

# Central Anoka County Regional Trail

Master Plan Amendment

2018





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# Central Anoka County Regional Trail

## Master Plan Amendment

### Introduction

The proposed Central Anoka County Regional Trail is a 26 - mile paved regional trail that traverses the middle of the county connecting Mississippi West Regional Park in Ramsey, MN to Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve in Lino Lakes and Centerville, MN. The trail master plan was first adopted by the Anoka County Board of Commissioners in 1999 and then expanded to the Washington County line in 2008.

The most recent amendment identified the trail alignment between Hanson Boulevard and Highway 65 in the Cities of Andover and Ham Lake. A portion of this trail alignment was constructed as part of the Anoka County Highway CSAH 116 reconstruction project. Included with the trail construction was a pedestrian underpass to allow safe passage under Bunker Lake Boulevard and into Bunker Hills Regional Park. To date, approximately 18.5 miles of the 26 mile-trail have been constructed.

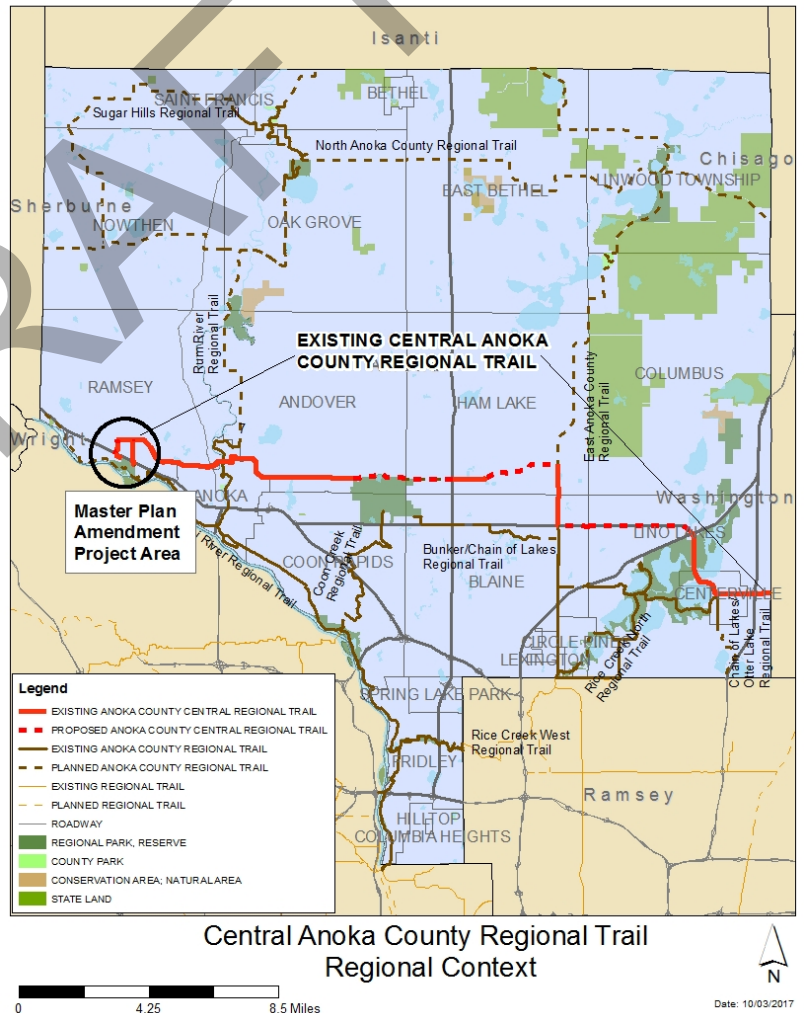


Figure 1

## Central Anoka County Regional Trail



This master plan amendment addresses a segment of trail located in the City of Ramsey, as shown in Figure 1 and 2. In 2017, the City of Ramsey requested the County to change the trail alignment from its existing route along Ramsey Boulevard to align with Center Street, the Ramsey Northstar Station, a proposed pedestrian overpass over Highway 10, and ultimately connect to Mississippi West Regional Park, the Mississippi River and the Mississippi River Trail, a federally designated bike route (U.S. Bike Route 45). In addition, the trail is proposed to connect to the Mississippi National River Recreation Area.

