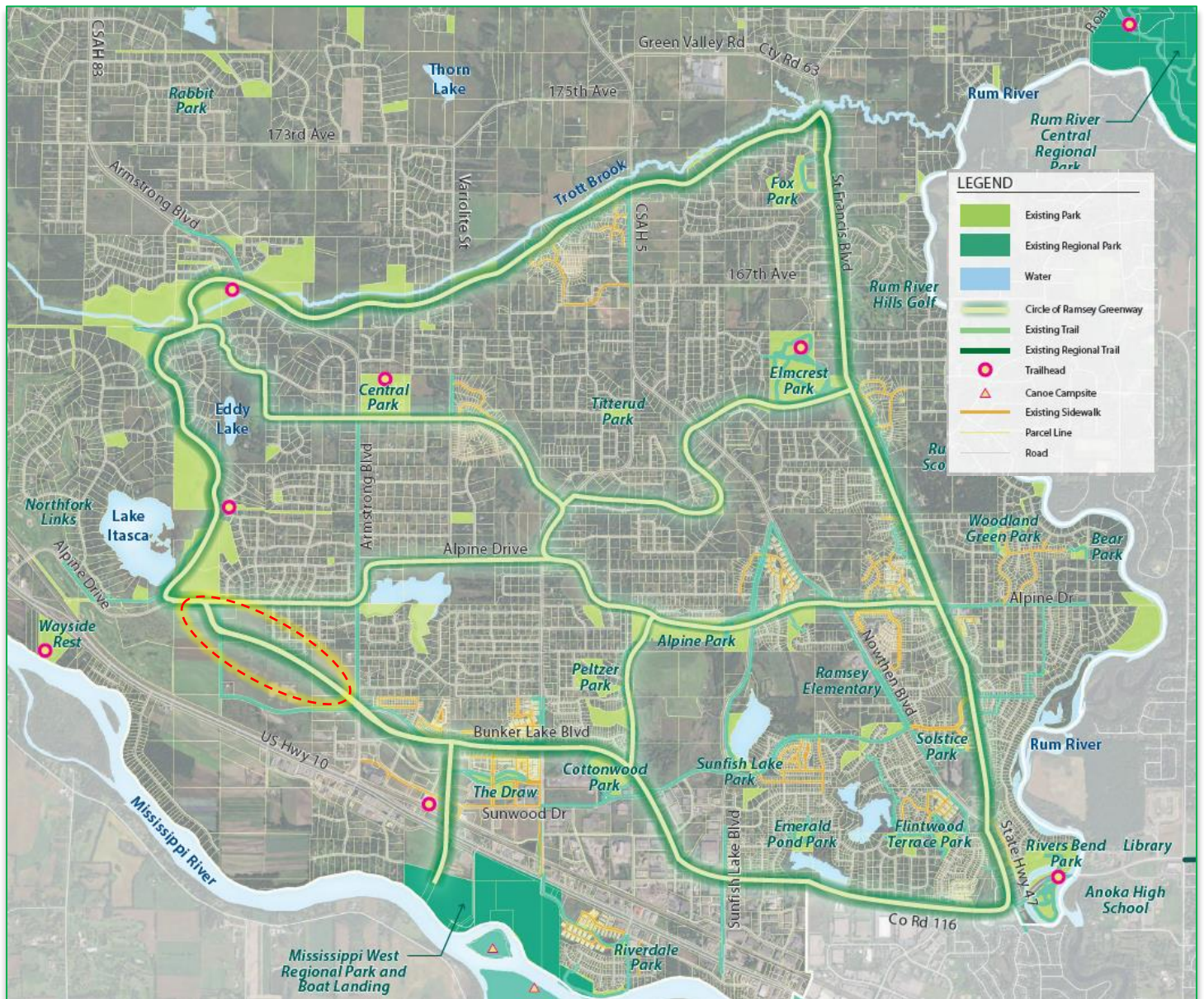


Questions and Summary Responses on the Proposed Lake Itasca Greenway

What is the Lake Itasca Greenway and its purpose?

A greenway is defined as a “*protected natural area that connects developed, esp. urban, areas, often providing trails for bicycling, hiking, etc.*” For the City of Ramsey, the Lake Itasca Greenway is a significant element of a city-wide greenway that will favorably encircle the community, connecting parks, people, their neighborhoods and destinations.



The Greenway, referred to as the ‘Circle of Ramsey’ is depicted above, with primary connecting greenway ‘spokes’ within – together, these are the priority trails planned for the community.

The vision for the Lake Itasca Greenway will add multiple values to all adjoining areas. This will be the inviting pastoral trail route for residents in western Ramsey to access The COR, to be the 'butts-in-seats' that help to promote retail development – and conversely, the corridor will be the preferred trail means for a couple thousand residents in and around The COR to access the natural resources and the park amenities of the Lake Itasca Community Park.



Additionally, one of the top priorities the City continues to hear from residents – most notably from the last year of community engagement, as part the Comprehensive Plan update is; *'maintain some open space and work to protect a feeling of rural character'*. The city-wide greenway plan is part of the strategy to meet this goal, with the proposed Lake Itasca Greenway an essential element of this, in an area with notable development pressures.

Another priority heard from residents city-wide, is the preservation of open space for wildlife and nature. The greenway plan encompasses the community and will connect residents to this resource –and at the same help to maintain biodiversity and prevent habitat fragmentation locally.

Is it unusual to acquire a greenway or trail as part of the 'Public Benefit' of a Planned Unit Development?

Perhaps the most well-known and utilized trail in the City of Ramsey is the Lake Itasca Trail, traversing a couple miles from near Lake Itasca, north to and across Trott Brook to 167th Avenue and the adjoining neighborhood. This trail and 75' foot wide protected corridor (greenway) was acquired as part of the platting of the North Fork Planned Unit Development, in the late 1980's.

Is the proposed Lake Itasca Greenway just a way to accommodate greater densities by justifying a Planned Unit Development.?

No. This trail route along the linear wetland has been identified for decades as part of the Master Park and Trail Plan, which is included within the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Accepting the land from the Developer for the proposed trail makes sense, but the wetland, isn't it already protected from development?

Wetlands have certain protections from filling, but through permitting may be impacted or replaced elsewhere. If the City were to acquire the wetland, the ecosystem is assured to remain intact and contiguous. Further, if in the public domain, the City with other conservation partners, can enhance the functioning and diversity of the wetland's plant community which would benefit pollinators and many other organisms.

Can't the City just wait for development north of Bunker Lake Boulevard, and obtain the desired Lake Itasca Greenway at that time?

Park Dedication has already been satisfied for the area between Bunker Lake Boulevard and the wetland area for *a certain zoning and land use*. If future development is the same as this zoning designation, or the land use is of lesser intensity, the greenway could not be taken through the Park Dedication process of the subdivision of land.

Further, Park Dedication is only 'triggered' when land is subdivided – if the land is sold and built on without subdividing, the City cannot require certain development fees nor land dedication.

Another aspect of 'holding-out' for a *possible* greenway acquisition through the Park Dedication process, is that the land north of Bunker Lake Boulevard may be developed in increments, and not all future owners may be willing to concede to land dedication, versus a cash payment to satisfy Park Dedication (*if* any would be due).

Lastly, there is no known subdivision plans at this time for the area north of Bunker Lake Blvd. The area could remain in its existing conditions without the ability for the City to begin constructing the trail element of the Lake Itasca Greenway for years, conceivably a decade or more.