



Planning Framework

The Baker/Carver Regional Trail will fill a gap in the regional park and trail system with a safe, accessible and enjoyable recreation and alternative transportation option. Currently, southwestern suburban Hennepin County residents do not have access to a convenient and attractive off-road regional trail that supports a north/south connection. The Baker/Carver Regional Trail will expand recreational access to park and trail facilities, residential neighborhoods, commercial nodes and downtown Maple Plain - which in turn supports bicycle and pedestrian mobility and economic development.

When completed, the trail will measure approximately seventeen miles from the Lake Independence Regional Trail in Baker Park Reserve (City of Medina) to the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail in Carver Park Reserve, through the cities of Maple Plain, Independence, and Minnetrista in Hennepin County and Laketown Township and the City of Victoria in Carver County. As the regional trail connects to the existing Lake Independence Regional Trail, users can continue on the Lake Independence Regional Trail to reach Crow-Hassan Park Reserve, another ten miles - effectively traversing the entire north/south length of western Hennepin County and creating a desirable recreation opportunity which also serves as an alternative transportation option (Figure 1).

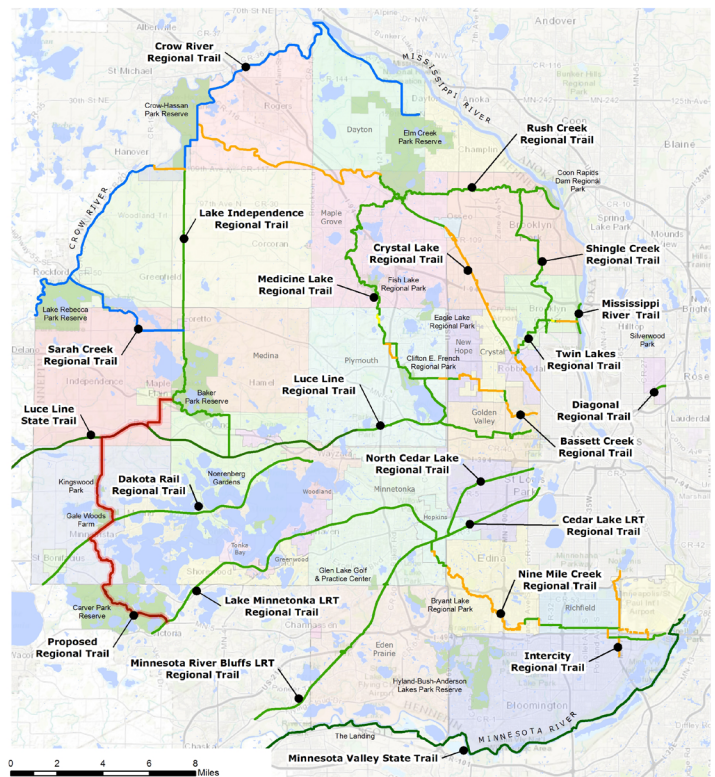


Figure 1

Baker/Carver Regional Trail | County Context

Source: Three Rivers Park District

Three Rivers Park District | Regional Trail System

- Open
- Under Construction
- Current Planning
- Alternative Route
- Future Planning
- Lakes



Map prepared by Three Rivers Park District Planning and Development, APR March 10, 2014
 This GIS Data is provided "as is" without warranty of any representation of accuracy, timeliness, or completeness. The user acknowledges and accepts the limitations of the Data, including the fact that the Data is dynamic and is in a constant state of maintenance, correction, and update.

Specifically, the proposed regional trail will directly connect recreational destinations such as Carver and Baker Park Reserves, Gale Woods Farm, and Kingswood Park in addition to Lake Minnetonka LRT, Dakota Rail and Lake Independence Regional Trails - and the Luce Line State Trail, and will indirectly connect to Lake Minnetonka Regional Park. Some segments of the proposed trail already exist, or are planned for construction funding in the near future (explained further in Section VII). These portions include sections through Carver Park Reserve, the crossing of Highway 7 and the two shared segments along the Dakota Rail Regional Trail and Luce Line State Trail (Figure 2).