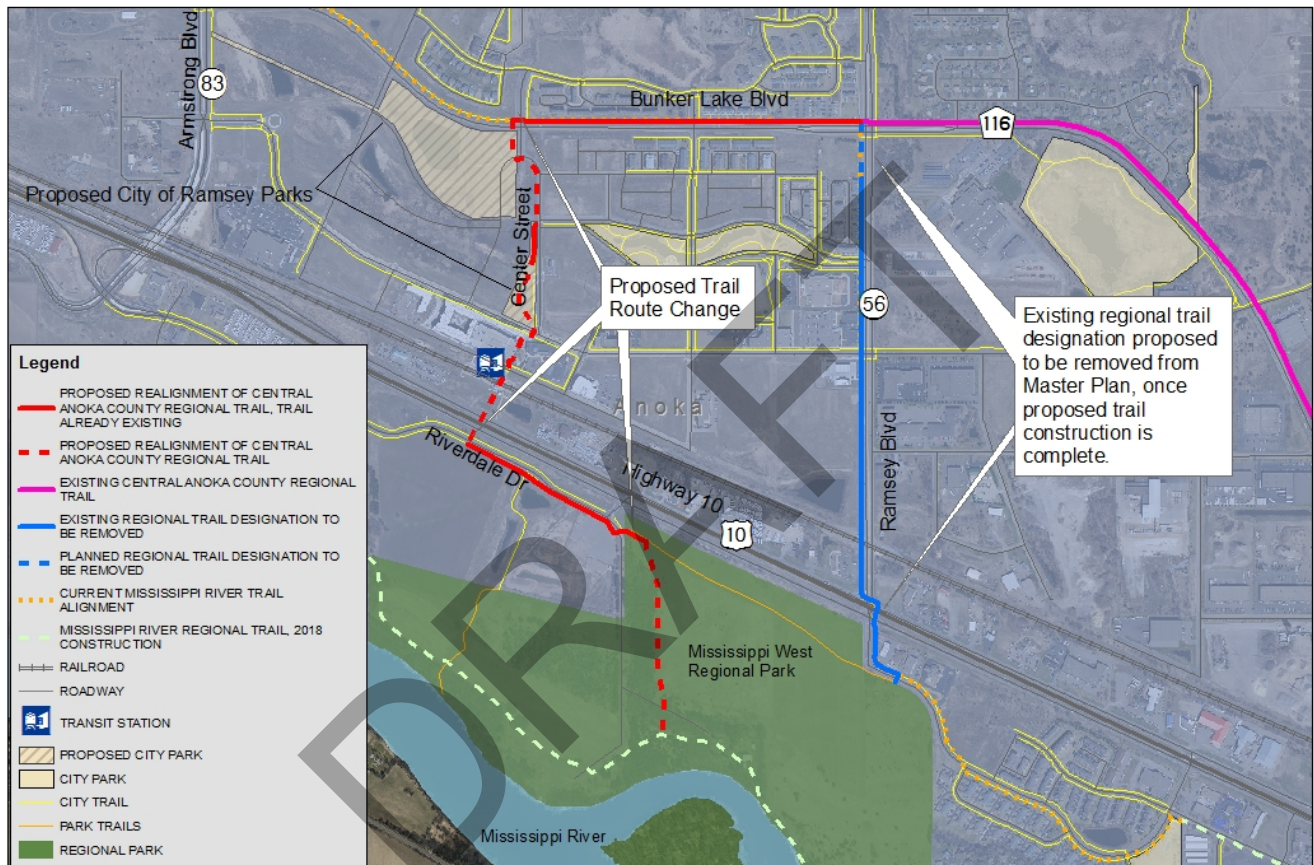


Figure 2

### *Boundaries and Acquisition*

The majority of the proposed change to the Central Anoka County Regional Trail segment discussed in this master plan amendment is already existing within the road right of way. Where the trail does not currently exist, the City of Ramsey owns the right of way or has an easement for regional trail purposes. The value of said easement is approximately \$100,000. Prior to construction of the trail, a



Joint Powers Agreement will outline and confirm use of the city owned right-of-way and easements for regional trail use. Therefore, no acquisition costs related to this trail change will be required.

