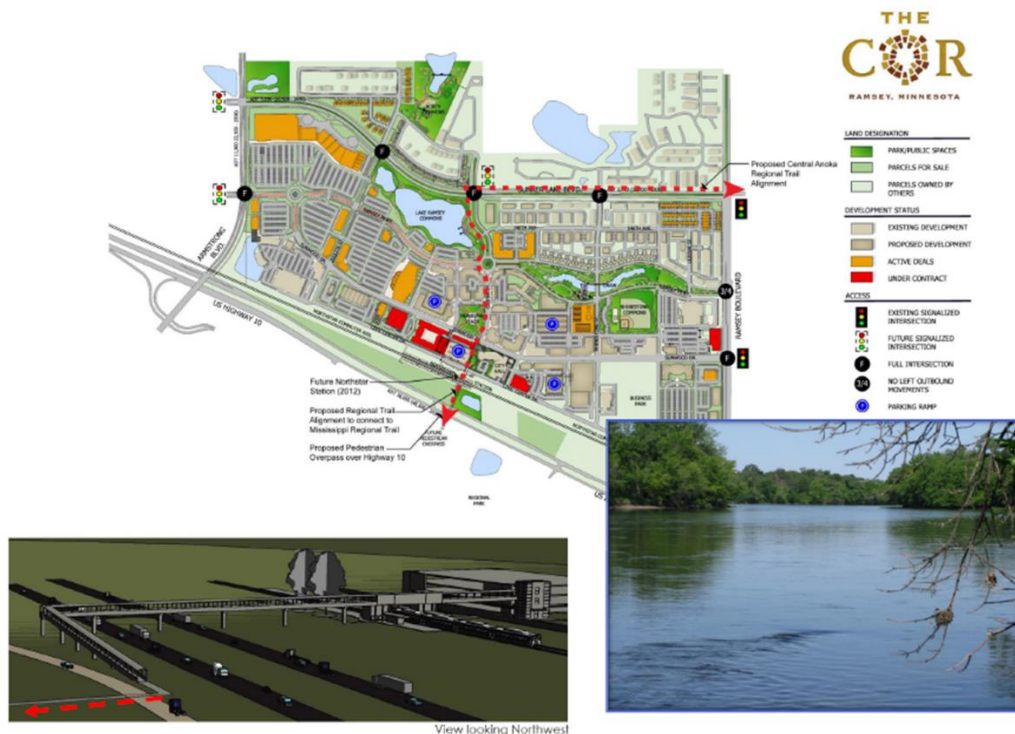


Recommended Action Outcomes of the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

In order for the *Thrive MSP 2040* plan to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous metropolitan region, three interrelated trail initiatives in Anoka County should be investigated to improve regional connectivity, access and sustainability.

Central Anoka County Trail and connection to Mississippi West Regional Park

The approved Metropolitan Council plan for Mississippi West Regional Park shows an elevated pedestrian crossing of U.S. Hwy's #10 & #169 as one of the phased improvements to the park. Following the first phase of the park's development, the boat landing and river access in 2010; the Northstar rail station was completed in Ramsey and placed in service north of the regional park, but separated by the highway. The pedestrian bridge known as the 'Mississippi Skyway' should be the next phase of the parks development, and when complete, the Central Anoka County Trail may be realigned to within the pedestrian oriented development known as The COR, or Center of Ramsey - and effectively connected to the regional park. The exhibit below shows the proposed trail corridor in a red dashed line.



Considerable investments in regional improvements converge in this location, including the \$13 million dollar rail station, with \$1.1 million dollar pedestrian skyway over Veteran's Drive, \$8 million dollar covered transit and parking facility, as well as approximately one half million in boat landing and river access improvements. Additionally, the Mississippi River Regional Trail is under construction from the City of Anoka, through the City of Ramsey and into the park depicted below. The trail together with two bridges on the 80-acre King's Island represents over one million dollars in bike facilities that are also a key component of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.



It is this inter-jurisdictional trail with multi-modal connections and host of retail services that make this pedestrian bridge the nexus of regional systems and destinations, and merits the concurrent alignment of the Central Anoka County Trail at such time the elevated highway crossing is in place. The following highlights outcomes of an aligned regional trail with a grade-separated pedestrian crossing of Hwy's #10 & #169 and railroad corridor.



Mississippi River at the regional park

Stewardship

Mississippi West Regional Park possesses a bounty of natural resources, including woodland habitats, restored native prairie, and a segment of the Nation’s most prominent river with Wild and Scenic designation. Advancing multi-modal connections to the park for the region’s residents and visitors is a strategic investment that makes available these rich natural assets for those who choose not to travel by automobile. Broadening access to these regional amenities exposes people to the intrinsic beauty of the park and river, and thus builds support for on-going stewardship of natural resources and the environment.



