
General

This section provides the basic information about the park or trail and the organizations responsible for it.

Last Update

01 Apr 2022 12:15:39

Park or Trail Name

Henderson Scenic Byway Regional Trail

District

5

Location Description

The Henderson Scenic Byway Regional Trail will be located in and around Henderson, Minnesota in eastern Sibley County, Minnesota. The Trail and its trailhead parks are a network of trails and parks including a new trail north of Henderson along Sibley County Road #6 to Blakeley (7.2 miles). Additional trails will lead to High Island County Park (3.5 miles) and Rush River County Park (2 miles) in Sibley County and the Ney Nature Center (1 mile), a LeSueur County Park east of Henderson. A short link will also go from County Road #6 to the Minnesota River bridge at Blakeley (.5 mile), leading to Scott County. Most of the Trail complex is located in Jessenland Township and follows along the Minnesota River Valley basin and bluffs. Extensive improvements to the trailhead parks at Rush River and High Island will be part of the phased development plan and long-range plans include new trails directly to the parks from the new trail proposed in this request. The City of Henderson is planning a new 12-acre park and trailhead to compliment the new trail system.

Park/Trail Address

32372 Scenic Byway Road

City

Henderson

Park/Trail State

Minnesota

Zip

56044

Latitude

44.584176

Longitude

-93.915441

Map of Park/Trail

Description: Map of Parks and Trails

[Master_Trail_Map_075ff1.pdf](#)

Facility Website

NA

Organization

Sibley County

Lead Contact Person

Tim Becker

Title

Director, Department of Public Works and County

Engineer

Mailing Address

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City

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Joint Applicants

Joint Applicant #1

Sibley County

Upload Resolution

[Sibley County Resolution 755fce.pdf](#)

Joint Applicant #2

City of Henderson

Upload Resolution

[City of Henderson Resolution 80c6db.pdf](#)

Joint Applicant #3

Joint Applicant #4

Other project supporters

City of Henderson Trail Task Force, Scott County Parks and Trails, Le Sueur County Parks and Trails, Friends of the Minnesota Valley, Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota, Minnesota Parks and Trails Council, US Fish and Wildlife Refuge-Carver Rapids Unit, Minnesota Valley Land Trust, Kerfoot Canopy Tours, Ney Nature Center, Jessenland Township Board, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Henderson Area Chamber, Henderson Feathers, Historic Henderson Auto Society, Henderson Historic Preservation Commission, Henderson Park Board, Belle Plaine and Henderson Borough Riders, Cemstone Products Company, Henderson Fire Department, Henderson Community Foundation

Description

This section provides the basic information about the park or trail and the organizations responsible for it.

Regional Significance Statement

The Henderson Scenic Byway Regional Trail complex will be a county-owned, multi-use trail system of parks and trails extending from Henderson to Blakeley and to High Island and Rush River County Parks, as well as to the Ney Nature Center in LeSueur County. Its multiple destinations and connections will have a significant economic and recreational impact on the region, including the historic Henderson community, the Twin Cities metro area and much of south-central Minnesota.

Classification

Regional Trail (Motorized and Non-motorized)

Overview/Description of Park or Trail

The Henderson Scenic Byway Regional Trail network, the first phase which will also be known as the Hummingbird Trail, will be a major recreational development for the community of Henderson, Sibley County and the surrounding region. The significance of this trail system in the Minnesota River Valley is tremendous and will be the first major trail section between Belle Plaine and Mankato. The economic and safety implications will be felt immediately and will foster positive community and recreational development in our region, as well as contribute meaningful benefits to public health. The proposed HSBRT is a 14.2-mile trail

network, including a 7.2-mile new trail (Phase 1) along a newly rebuilt section of County Road #6 (Minnesota Valley National Scenic Byway) between Henderson and Blakeley and additional extensions to the Minnesota River via County Road #5 (1/2 mile), upgraded trail to the Ney Nature Center east of Henderson (1 mile), and trails to the Rush River (2 miles) and High Island County Parks (3.5 miles).

The City of Henderson (pop.950) and its Scenic Byway Trail Task Force are working with Sibley County to assist with Regional Trail designation and development. In conjunction with the trail construction, County Road #6 will be rebuilt in 2023 & 2024. Bolton & Menk of Mankato are the lead engineers and the project managers for both the roadway and trail construction. The City of Henderson has contracted with SEH, Inc. to assist with a new north entrance design, including a new trail head and park. The Hummingbird Trail will be aggregate to begin with and will be paved within five years.

The Henderson area of the Minnesota River Valley is a natural gem within thirty miles of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. Much of the area is undeveloped and protected by park land (eastern bluff) and County and Jessenland Township zoning ordinances (western bluff). A significant portion of the river corridor is part of the USFW Minnesota Valley Refuge-Carver Rapids Unit and is adjacent to the proposed trail. The natural beauty and relative isolation of the trail area is already a major attraction. Historically, Jessenland Township, where most of the entire trail complex is located, is the oldest Irish settlement in Minnesota. Downtown Henderson has already been designated a National Historic Preservation District and is a destination for 35-40,000 visitors each year.