## *Demand Forecast*

Overall, demand for parks, trails and recreational opportunities have been on the rise over the past several years. In 2016, according to the Outdoor Foundation's Topline Report<sup>1</sup>, nearly half of all Americans or 144 million Americans participated in at least one outdoor activity. This number is up from 2010, when there was only 137.9 million participants. The increase in participants is indicative of an increase recreational demand.

Looking at the metropolitan regional area, according to the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, the metropolitan region is expected to gain over 850,000 residents between 2010 and 2040, for an estimated total population of over 3.7 million people in 2040. Anoka County's population is expected to grow approximately 30-35% between 2010 and 2040, with a total population estimate of 440,420 in 2040<sup>2</sup>. The City of Ramsey's population is anticipated to grow from 23,668 in 2010 to 34,700 in 2040. There are still many undeveloped tracts of land within the City that will allow the City to continue to grow. The increase in population throughout the metropolitan area, Anoka County and the City will only increase demand for recreational opportunities and for trail gaps to be filled.

While the current gaps in the trail may deter some use, the Central Anoka County Regional Trail did have approximately 95,000 visits in 2016. When additional segments are completed, that will create more recreational opportunities and provide additional connectivity through the cities and county. The use estimates for Anoka County show that regional trail use has almost doubled from 583,500 visits in 2009<sup>3</sup> to over 1.2 million visits in 2016, further illustrating the increasing demand for trails.<sup>4</sup>

It is anticipated that the number of visitors to this particular trail segment will grow substantially once it's complete due to the proximity of the trail to the large numbers of planned residential homes near it, the proximity to commuters and the Northstar Rail Station, as well as the existing residential, business and entertainment land uses nearby. The average weekday Northstar Line ridership for 2016 was just over 2500 people.

Lastly, while the portion of Central Anoka County Regional Trail discussed in this master plan amendment is not on the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN), it is proposed to connect to a Tier 1 Priority Regional Bicycle Transportation Corridor, the state and federal designated Mississippi

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<sup>1</sup> Outdoor Foundation's 2017 Topline Report on Outdoor Recreation Participation in 2016

<sup>2</sup> Metropolitan Council's Thrive 2040 MSP – Local Forecasts as of September 1, 2017

<sup>3</sup> Metropolitan Council's Annual Use Estimate of the Metropolitan Regional Parks System for 2009, April 2010

<sup>4</sup> Metropolitan Council's Annual Use Estimate of the Metropolitan Regional Parks System for 2016, July 2017