Workforce Housing in The COR, completed in 2013

Prosperity

Investment in the pedestrian overpass will make the commercial and retail areas on both sides of Hwy's #10 & #169 more attractive to quality business that are concerned with quality of life for their employees in terms of the ability to walk during break periods to and from the park. In addition, improved connection to the trail systems the bridge will provide for, allows a greater proportion of the workforce to commute without an automobile and expands transit access – both of which enhance economic competitiveness.



Rail and bus service can provide access to the natural-resource based Mississippi West Regional Park from the urban cities

Equity

The transit-oriented development known as The COR includes a mix of residential housing choices for people of all incomes. Providing a ‘means’ to access Mississippi West Regional Park sans an automobile also means creating real choices in where residents may live, travel and recreate. The grade-separated pedestrian crossing of the highway and rail line creates the nexus between housing, transportation and recreation, and thus leverages multiple investments to build a more equitable region.



Increasingly, people are using the Northstar Commuter Rail to expand recreational access to the region’s parks and trails

Livability

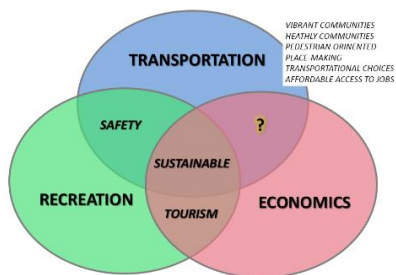


U.S. Hwy's #10 & #169 can be a barrier to accessing Nature associated with the regional park and trail on the south side of the highway. Livability is enhanced by *one* connecting piece of infrastructure – the pedestrian crossing and bicycle facility. This will provide transportation choices, and access to Nature and outdoor experiences for a range of the region's demographic and economic make-up. The COR is by design, pedestrian-oriented as well as transit-oriented. Aligning resources (the pedestrian bridge), supports walkable places and promotes healthy communities and active living.



Sustainability

The Mississippi Skyway exemplifies sustainability as bicycles will always be an efficient means of short trips – made more effective especially with the proposed bridge's physical connection to the commuter rail station. With a 100-plus year lifespan, the facility will help to ensure regional vitality for generations to come. This also adds and preserves capacity for all the public and private investments it connects to, thereby quite literally investing in the future.



Integration

The pedestrian facility will be the embodiment of the intentional combining of related activities and infrastructure to achieve more effective results in coordinating the way people travel, commute, work and play. The bike and ped bridge will be an example of the Council effectively working with partners and stakeholders throughout the region to prioritize a project that will have multiple benefits.





Collaboration

The Mississippi Skyway, with its direct connection to the National Mississippi River Trail and U.S. Bikeway #45 - when completed with a realigned Central Anoka County Trail, will be an unequalled example of collaboration in advancing the region most effectively towards shared outcomes. The pedestrian bridge is an expensive facility, no single entity has the capacity to fund it alone, and therefore a *shared* strategy is truly in the region's interest. Indeed, it is the Metropolitan Council's mission to foster these partnerships and reciprocal relationships to address regional opportunities and solutions.

Accountability and Additional Directives



*Ramsey Station, October 2014:
People use the rail and bus service for commuting, efficient access to the airport, as well a connection to the region's trail systems*

Identifying the proposed pedestrian bridge over U.S. Hwy's #10 & #169 as a priority for the regional partners to secure Federal funding; fulfills the Council's mission of an equitable return on investments across the geographic region. This positions the Council, the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, regional park agencies, municipalities, the National Park Service, and state partners to effectively collaborate on:

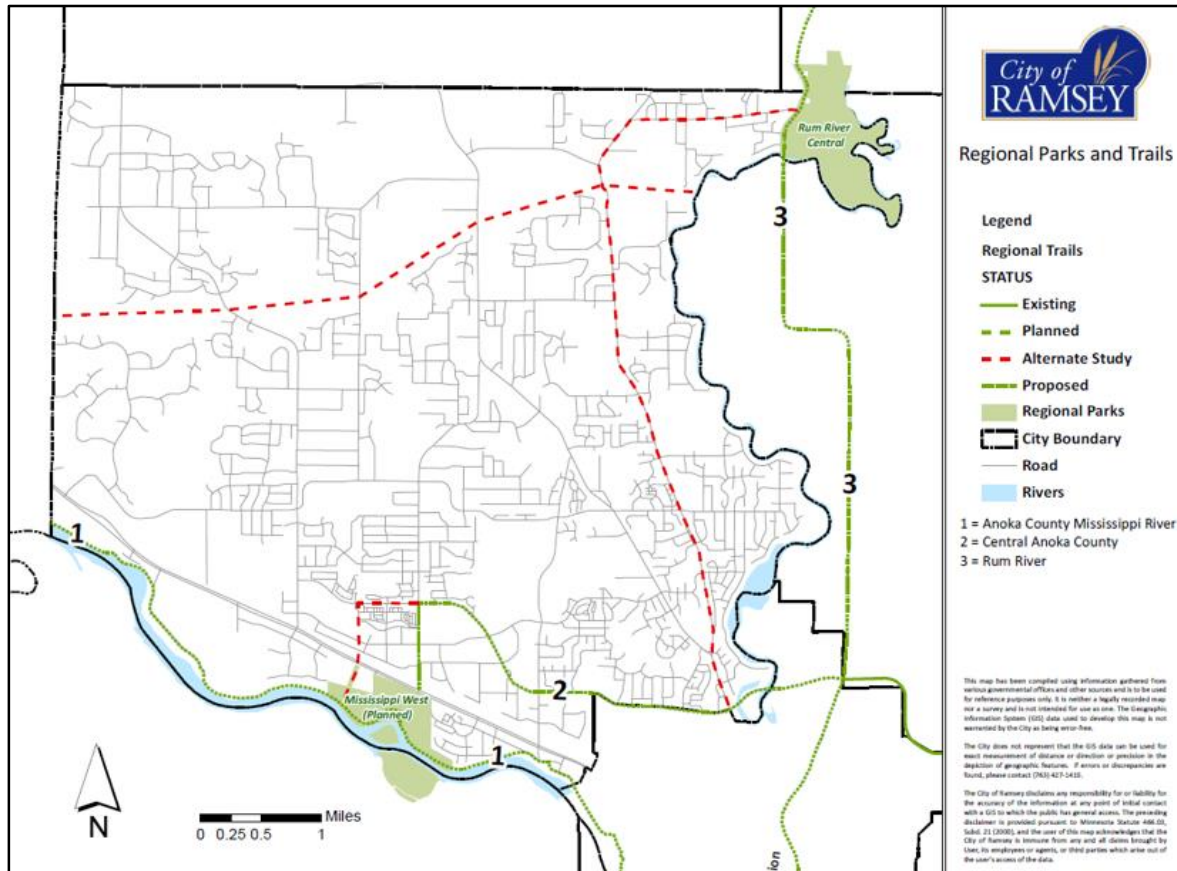
~ Expanding the Regional Parks System to conserve, maintain, and connect natural resources identified as being of high quality or having regional importance, as identified in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

~ Provides a comprehensive regional park and trail system that preserves high quality natural resources, increases climate resiliency, fosters healthy outcomes, connects communities, and enhances quality of life in the region

~ Promotes expanded multimodal access to regional parks, regional trails, the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, and the transit network, and as such, strengthens equitable usage of regional parks and trails by all our region's residents - across age, race, ethnicity, income, national origin, and abilities



In concluding, the Alternate Alignment Study would explore moving this future connection/regional trail from Ramsey Boulevard to a connection point at the rail station (#2 from green to the red dashed line below).