Very important to the trail system are the facility upgrades that will be planned for the Trailhead destinations at the High Island County Park (50+ camp sites), Rush River County Park (200+ camp sites), City of Henderson new trailhead and park and the inclusion of Kerfoot Canopy Tours as a trail head and destination. The future Blakeley Bluffs Regional Park in Scott County will also be a major trail connecting site and attraction. Long-range plans also including new direct trail routes to the two county parks. The upgraded route to the Ney Nature Center will be a partnership with USFW Refuge lands.

Total Acreage or Mileage

14.2

Acquisition and Development Status

New Park or Trail (no land acquired or developed)

All lands are currently owned or will be owned by Sibley and LeSueur Counties. The proposed trail link to the Ney Nature Center will be part of USFW Refuge lands.

Development status

No development

New facilities proposed

Facility Listing

This section provides an overview of existing and proposed site facilities and general site characteristics .

Existing Facilities

- Camping-cross-section of camper types
- Electric/water/sewer RV sites
- Electric/water campsites
- Electric campsites
- Non-electric campsites
- Group campsites

Proposed Facilities

- Camping-cross-section of camper types
- Electric/water/sewer RV sites
- Electric/water campsites
- Electric campsites
- Non-electric campsites
- Group campsites

- Tent only sites

Other camping-related facilities

City of Henderson Allanson's Park- on trail in town (18 full service RV sites)
 Sibley County Rush River Park- on trail extension, 2 miles from Henderson
 Sibley County High Island Park- on trail extension, 5.5 miles from Henderson
 Le Sueur County Park, Ney Nature Center- on trail extension, 1 mile from Henderson (no camping)
 Kerfoot Canopy Tours and Challenge Course- on trail, 7 miles from Henderson (no camping)

- Picnicking and picnic shelters
- Walking Trails (paved)
- Hiking Trails (natural)
- Cross-country Skiing Trails
- Horseback Riding Trails (natural)
- Swimming
- Canoeing Facilities
- Nature Center/Interpretation Trails
- Zip Lines
- Restrooms/sanitation building
- Roads and Parking Areas

Existing Facilities Other Information

Allanson's City Park is a full service camping facility with electricity, water, park shelter, restrooms w/showers.
 Rush River County Park has camping, water, shelters and restrooms (some electricity) major horseback riding park
 High Island County Park has camping, water, shelters and restrooms (some electricity)
 Ney Nature Center is a Le Sueur County Park with hiking trails, skiing, mountain biking, some tent camping for school and scout groups
 Kerfoot has a 14 stage zipline course and challenge course

Proposed Facilities Other Information

Substantial trailhead enhancement upgrades to both county parks in phase 2
 Addition of Kerfoot Canopy Tours as private trailhead (no funds to be requested)
 Handicapped accessible facilities upgrades (toilets, shelters, parking, etc.)
 More designated mountain biking trails and hiking trails
 More kid-friendly play equipment

General Site Characteristics

The trails are situated entirely within the Minnesota River (River Warren) valley at its narrowest and deepest point approximately fifty miles from the confluence with the Mississippi River. Steep (app 500 feet) wooded bluffs are clearly visible from all points on the proposed trail. Much of the valley floor is within the flood plain (El. 932.5 in Henderson). Multiple facilities are already available at the two county parks (High Island and Rush River) and at the Ney Nature Center (a LeSueur County Park). The City of Henderson is developing a trail head and park at the north edge of Henderson to accommodate the new trail. Much of the trail is along hardwood forest and wetland with scenic vistas of the valley and river.

The current land cover along the east side of the corridor is a mix of floodplain forest and wetlands, an active aggregate mining operation, cropland and three single-family homes. With the exception of the individual homes, the other land cover or land uses are mostly located within the Minnesota River floodplain and are

- Tent only sites

Other camping-related facilities

Second phase upgrades at the county parks include new services and an extensive increase in the number of sites (200-300)
 Increase in camp sites at Allanson's Park in Henderson
 New river park in Henderson will have several acres of tent-only sites

- Picnicking and picnic shelters
- Walking Trails (paved)
- Hiking Trails (natural)
- Biking Trails (paved)
- Mountain Biking Trails (natural)
- Cross-country Skiing Trails
- Nature Center/Interpretation Trails
- Restrooms/sanitation building
- Roads and Parking Areas

subject to periodic flooding. The bluff lands on both sides of the valley are steep and hardwood covered with deep ravines and creeks. Most of landscape in the area is prominently characterized by the Rush River and High Island valleys meandering westward with very little development.