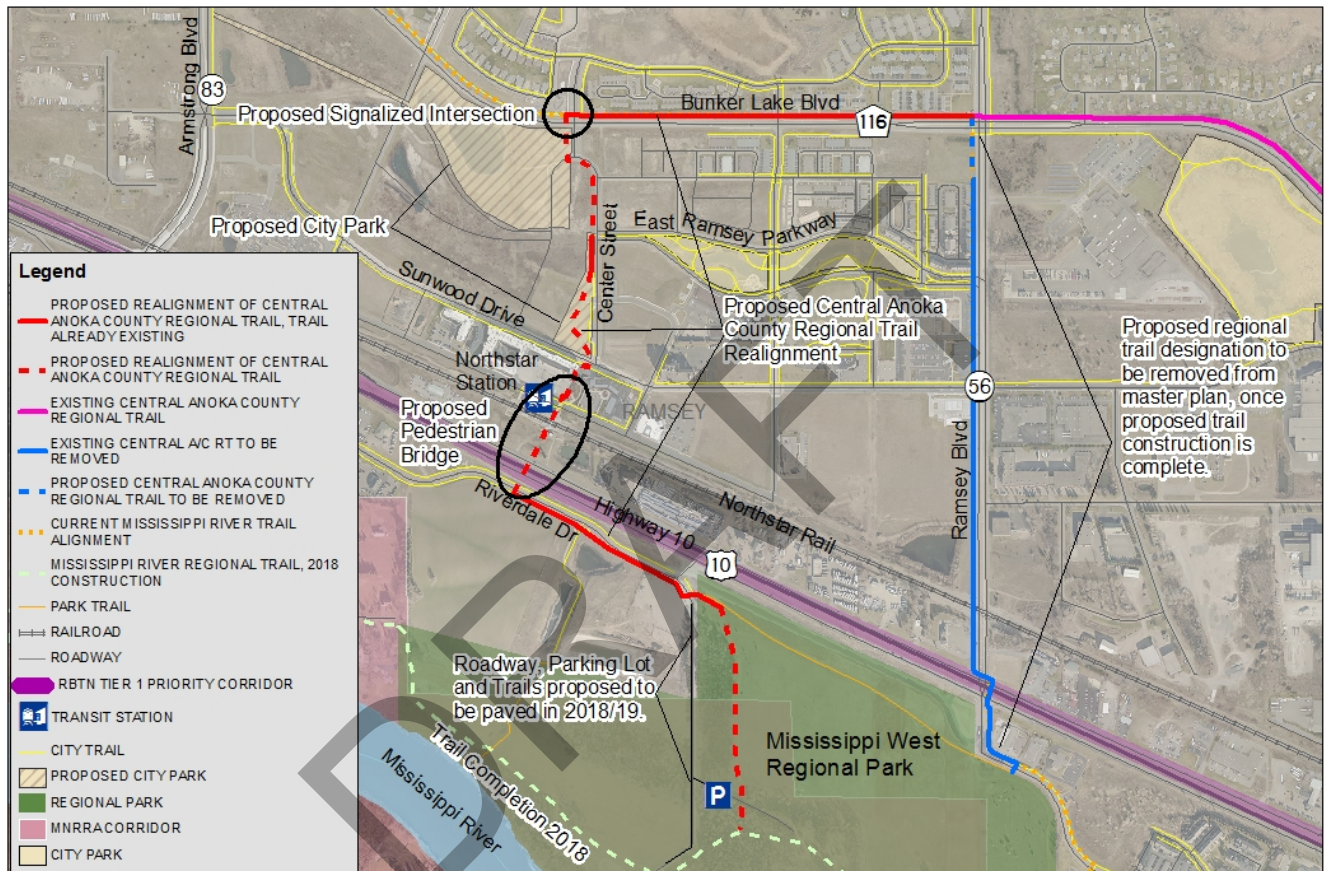
## Central Anoka County Regional Trail



River Trail, which illustrates the importance of regional trails and how they serve to connect transportation systems. See Appendix for map of RBTN network.

### Development Concept

The development concept for the proposed trail realignment in the City of Ramsey is highlighted in Figure 3.



Development Concept for  
Central Anoka County Regional Trail  
Realignment

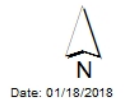
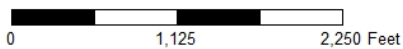


Figure 3

Currently the City of Ramsey has limited access to the Mississippi River and Mississippi West Regional Park because Highway 10 is a large barrier for bicycle and pedestrian access. This amendment proposes to change the alignment of the Central Anoka County Regional Trail within the City of Ramsey to better connect with local parks, trails, restaurants, businesses and transit, while still providing a connection to the river and Mississippi West Regional Park. The current regional trail designation along Ramsey Boulevard is proposed to be removed once the proposed changes, outlined



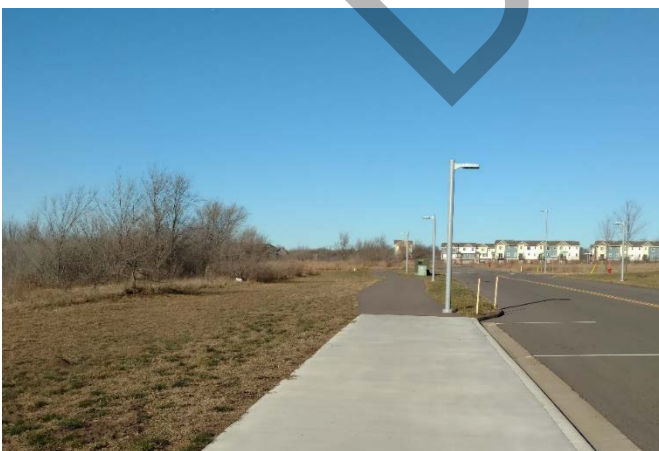
below, have been constructed and a direct connection to Mississippi West Regional Park is made. The existing designated region trail along Ramsey Boulevard was completed when the road was reconstructed so no Metropolitan Council Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program funds or Parks and Trails Legacy program funds were used for the construction of that segment.