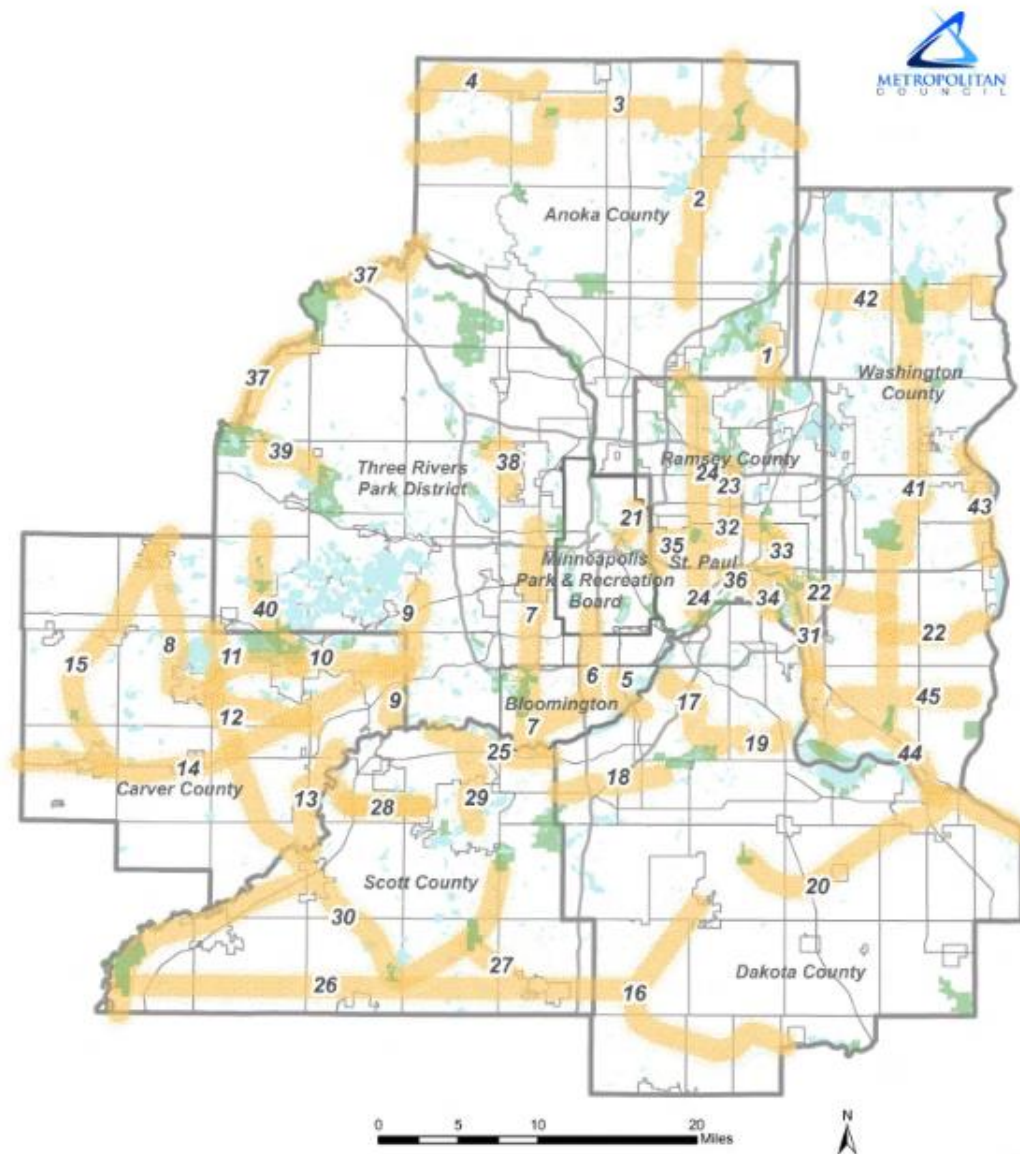


The proposed 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, Chapter Four: Policy and Strategies, cites, “Bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be coordinated between the Regional Parks System and the transportation system”. The proposal above meets this objective, and addresses the multitude of meaningful *Thrive Outcomes and Principles*.

Add the Trott Brook Greenway as a Regional Trail to connect Rum River Central Regional Park

The proposed 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, Chapter Three identifies 'Regional Search Corridors', including one entitled 'North Anoka County' generally designated as number three on Figure 3-9.

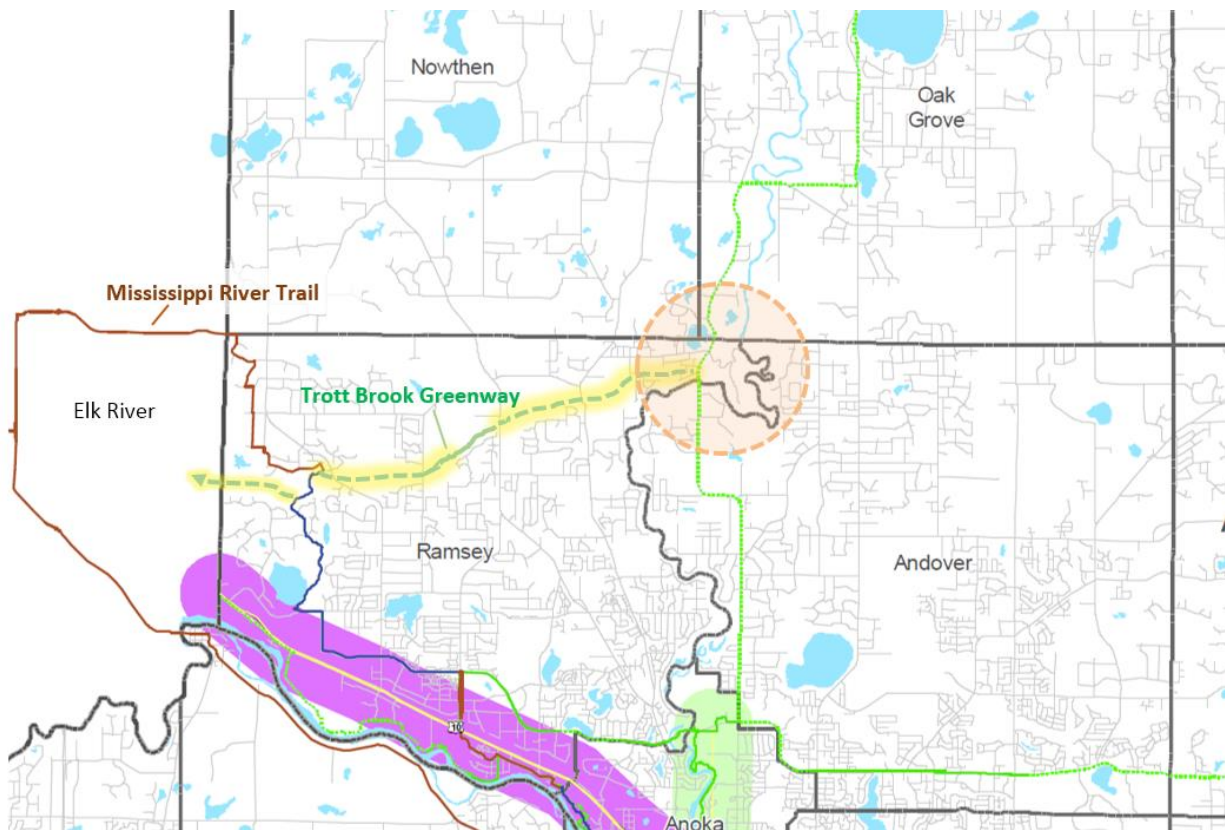
Figure 3-9. Regional Trail Search Corridor Map