The Minnesota River plays significantly into the HSBRT development. Historically and culturally the river has been the focus of all previous development of native settlements, military expansions and European migration. No part of any written history of the area excludes the river as the major focal point. As with many places in the world, the river is why and how people came to live here and thrive. This trail project follows the river and its tributaries. We intend to develop the trails for a variety of reasons but a big part of why people want to be here is the aesthetic value of the river valley. The reason folks settled here originally was due to river transportation. The reason people stay here now is the valley geography and proximity to jobs here or in other communities along the river. And the reason they come here now on weekends is because of the rivers unique draw; be it a winding drive through the verdant valley, riding a bike along the path of history, or just leisurely walking the streets or shopping in an old town. People love being along a river.

Geologic Characteristics, Landforms and Unique Features

Geologic events between about 12,000 to 9,000 years before present combined to create a unique landform in the area of the Henderson Scenic Byway Regional Trail the Minnesota River Valley.

By the late stages of the ice age the area transected by the Henderson Scenic Byway Regional Trail (HSBRT) was covered in multiple layers of glacial till. As described in the Geologic Atlas of Sibley County, Minnesota, Minnesota Geological Survey, (Lusardi, et al) a profound landscape-altering event - the incision of the deep, glacial River Warren channel - followed the ice withdrawal from the region. The glacial river was created as a spillway for glacial Lake Agassiz that developed as the ice front retreated north of a low divide in the Browns Valley area of western Minnesota. Glacial River Warren started in a broad valley but quickly created a narrower pathway as it flowed toward present day Mankato where the glacial lake discharge turned north-northeast creating the steep-walled valley present in the Henderson-Blakely area. Discharge flow rates from glacial Lake Agassiz through the Browns Valley outlet have been estimated to have ranged from 17,400 m³/sec to 98,200 m³/sec compared to today's average flow rate of about 235 m³/sec as calculated at Mankato. These enormous discharges took place over a period of time and resulted in the deeply incised, steep-walled valley, roughly 250 feet deep in the Henderson area. Creation of various sandy terraces present today in the Minnesota River valley were also a result of the ebb and flow of discharge water from glacial Lake Agassiz.

Larger tributary streams like the Rush River and High Island Creek in Sibley County adjusted their gradients to the newly formed valley bottom and hence generally have little or no deposition of sediment before discharging to the main stem of the Minnesota River. However, smaller-scale intermittent streams, which start on the uplands near the top edges of the valley have cut down valley walls forming steep ravines carrying erosion-derived sediments to the base of the present-day valley creating fan-like deltaic deposits. These deposits have usually accumulated enough thickness to rise above the flood elevation of the Minnesota River. These features can be observed in many locations along the river side of the HSBRT.

The same continental glacier that eventually melted forming glacial Lake Agassiz and glacial River Warren also left this area with another great resource not as scenic as the Minnesota River valley, but of great value soils. The glacial drift that covered this part of Minnesota had all the right ingredients that over time have formed some of the most productive soils in the world. A short side trip to the west of the HSBRT will illustrate the abundance of crop productivity.

Nearly 100 years ago, much of the Minnesota River bottoms in this area were used for cultivated crops or hay lands. Today, very little of the floodplain is used for agricultural purposes. A traveler along the HSBRT can now observe the Minnesota River gradually transforming the bottoms back to a floodplain forest a step back in time.

The resulting landscape makes for a gently rolling and scenic path for the new Hummingbird Trail and its links to the upland park trails. The hardwood vegetation all around also makes these paths even more distinct. These woods were decimated by logging in the late nineteenth century but have grown back to what is probably very much like it had been before European settlement. Large oak, maple, basswood and elm trees dominate the valley side-slopes today and cottonwoods, silver maples and willows cover the river floodplain. Cattails dominate the wetlands and grasses and wildflowers cover the open spaces.

The leisure and openness of the trail landscape echoes the community atmosphere of the Henderson community; laid back and picturesque with a sense of purposeful enjoyment. The warmth of old brick and active small business lend a character to be relished. This is the Henderson Scenic Byway Regional Trail, ready and waiting.

Site characteristics upload

Description: Map showing glacial River Warren

[River Warren_c6970c.pdf](#)

Site characteristics upload

Description: Aerial view of Henderson and MN River Valley

[Aerial view of Henderson and MN River Valley_ad24fd.JPG](#)

Site characteristics upload

Description: Cross section of River Warren at Henderson

[Henderson cross section_7431fc.jpg](#)

Site characteristics upload

Description: Aerial cross section of River Warren

[Henderson aerial river cross section_54f7cc.jpg](#)

Site characteristics upload

Description: Rendering of River Warren at Henderson

[Henderson aerial River Warren_93cca5.jpg](#)

Master Plan

Master Plan Status:

Master Plan meeting requirements of strategic plan is available

Additional Supportive Information:

Cost information- Part of the rationale and catalyst for this project is due to how it has come about and the financial and design assistance available at this time. The rebuild of County Road #6 going north from Henderson to the intersection of County Roads #6 and #5 at Blakeley has given us an extraordinary opportunity to build off the Minnesota Legislative bonding funds and Sibley County public works funding. The current funding plan includes a total of approximately \$22 million; \$14 million from the 2020 state bonding bill and \$8 million from Sibley County. The timing is important because the cost to build a large segment of the trail at a later date, not as part of the county road rebuild, would be prohibitive. The reason for the urgency and focus on the first new trail segment of the system is because without this 7.2-mile initial trail along the new roadway, the other connection

will not be possible. Aside from the preliminary contributions from the county, the off-road trail costs are figured separately and will be bid separate from the road project. Sibley County's contribution to the trail cost will include preliminary site work and acquisition work as well as culvert extensions and base material. The value of the County's contribution to the trail is conservatively estimated to be at least \$210,000. The rest of the trail project would require an estimated \$1.1 to 1.25 million, to be raised from other sources. Additionally, the City of Henderson will provide a new trailhead and park amenities and is not part of this request. The value of the City's contribution is estimated to be \$250,000. The bulk of the county road rebuild project and trail will be done in 2023 with completion in 2024. (See the attached map) CSAH 6 - Off Road Trail Costs per this request (Phase 1)

Description	Unit	Unit Costs	Quantity	Estimated Cost
Common Embankment (CV)	CY	\$9.00	80,000	\$720,000
Aggregate Base Class 5	CY	\$30.00	7,100	\$213,000
30" Pipe Extensions	Lin. Ft.	\$125.00	174	\$21,750
36" Pipe Extensions	Lin. Ft.	\$200.00	72	\$14,400
48" Pipe Extensions	Lin. Ft.	\$300.00	74	\$22,200
60" Pipe Extensions	Lin. Ft.	\$400.00	14	\$5,600
72" Pipe Extensions	Lin. Ft.	\$600.00	12	\$7,200
Wetland Impacts	Acres	\$300,000	6	\$300,000
Signing		\$50,000		\$50,000
Engineering-Preliminary		\$100,000		\$100,000
Amenities (benches, ADA, etc.)		\$50,000		\$50,000
Total Trail Cost				\$1,504,150

County Contribution Common Embankment- 140,000 Pipe Extensions- 71,150 Preliminary costs (prorated) 38,850 County Contribution total match- \$211,150 City of Henderson- Trailhead and park construction- \$250,000 (Phase 2) Total \$1,754,150 Additional trail segments and connections- Along with the primary 7.2-mile section of the trail we are excited about the possibility of connecting to important regional features such as parks and future trails. Leading east from Henderson to the Ney Nature Center (a LeSueur County Park) will be an improved one-mile trail segment. The Ney Center is a 450-acre nature park featuring several miles of hiking and skiing trails, mountain biking trail, abundant wildlife viewing and year-round educational programs and events. The Ney Center is also in both the DNR Minnesota Valley State Trail and Scott County Trail Corridors, projecting future trail development connecting the metro area with southern Minnesota. (See the attached maps, i.e. Scott County Parks and Trails and Minnesota DNR authorized trails) Within three and one-half miles of the main trail, we have two beautiful Sibley County parks, Rush River and High Island. These two major parts of the HSBRT will be connecting trails 2 and 3.5 miles respectively from the main trail. Both are 200+ acre parks featuring camping, trail hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding and are served by blacktop and gravel county roads, accessible by bicycle. (See the attached maps) The long-term plan is to have new direct trails built to both parks and major improvements to each park, including more campsites, better shelter, improved wells and restrooms, and more parking. Trailheads for all of the trail sections will be provided by the City of Henderson (along with a new riverside park), Sibley County, the Ney Nature Center and Kerfoot Canopy Tours. All five sites currently have restroom facilities, drinking water and other amenities. Three have camping, totaling more than 300 sites. Allanson's Park in Henderson has 18 RV camping sites. In close proximity to the north end of the HSBRT at Blakeley, the new Blakeley Bluffs Regional Park Reserve will provide additional amenities for trail users and eventually be a connecting route to the Minnesota Valley State Trail. Although not part of this regional request, the Park and connecting trail will provide a key connection to a significant population link. The Minnesota Valley State Trail could also be accessed via Sibley County Road #6 and State Highway #25 north of Belle Plaine. The connection to the Ney Nature Center opens up the possibility of extending the trail south to LeSueur and beyond. The HSBRT also opens up the possibility of extending trails to the west through Sibley County. Please see the attached Sibley County Comprehensive Plan (pg. 146) trail map. Safety- An important issue related to the trail effort is safety. Part of our motivation here is that County Road #6 is virtually un-usable for recreational activities due to the narrow roadway and shoulder and increasing traffic volume. We sympathize with those who unknowingly traverse the roadway on bicycle. The average daily traffic count is 1,200 vehicles, many of which are gravel trucks (22,000 trucks from Cemstone last year) hauling from the three aggregate mining operations in the area. On weekends, there are hundreds of motorcycles traversing the Scenic Byway. This fact seriously limits the opportunity for people to enjoy the beauty of the area in other ways than driving a vehicle. Because of the expected population growth in the