Metropolitan Regional Parks System

The Twin Cities’ nationally renowned Metropolitan Regional Parks System significantly contributes to the area’s high quality of life. Establishing green space for recreation and resource protection enhances the region’s livability and economic strength. The Metropolitan Regional Parks System includes 51 regional parks and park reserves, 38 regional trails with 231 miles open to the public, seven special recreation features and is still growing (Figure 3). Currently, there are 54,633 acres of protected land open for public use, with planned acquisition of an additional 15,000 acres over the next 20 years. The Metropolitan Regional Parks System is made up of 10 park implementing agencies consisting of six county park departments, three city park departments, and the Park District.

The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning agency that oversees and provides partial funding of the acquisition, development, and operation of the regional parks and trail system. The Metropolitan Council and implementing agencies also develop regional park policies to protect the region’s water quality; promote best management practices; and help integrate the parks system with housing, transportation, and other regional priorities.

The Metropolitan Council provides guidance in the development of regional park and trail master plans. The Baker/Carver Regional Trail Master Plan reflects that guidance. Each regional park or trail must have a master plan approved by the

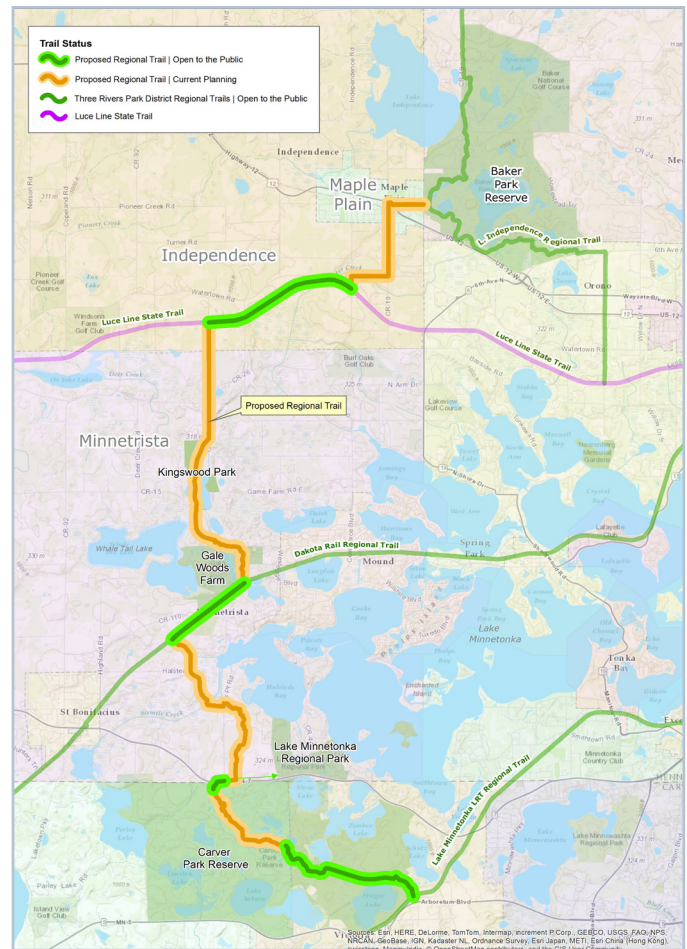


Figure 2
Baker/Carver Regional Trail Alignment & Status

Source: Three Rivers Park District

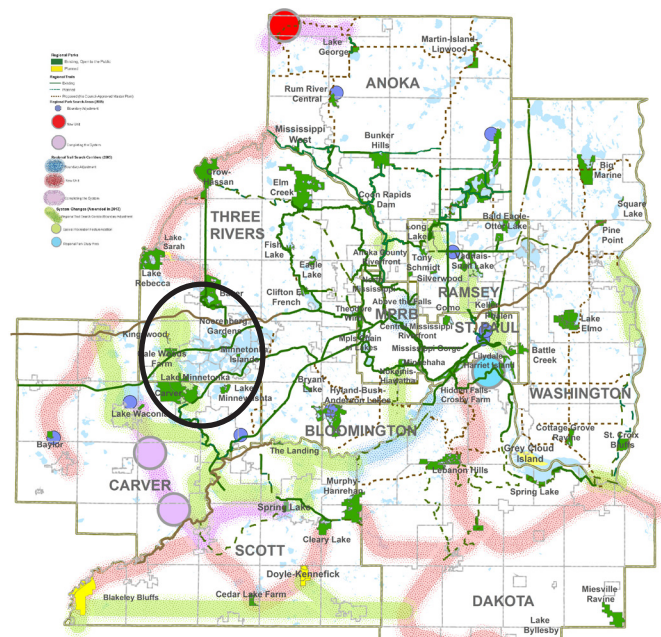


Figure 3
Metropolitan Regional Parks System Update

Baker/Carver Regional Trail is identified by the black circle.
 Source: Metropolitan Council - 2030 Regional Policy Plan

Metropolitan Council prior to receiving Metropolitan Council funding. The master plan must address boundaries and acquisition, demand, development concept, implementation schedule, development and operational costs, and natural resources. Public input is encouraged throughout the master planning process. The Metropolitan Council's planning requirements help ensure consistency between the implementing agencies' and their own regional plans.

Three Rivers Park District

The Park District is an independent, special park district charged with the responsibilities of acquisition, development, and maintenance of regional park reserves, parks, special recreation features, and trails for the benefit and use of the citizens of suburban Hennepin County, the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area, and the State of Minnesota. The Park District works cooperatively with local communities, counties, public agencies, the Metropolitan Council, and the State Legislature.