The introduction of Regional Trails within Chapter 3 states: “...regional trails are selected to pass through or provide connections between components in the Regional Parks System. The regional parks and park reserves perform the important function of providing places for parking, comfort facilities and safe water supplies.

Trails also are selected for their ability to intersect with local trail networks, with the regional trails functioning much like regional highways that interconnect with more local arterials and local streets”.

In keeping with the above statement and intent; the west portion of Search Corridor 3 should be investigated to ascertain if it is prudent to connect to the only regional park in this area. By aligning the proposed, search area trail south to Rum River Regional Park, it also then intersects with the east/west Trott Brook Greenway. Additionally, this connects the Four-corner sub-regional center (depicted by the circle below) of Nowthen, Oak Grove, Andover and Ramsey to the Mississippi River Trail, a Regional Park, Wild and Scenic Rum River, and proposed Rum River Regional Trail.



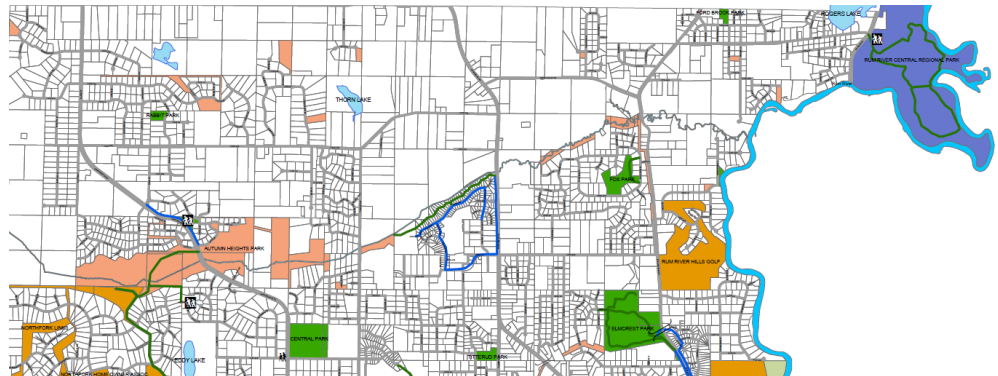


The quarter-mile Lake Itasca Boardwalk provides access to the stream

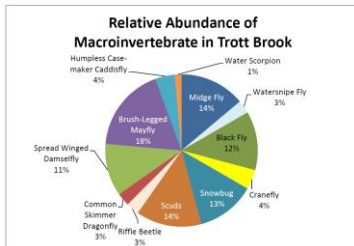


DNR electro-fishing at Trott Brook to survey existing fish populations

Significant tracts of land have been acquired along Trott Brook for the greenway and trail, including a \$500,000 investment by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources for conservation and trail easements. Trott Brook runs west to east within the area below.



A proposal exists for habitat improvements and the stocking of trout within the brook – if this is found to be feasible, this would provide a rare opportunity in the Metropolitan area, and a unique recreational opportunity with significant tourism and favorable economic impacts. The MN DNR has placed data loggers in Trott Brook (2013) to collect the thermo profile of the stream to better understand the streams suitability as a fishery – and a report has identified the brook as potential as a trout fishing stream for the Metro. Trails and public lands along the brook are synergistic with fishing and multi-uses of the greenway.