While the County debated keeping the existing alignment, the initial input from the public for a safer alternative to the signalized intersection at Ramsey Boulevard and Highway 10, showed the need for a grade separated crossing over Highway 10. Highway 10 is a 55-60 mph high speed road and public input suggested that bicyclists and pedestrians are not comfortable crossing Highway 10 at the signalized intersection. Therefore, a grade separated crossing would be a safer option for bicyclists and pedestrians to access the park and the river.

To eliminate the Highway 10 at grade crossing, the proposed change would shift the regional trail approximately one-half mile to the west along Center Street. At Center Street, the trail is proposed to cross to the south of Bunker Lake Boulevard. At this intersection, the City anticipates a signalized intersection to occur within the next 5-7 years in conjunction with the road being reconstructed. A signalized intersection will provide a safer crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists. Until that time, the City and County will work cooperatively to install a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon or high intensity activated crosswalk (HAWK) system used to stop traffic and allow trail users to cross a high-speed road safely. Once south of Bunker Lake



Proposed PHB or HAWK System Light until Bunker Lake Blvd/Center Street intersection is signalized



Existing segment of bituminous trail and concrete sidewalk. A new bituminous trail will be built separate from the sidewalk when parcel is developed.

Boulevard, the trail is proposed to follow Center Street south to Sunwood Drive. The first 900 feet (approximately), from Bunker Lake Boulevard to East Ramsey Parkway does not exist yet and is proposed to be constructed on the west side of Center Street and paved to a ten-foot width. This section of trail will require a crosswalk. Center Street is a low speed road and a striped crosswalk with advance alert trail crossing signs will notify drivers of the crossing and allow enough time for vehicles to yield to pedestrians.

## Central Anoka County Regional Trail



From East Ramsey Parkway south to Sunwood Drive, the trail is approximately 950' and currently exists as a combination of a 10 foot wide asphalt trail and concrete sidewalk immediately back of curb. Ultimately, the trail will be separated from the sidewalk, which is anticipated to occur in a year or two when the parcel is developed. The 10-foot wide bituminous trail will be constructed as part of a City of Ramsey park. The trail will then tie into the intersection of Center Street and Sunwood Drive.

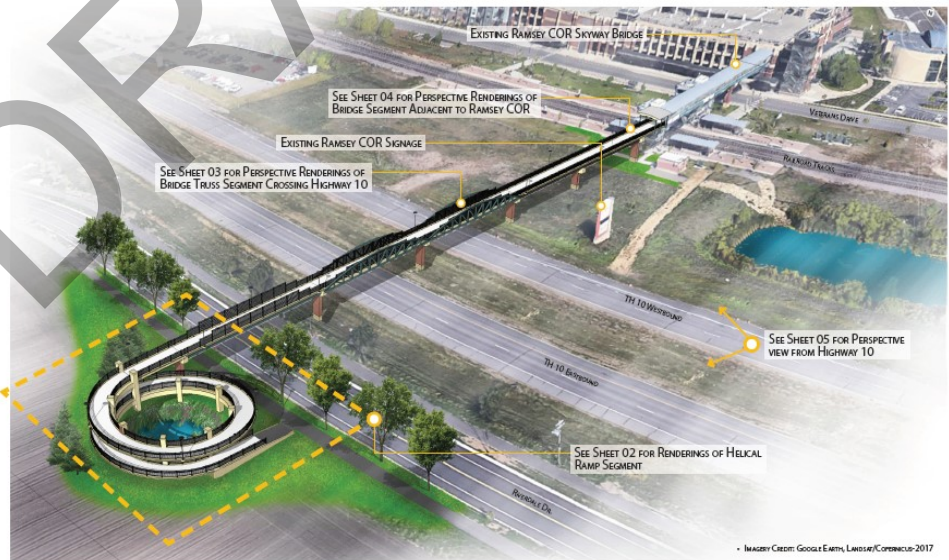
From that point, the trail then crosses Sunwood Drive (30 mph road) via a crosswalk and follows along



the sidewalk of an existing parking ramp for the Northstar Transit Station. It is at this point that bicyclists would be asked to dismount and walk or carry their bikes to the elevator or stairs for the rail station pedestrian bridge or bicyclists could use the adjacent parking ramp to access bridge.

Existing Northstar Transit Station Pedestrian Bridge.