area and increased traffic volume, if there is to be a trail here, it must be separated from the roadway. Hummingbird Trail- We have also been calling the proposed first trail section along County Road #6 the "Hummingbird Trail" as Henderson is fast becoming known as the Hummingbird Capital of Minnesota because of the beautiful hummingbird garden and the Hummingbird Hurrah event every August. We are also anticipating the future development of the National Ruby-Throated Hummingbird Center, a destination interpretive center to be located in Henderson. Design Team- Coincident with our Trail initiative, the American Institute of Architects' Minnesota Design Team will be visiting Henderson in early Fall, 2022. According to their website, MDT has helped more than 130 communities to "improve their built environments," including a highly successful initiative in Henderson in 1998. The 2022 event will feature 3-4 days of community interviews, planning discussions, and design work, culminating in a final, illustrated report of recommendations. The Henderson Scenic Byway Trail amenities, portals and features will play prominently into the results of the visit, especially as the City of Henderson considers its trailhead and park development plans. We will invite the Minnesota Design Team to consider the full breadth of the trail system in their work. Further regional consideration- Lastly, we have been in contact with twenty-eight different organizations, agencies and municipalities as part of this regional designation application. The information gathered from those entities is important and will become part of our Master Plan. All have been positive and supportive. We believe this is an indication that this proposed trail and park system will be very popular within the region. With over a million people in a fifty-mile radius of Henderson, it bodes well for an awesome new destination. This proposal is the start of a much larger area trail and park network. Suffice it to say that the region is excited about another much-needed high quality trail and parks system.

Additional Supportive Documents:

Scott County Parks and Trails Map

[Scott County Regional System Map_b14b6b.jpg](#)

Minnesota DNR authorized trails map

[MN State River Master Plan_000ca8.pdf](#)

Sibley County Parks and Trails Map

[Sibley County Park Trails and Open Space_9a04e0.png](#)

Project Location Map

[Project Location Map_f6ca6c.pdf](#)

Project Site Level Map

[Project Site Level Map_8e2bd4.pdf](#)

Classification Details

Regional Trail (Motorized and Non-Motorized) Classification

Provides a High-Quality "Destination" Trail Experience

Because of its proximity to the Twin Cities metro area, its connection to the Ney Nature

Center, the future Blakeley Bluffs Regional Park, the National Wildlife Refuge, a historically inviting

Criteria #1 Images

Fall Colors of the Minnesota River Valley

[Fall_colors_valley_345489.jpg](#)

Criteria #1 Images

Crane

community and its extraordinary natural state, the Henderson Scenic Byway Regional Trail will instantly become a destination. The main part of the trail itself will be an easy bike ride or hike with beautiful vistas, abundant wildlife, wetlands and bluffs, and multiple places to stop, rest and enjoy the outdoors. The east side of the main trail (river side) is almost entirely wooded with less than 10 percent farmland and pasture. The west side of the main trail (bluff side) is free of major development and features small farm fields, pastures and some farmsteads and residences. Additionally, the trail extensions take you to two county parks, a state water trail and three City parks.

The community of Henderson, the fourth oldest European settlement in Minnesota, is already a destination for its historic presence and popular shops and will benefit greatly from the trails hiking, biking and running opportunities. The historic downtown, the Sibley County Museum and the JR Brown Minnesota River Center are all popular, important sites, bringing attention to the areas immigrant and native culture and history. There is something for everyone to enjoy in Henderson. Explore Minnesota has named Henderson as one of the states most charming small-town Main Streets. The addition of a recreational trail will contribute significantly to the economic and cultural vitality of the region.

Many bicycle enthusiasts look for the perfect day trip. That's our goal in creating the HSBRT. It will provide fourteen+ miles of trail within easy reach of the metropolitan and Mankato areas, connected to other great trails and communities, and amenities and natural beauty from one end to the other.

Well-located (i.e., Convenience of Access/Adequate Length) to Serve Regional Population and/or Tourist Destination

The HSBRT is expected to attract an additional 50,000 guests to the region annually.