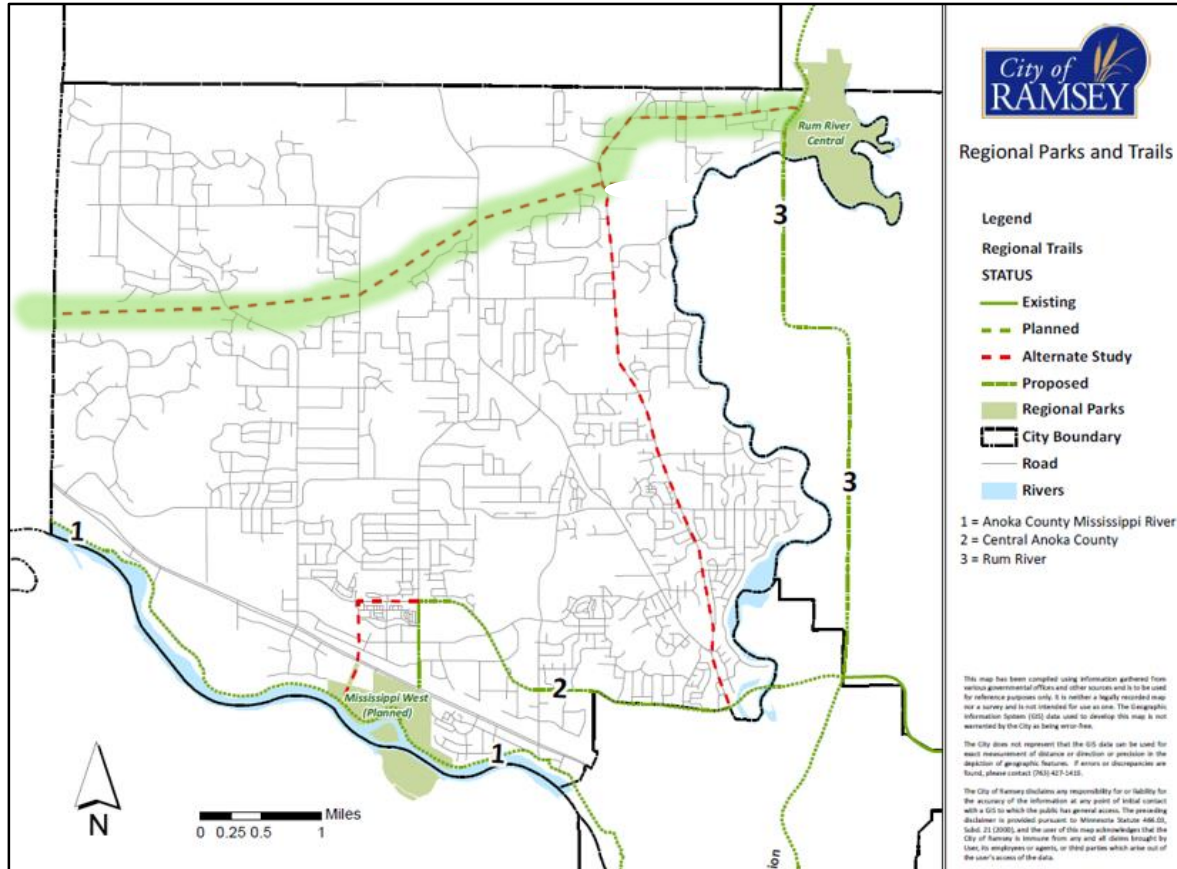


*Excerpt from the 22-page report: **Assessing the Ability to Bring Trout Fishing to the North Metro Area through Stream Quality Assessments and the Summarization of the Economic Impact of Anglers***



Fish sampling in 2012

In concluding, this proposal would recommend that the Trott Brook Greenway be considered as a Regional Trail, fulfilling the east/west Regional Search Corridor goals, as aligned generally and depicted below.



The proposed 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, Chapter Four: Siting and Acquisition – Strategy 3, cites, “New regional trails must serve a regional audience and provide connection between regional parks, park preserves, and regional trails without duplicating an existing trail.” The proposal above meets this objective, by connecting Rum River Central Regional Park to the proposed Rum River Regional Trail (west of the river, as described below) and does not duplicate an existing trail.

Moreover, by designating the Trott Brook Greenway as a regional trail, it will function as described by the Council “...two major types of trails to serve the region: 1) destination or greenway trails and 2) linking trails”. The trail would be destination, and one significant linkage would be the Mississippi River Trail in Ramsey, with its connection to the west in Elk River and subsequent link to the Great Northern Trail.

