well as the potential, with future connections, to link vast natural areas such as the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, Sand Prairie Wildlife Refuge and Sand Dunes State Forest. Future connections will also link other regional sites of importance such as the Lake Wobegon Regional Trail and Glacial Lakes State Trail, providing access to the Mississippi River and downtown St. Cloud for all residents in and outside of the St. Cloud metro area. This functional linkage creates a transportation route independent of the consumption of fossil fuels, providing healthier life styles, a cleaner environment and safer routes to schools. Making trail connections has been a priority for the St. Cloud regional area for some time. This proposed project has been determined to be regional priority by many planning studies and reports which include: * 2011 St. Cloud Urban Area Mississippi River Corridor Plan * 2005 Central Minnesota Regional Parks & Trails Plan * 2030 Area Transportation Authority Bike and Pedestrian Plan (projected need in year Twenty-Thirty) * 2003 City of St. Cloud Comprehensive Plan * 2015 City of St. Cloud Capital Improvement Plan * 2000 Beaver Island Trail Regional Concept Plan * 2014 City of St. Cloud Strategic Plan * The proposed project has also been determined to be a bicycle route on the newly designated Mississippi River Trail Bike-way

system (MRT) The proposed project is supported by many Regional users and it is now time to embark on the actual construction of this segment.

Criteria #4 Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within a Region: This project should be funded in part because the area voters have demonstrated that they not only support trails, but also desire more trails and open space through the voter approved local option sales tax. The development of trails is listed as a priority in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), the Minnesota Recreational Trail Users Association (MRTUA), and a priority for the Greater Minnesota Parks and Trails Strategic Plan. Connecting liner parks to other communities, to city parks, county parks, and to existing trails can best be accomplished by such action. The project provides the opportunity for healthier lifestyles for persons of all abilities. The current 20+ miles of trail in existence have been designed and constructed to meet and/or exceed standards set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This project is part of the City's 2003 Comprehensive Plan to provide for pedestrian and bicycle trail development, and development of links between other communities, schools and parks. This project, together with planned future trailway improvements, will connect the current Beaver Island Trail system with other existing parks and St. Cloud metro area trails. This project will help the City to create a system of trails that connects to parks and other trip generators. The proposed project will provide functional linkages to the River Bluffs Regional Park, the Scenic River Regional Trail, the Beaver Island Regional Trail, the River's Edge Convention Center, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Hospital, Hester Park and downtown St. Cloud. These sites are responsible for thousands of visits each year by persons from the tri-county area, as well as the state of Minnesota and the national population.

Attachment List Section (only lists up to 10 documents)

Type	Description
Master Plan	Master plan added from master plan tab
Resolution	St. Cloud City Council Support
Resolution	St. Cloud City Council Support
Location Map	Location map added from general tab
Letters of Support	Group letters of support for the project
Location Map	Location map added from general tab