The eastern Sibley County border abuts Scott and Le Sueur Counties, separated by the Minnesota River. Over one million people in the SW Twin Cities metropolitan area reside within fifty miles of the proposed Henderson Scenic Byway Regional Trail. One mile from the trail is Scott County, the fastest growing county in Minnesota. To the south, the Mankato-St. Peter-Le Sueur area (pop.100,000) is thirty miles or less from Henderson. To the north is Carver County, including Waconia, Chaska, Victoria and other rapidly growing

[Crane_a73c08.JPG](#)

Criteria #1 Images

Ducks

[Ducks4_c931d7.jpg](#)

Criteria #1 Images

River Otter

[Otter_2a5b6f.JPG](#)

Criteria #1 Images

Swans

[Swans_cb987d.JPG](#)

Criteria #1 Images

Turkeys

[Turkeys_08ca00.JPG](#)

Criteria #1 Images

Barn along the proposed trail

[Barn1_d89999.JPG](#)

Criteria #1 Images

Cemetery view with fall colors

[Cemetery_4_ca377d.JPG](#)

Criteria #1 Images

River view

[River1_a07126.JPG](#)

Criteria #1 Images

St Thomas Church foggy morning

[JessenlandSt.ThomasChurch_659ae7.jpg](#)

Criteria #2 Images

Fall Colors of the Minnesota River Valley

[Fall_colors_valley_345489.jpg](#)

Criteria #2 Images

Crane

[Crane_a73c08.JPG](#)

Criteria #2 Images

Ducks

[Ducks4_c931d7.jpg](#)

Criteria #2 Images

River Otter

[Otter_2a5b6f.JPG](#)

communities. The region is served by two four-lane roadways: Highway #169 runs from the metro area to Mankato and within 4 miles from the Trail in Henderson. Highway #212, in the west metro is 15 miles from the Trails north end.

Much of the new trail is situated alongside the Minnesota Valley National Scenic Byway, but no part of this trail system is in a state trail corridor.

Henderson, deep in the heart of south-central Minnesota and the Minnesota River Valley, is already a tourist destination. Known for its great food, unique shops and frequent events, the community was also just voted as having the Best Classic Car Roll-in in Southern Minnesota. The Tuesday evening event (20 per summer), coordinated by 60 volunteers, averages 350 classic vehicles and 1,500 people, making it the biggest weekly event of its type in Minnesota.

Notably, Henderson is also the Hummingbird Capital of Minnesota, hosting the annual Hummingbird Hurrah and featuring a beautiful and quite popular Hummingbird Garden only a quarter mile from the proposed Trail. To top it off, Henderson is the home of Toody's Sweet Treats, voted one of the best ice cream shops in the Midwest by Midwest Living magazine.

Enhances Connectivity to Regional Destinations

Vital to this effort are the future connections that will encourage recreational development along the Minnesota River Valley and the rural region southwest of the metro area. First, although not part of this request, future trail development to the north will extend the Minnesota Valley State Trail from Belle Plaine to Blakeley and beyond, connecting to the future Blakeley Bluffs Regional Park Reserve and Ney Nature Center to the HSBRT. This will be a major accomplishment, bringing a completed trail all the way from Bloomington to Henderson, connecting two historically important communities.

Second, HSBRT will spur further trail development to the south. A Minnesota River Valley trail across the river east of Henderson has been on the DNR drawing board since 1934 with major planning in the late-60s and again since 2000. Because of numerous major flooding events over the past 25 years, it has been impractical to design and construct trails that avoid the floodplain while highlighting the geographic features, scenic beauty and destinations of the Valley. Some of these destinations include the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge-Rapids Lake Unit, Sibley County Museum and

Criteria #2 Images

Swans

[Swans_cb987d.JPG](#)

Criteria #2 Images

Turkeys

[Turkeys_08ca00.JPG](#)

Criteria #2 Images

Barn along the proposed trail

[Barn1_d89999.JPG](#)

Criteria #2 Images

Cemetery view with fall colors

[Cemetery_4_ca377d.JPG](#)

Criteria #2 Images

River view

[River1_a07126.JPG](#)

Criteria #2 Images

St Thomas Church foggy morning

[JessenlandSt.ThomasChurch_659ae7.jpg](#)

Criteria #3 Images

Fall Colors of the Minnesota River Valley

[Fall_colors_valley_345489.jpg](#)

Criteria #3 Images

Crane

[Crane_a73c08.JPG](#)

Criteria #3 Images

Ducks

[Ducks4_c931d7.jpg](#)

Criteria #3 Images

River Otter

[Otter_2a5b6f.JPG](#)

Criteria #3 Images

Swans

[Swans_cb987d.JPG](#)

Criteria #3 Images

Turkeys

[Turkeys_08ca00.JPG](#)

Criteria #3 Images

Barn along the proposed trail

JR Brown Minnesota River Center in Historic Henderson, Ney Nature Center across the river from Henderson, Mayo House in Le Sueur, Treaty Site History Center in St. Peter, Seven Mile Creek Park south of St. Peter, and several trails and parks in and around Mankato.

Third, HSBRT will provide enhanced access to a substantial amount of USFWS land, Kerfoot Canopy Tours, two nearby county parks, and Allansons and Bender Parks, as well as the newly planned trail park in Henderson.