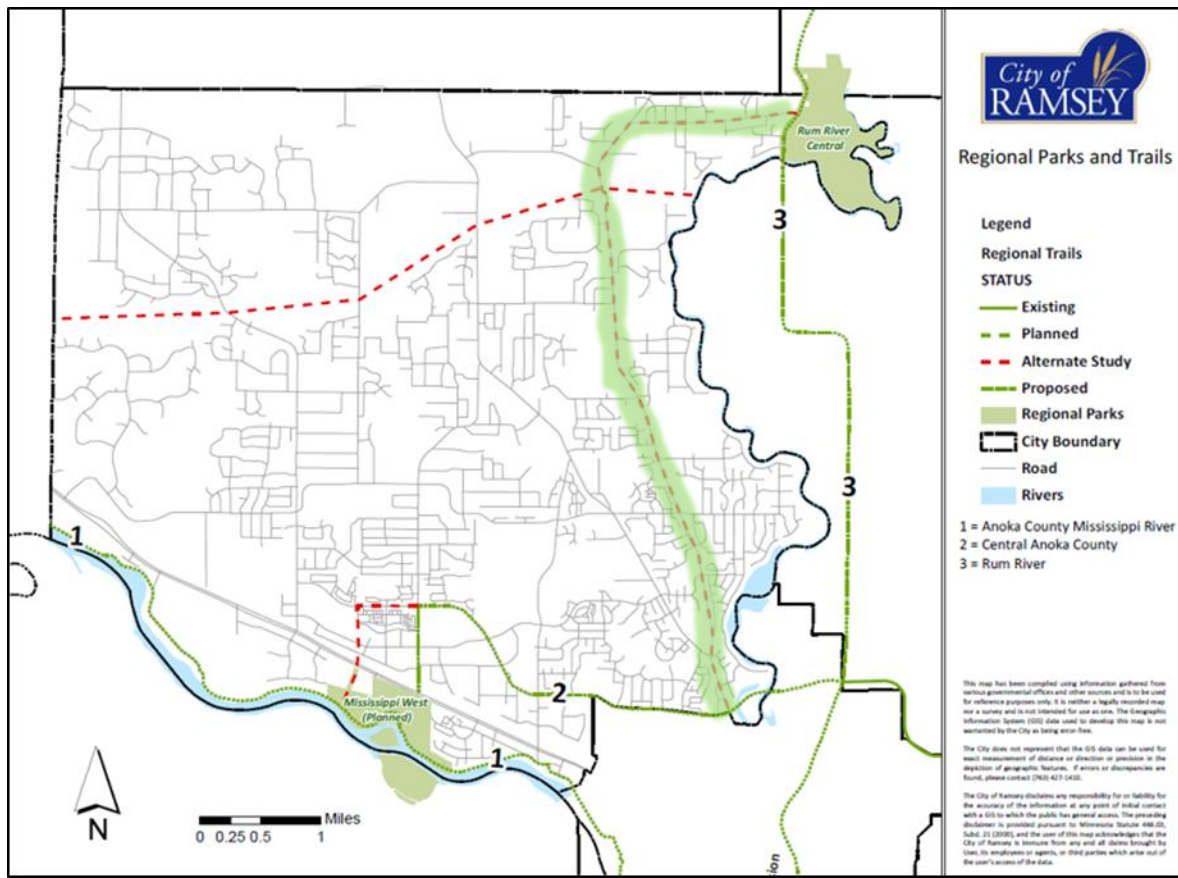


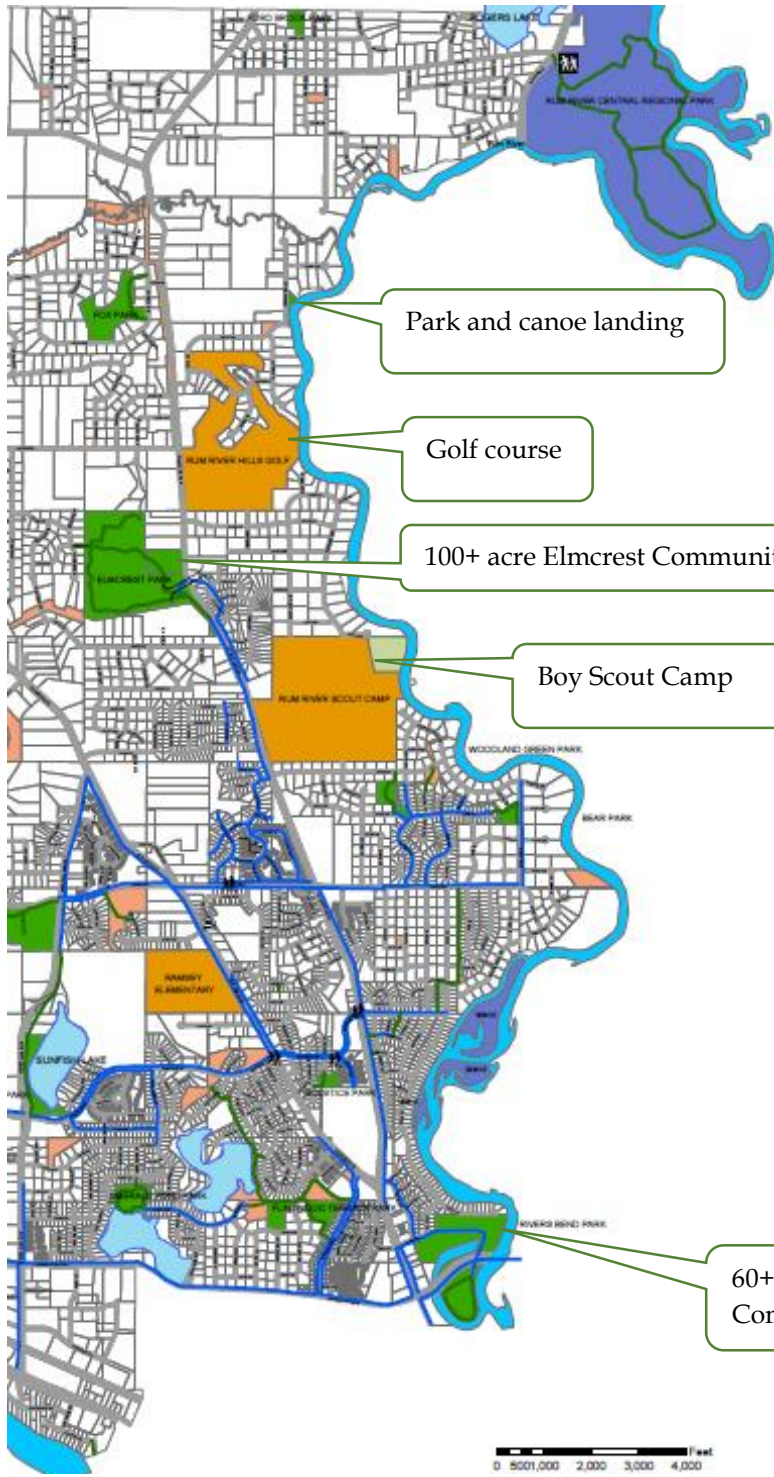
Boardwalk and bituminous trail within the Trott Brook Greenway

Consider Realigning the Rum River Regional Trail to the west side of the river corridor

The exhibit below identifies the proposed Rum River Regional Trail as number 3 between the Central Anoka County Trail (at Bunker Lake Boulevard) and Rum River Central Park. None of the trail is in place, and presumably the intention would be for it to be constructed in the ROW of CSAH #7. CSAH #7 does have striped bike lanes on each side however.

In that there is significant and continuous trail in place on the west side of the river in Ramsey, this proposal recommends an Alternative Alignment Study to see if it is in all jurisdiction's interest to shift the Rum river Regional Trail alignment to the west.





Park and canoe landing

Golf course

100+ acre Elmcrest Community

Boy Scout Camp

60+ acre Rivers' Bend Community Park

Legend	
Park_Map_symbols	trails
Map Symbols	Existing Trails
	Off-Road System
	On-Road (Within ROW)
	rightofway
	Park - Open
	TYPE
	PARKS
	OPEN SPACE/ TRAIL CORRIDOR
	PROPOSED PARK
	QUASI-PUBLIC
	REGIONAL

0 500 1,000 2,000 3,000 4,000 feet



Illustration of the new completed one million dollar Elmcrest Park Community Building with public restrooms



In addition to many more parks and recreation facilities on the west side of the Rum River than the east, there is an area of retail services (restaurants etc.) that are presently accessed by trails on both sides of T. H. #47 north of the Central Anoka County Regional Trail at Bunker Lake Boulevard.

Within the **Linking Regional Trails** definitions in the 2040 Policy Plan, indicates that: “*Visitor origin data from the Council’s 2008 Regional Parks and Trails Survey indicate that regional trails in the metropolitan area are used most by people who live nearby or can reach the trail in a short bicycle trip or drive. Therefore, a priority is to develop more trail corridors in the Metropolitan Urban Service Area, where more than 90% of the population lives*”.



Ramsey has many thousands of residents in the Metropolitan Urban Service Area within 1.5 miles of the proposed, realigned Rum River Regional Trail, where in Andover conversely, there are few homes that are in the MUSA, and within 1.5 miles.

In concluding, the Alternate Alignment Study would explore moving this proposed regional trail from the east side of the river to the west (#3 from green to the red dashed line west of the Rum River above).

Catch and release Smallmouth fishing in the rain at Ramsey’s canoe landing