The Park District's mission is to promote environmental stewardship through recreation and education in a natural resources-based park system. The Park District was established in 1957 by the Minnesota State Legislature when prominent members of the community promoted the benefits of parks in the outlying areas of Hennepin County. Since its inception, the Park District has grown to serve more than 10 million annual visitors through access to 26,500 acres of park reserves, regional parks, special recreation features, and 120 miles of regional trails.

Regional Trail Planning Guidelines

The Park District manages its lands under four categories of regional open space: regional park reserves, regional parks, regional special recreation features, and regional trail corridors.

Regional trail corridors, such as the Baker/Carver Regional Trail, are intended to provide recreational travel along linear pathways that transcend multiple jurisdictions and may or may not also serve a transportation component. In addition, regional trails follow criteria established by the Metropolitan Council and Park District:

- Regional trail corridors are carefully selected to follow natural or cultural linear features with scenic appeal and/or historical, architectural and developmental interest, connect people with places, help create a sense of place amongst the greater community, intersect with local trail, sidewalk, and bicycle networks, provide access to mass transit, and link components of the regional park system together.
- Regional trails may function as a destination or linking regional trail or both:
 - Destination regional trails are developed as greenways or linear parks, and are distinct in that the trail itself is a destination. This type of regional trail typically is an independent facility and includes a wide corridor providing opportunities for improving wildlife habitat, protecting natural/cultural resources, and providing recreational opportunities.
 - Linking regional trails serve a greater transportation function and act as the backbone to the regional trail system by connecting the regional park system to itself and the people it serves in a logical and efficient manner.
- For either regional trail type, adjacent land with significant natural or cultural resources may be acquired as part of the trail corridor.

Baker/Carver Regional Trail will serve as both a destination and linking function; however, its primary function is that of a destination trail as the Baker/Carver Regional Trail is routed and intended to be developed in a manner to integrate natural resources, expansive viewsheds, and open space within the trail corridor.

In the future, a formal trail name will be considered for the Baker/Carver Regional Trail that portrays its unique destination qualities and provides contextual relationship for visitors.

This page left intentionally blank