Fourth, the Trail will encourage recreational development along the Minnesota River State Water Trail, popular with paddlers from far western Minnesota to the Twin Cities but underutilized in this stretch of the river.

Fills a Gap in Recreational Opportunity within a Region

For forty miles in the Minnesota River Valley there is no trail between Belle Plaine and Mankato.

Sibley County has only three county parks, a few city parks, and a 1 mile trail in Arlington. The Countys most recent comprehensive plan does envision an extensive trail system, including the stretch along County #6 that comprises part of the HSBRT. The trail is a much-needed catalyst for new recreational amenities and will create a compelling destination in conjunction with the Minnesota Valley National Scenic Byway. We anticipate people from at least a fifty-mile radius will come to regularly enjoy biking, hiking, running, camping and snowmobiling and will also provide greater access to the Minnesota Valley USFW Refuge; enable folks to enjoy birdwatching and photography and bring attention to festivals and events in Henderson and surrounding communities. There are campgrounds along the valley and great hiking and cross-country skiing at the Ney Nature Center.

We will be making a major effort to enhance the county parks to serve the new trail users.

Seven miles north of Henderson is one of the most popular destinations in southern Minnesota: Kerfoot Canopy Tours, ranked among the top ten zip-lines in the US. KCT is a thriving recreational business along the trail (14,000 visitors last year) and they are planning to expand into bike rentals. The HSBRT Task Force is already planning events in partnership with KCT around the new trail, such as bike rallies, foot races and a non-competitive family quadrathlon.

[Barn1_d89999.JPG](#)

Criteria #3 Images

Cemetery view with fall colors

[Cemetery_4_ca377d.JPG](#)

Criteria #3 Images

River view

[River1_a07126.JPG](#)

Criteria #3 Images

St Thomas Church foggy morning

[JessenlandSt.ThomasChurch_659ae7.jpg](#)

Criteria #4 Images

Fall Colors of the Minnesota River Valley

[Fall_colors_valley_345489.jpg](#)

Criteria #4 Images

Crane

[Crane_a73c08.JPG](#)

Criteria #4 Images

Ducks

[Ducks4_c931d7.jpg](#)

Criteria #4 Images

River Otter

[Otter_2a5b6f.JPG](#)

Criteria #4 Images

Swans

[Swans_cb987d.JPG](#)

Criteria #4 Images

Turkeys

[Turkeys_08ca00.JPG](#)

Criteria #4 Images

Barn along the proposed trail

[Barn1_d89999.JPG](#)

Criteria #4 Images

Cemetery view with fall colors

[Cemetery_4_ca377d.JPG](#)

Criteria #4 Images

River view

[River1_a07126.JPG](#)

Finally, it must not be overlooked that the Minnesota River State Water Trail parallels the proposed new trail. We envision opportunities for paddling-related events and businesses and increased public awareness and appreciation of the rivers natural, historical and cultural legacy.

Criteria #4 Images

St Thomas Church foggy morning
[JessenlandSt.ThomasChurch_659ae7.jpg](#)

Attachments

Doc Name	Description	Url
Park Trail Map	Map of Parks and Trails	Master Trail Map_075ff1.pdf
Additional Attachment	Bike MN Letter of Support	Bike MN Henderson Trail Support_2f55b6.pdf
Additional Attachment	Burrough Riders Letter of Support	Burrough Riders Letter_e26e07.pdf
Additional Attachment	Cemstone Letter of Support	Cemstone Letter of Support_4c9234.pdf
Additional Attachment	Friends of the Minnesota Valley	Friends of the MN Valley_535884.pdf
Additional Attachment	Henderson Area Chamber Letter of Support	Henderson Area Chamber letter_b7330f.pdf
Additional Attachment	Henderson Feathers Letter of Support	Henderson Feathers letter of support to GMRPT_f34b5a.pdf
Additional Attachment	Henderson Fire Department Letter of Support	HFD Letter of Support - Trail_04a2e9.pdf
Additional Attachment	Historic Henderson Auto Society Letter of Support	Historic Henderson Auto Society letter_b76b87.pdf
Additional Attachment	Jessenland Township Letter of Support	Jessenland Letter of support_939488.pdf
Additional Attachment	Jessenland Township Board of Supervisors Letter of Support	Jessenland Township Letter of support for Trail 11-12-21_40534f.pdf
Additional Attachment	JRB Letter of Support	Letter of support_JRB_71cb28.pdf
Additional Attachment	Le Sueur County Parks Department Letter of Support	LS County letter_046c87.pdf
Additional Attachment	Sauerkraut Days Letter of Support	Sauerkraut Days Letter_657085.pdf
Additional Attachment	Scott County Parks and Trails Program Letter of Support	Scott County Letter of Support_Henderson Scenic Byway Regio

		nal_Trail_c391e6.pdf
Site Characteristics Upload	Map showing glacial River Warren	River_Warren_c6970c.pdf
Site Characteristics Upload	Aerial view of Henderson and MN River Valley	Aerial_view_of_Henderson_and_MN_River_Valley_ad24fd.JPG
Site Characteristics Upload	Cross section of River Warren at Henderson	Henderson_cross_section_7431fc.jpg
Site Characteristics Upload	Aerial cross section of River Warren	Henderson_aerial_river_cross_section_54f7cc.jpg
Site Characteristics Upload	Rendering of River Warren at Henderson	Henderson_aerial_River_Warren_93cca5.jpg
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Additional Information Upload	Minnesota DNR authorized trails map	MN_State_River_Master_Plan_000ca8.pdf
Additional Information Upload	Sibley County Parks and Trails Map	Sibley_County_Park_Trails_and_Open_Space_9a04e0.png
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Additional Information Upload	Project Site Level Map	Project_Site_Level_Map_8e2bd4.pdf
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Classification Criteria1 Upload	Ducks	Ducks4_c931d7.jpg
Classification Criteria1 Upload	River Otter	Otter_2a5b6f.JPG
Classification Criteria1 Upload	Swans	Swans_cb987d.JPG
Classification Criteria1 Upload	Turkeys	Turkeys_08ca00.JPG
Classification Criteria1 Upload	Barn along the proposed trail	Barn1_d89999.JPG
Classification Criteria1 Upload	Cemetery view with fall colors	Cemetery_4_ca377d.JPG
Classification Criteria1 Upload	River view	River1_a07126.JPG
Classification Criteria1 Upload	St Thomas Church foggy morning	JessenlandSt.ThomasChurch_659ae7.jpg
Classification Criteria2 Upload	Henderson Classic Car Roll-In street scene	Street_scene_1_af2353.jpg
Classification Criteria2 Upload	Hummingbird Garden	HHH1_2af8b0.jpeg
Classification Criteria2 Upload	Toody's Sweet Treats	Toody_s_Sweet_Treats_77835b.jpg
Classification Criteria3 Upload	Blakeley Bluffs Park entrance	Entrance_d176c9.jpg
Classification Criteria3 Upload	Kerfoot Canopy Tour	Entrance_to_Kerfoot_Canopy_Tour_399553.png

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Classification Criteria4 Upload	Rush River Park Playground	Rush River Park Playground_38257c.jpg
Classification Criteria4 Upload	Rush River	Rush River_1480aa.jpg
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Site Map Upload	Project Site Level Map	Project Site Level Map_34ec53.pdf
Site Map Upload	3D Satellite Map of Project Area	3D Satellite Map_d1d595.pdf
Site Map Upload	Topographic Map of Project Area	Topographic Map_c1bf21.pdf
Recreational Trends Upload	Recreational Trends Support Material 1	Recreational Trends Support Material_1_a5a505.png
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Recreational Trends Upload	Recreational Trends Support Material 3	Recreational Trends Support Material_3_5796d7.png
Joint Org Responsibilities Upload	Hummingbird Trail Maintenance Agreement	Henderson Hummingbird Trail Maintenance Agreement Signed_78c468.pdf
Public Involvement Summ Upload	Henderson Scenic Byway Regional Trail Community Survey	HENDERSON SCENIC BYWAY REGIONAL TRAIL Community Survey_9e820d.pdf
Regional Map Uploads	30 and 60 mile radius maps	Henderson Regional 30 and 60 mile_b759c7.pdf
Public Health Values Upload	Public Health Values Support Material 1	Public Health Values Support Material_1_043252.png
Public Health Values Upload	Public Health Values Support Material 2	Public Health Values Support Material_2_fb72ea.png
AcqDev Cost Projections Upload	Cost Estimate Spreadsheet	Cost Budget_b3dce0.pdf

User Metrics Research Plan Upload	Economic Impact Washington County Trail Connections	Economic Impact Washington County Trail Connections_dd6a90.docx
Economic Development Tourism Upload	Economic Contribution of Bicycling Industry in MN	economic-contribution-of-bicycling-industry-in-mn_f76f61.pdf
Site Map Upload	Glacial Tills	Glacial_2_1013c8.png
Regional Demographic Upload	QuickFacts	QuickFacts_282465.pdf
Development Feature Upload		Attachment_A_05dfc7.pdf
Development Feature Upload		Attachment_B_28ee09.pdf
Development Feature Upload		Attachment_C_46f22a.pdf
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Programming Plan Upload	Programming costs and revenues	Programming_Costs_418bb2.pdf
Ad Phasing Plan Upload	Phasing Costs	Phasing_costs_43eaae.pdf

Maintenance Operations Budget
Upload

Maintenance and Operation Costs

[Maintenance and Operation cost
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