The first section of the pedestrian bridge, within the station, is an enclosed walkway from one platform to the other. Once on the south side of the station, a new 550' long by 12' wide open-air pedestrian bridge is proposed to connect to the enclosed walkway and allow users to cross safely over Highway 10 and Riverdale Drive where a helical ramp will connect them to an existing 10' wide paved trail along Riverdale Drive. At Riverdale Drive, the trail is proposed to follow Riverdale Drive southeast into Mississippi West Regional Park.



Proposed Pedestrian Bridge over Highway 10

**MISSISSIPPI SKYWAY - CITY OF RAMSEY**  
PROPOSED CIRCULAR RAMP @ SOUTH SIDE OF HIGHWAY 10





Once in the park, the proposed 10' wide bituminous trail is proposed to travel south through the park towards the river and connect to the Mississippi River Trail, which is anticipated to be completed in 2018. In addition, the park entrance roadway, a small parking lot and other connector trails are planned for 2018/19.



Figure 4

Wayfinding for the trail will include two different types of signs. One type of sign will be a trailhead sign. These will be located within existing park areas where parking is available to access the trail and will include a map of the area that highlights trail connections and surrounding businesses and amenities. The second type of sign will be a simple directional sign located at decision points and to provide confirmation. These signs may look like Figures 4 and 5. A wayfinding plan is located in the Appendix.



Figure 5

The estimated development costs for this trail segment is approximately \$8.9 million. The pedestrian bridge is estimated to be \$5.6 and the remaining \$3.3 million is for design/engineering, site analysis, survey, trail construction, lighting, signage, and furnishings. The schedule for completion of this trail segment will be in stages as the County and City move forward with development in the area. The connector trail within Mississippi West Regional Park is anticipated to be completed within the next few years and other segments within the City of Ramsey jurisdiction are expected to be completed within 3-5 years.

## Conflicts

The potential conflicts with the trail crossing at the Northstar Rail line and Highway 10 will be avoided by use of the existing pedestrian bridge at the rail station and by a proposed pedestrian bridge that extends from the rail station across Highway 10 and touches down south of Riverdale Drive as outlined in the Development Concept section of this document. Another conflict exists at the intersection of CSAH 116/Bunker Lake Boulevard and Center Street. At this location, a signalized intersection as proposed in the Development Concept will allow safe passage for pedestrians, while a HAWK system is proposed for the short-term.

Other conflicts between the trail and the existing and proposed land uses will be minimal as the proposed trail route is already being planned and incorporated into the City of Ramsey's development plans. Land use maps can be found in the Appendix.



It is anticipated that any other conflicts related to this segment of trail will be kept to a minimum through proper planning and community involvement. Land uses along this segment include residential, industrial and utility, institutional and agriculture. By working closely with the City of Ramsey as development occurs and working with businesses and residents during the design phase of the proposed trail, the County is confident any conflicts that arise will be addressed to all party's satisfaction.

### *Public Services*

A variety of public services are available at points along the entire trail and the proposed route change, therefore no new non-recreational related public services will be required under this master plan amendment. The terminus of the trail is located at Mississippi West Regional Park and while that park is not fully developed yet, a parking lot and portable toilet will be available until facilities are developed, which is anticipated to be about 5-10 years.

### *Operations*

The Anoka County Ordinance, dated January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 regulates parks and trails under the jurisdiction of Anoka County. The County will continue to encourage safe and enjoyable user experiences through education, monitoring and collaboration between the Park Services Unit, local police departments, and the Anoka County Sheriff's Office.

Current practice partners Anoka County with the local cities through either a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) to provide for the maintenance of regional trails. Typically, the MOU or JPA is executed prior to trail construction and outlines what agency is responsible for general routine maintenance of the trail and what agency is responsible for capital improvements to the trail in their jurisdiction.

The County is typically responsible for the routine maintenance of trails within regional or county park lands. This includes such maintenance as mowing, sweeping, plowing, clearing, debris removal, and patching for example. Outside of regional and county park facilities, the local cities are generally responsible for routine trail maintenance. Solid waste is typically collected from trash receptacles located along the trail at regular intervals. Anoka County inspects trails annually and provides the capital improvements that are needed and provides the long-term maintenance required, such as bituminous overlays, and trail reconstruction. Trail signage is provided and maintained by either the City or the County as determined in the MOU or JPA.

Annual maintenance costs for the existing and proposed trail once completed are estimated to be about \$20,000. This includes funding for sign replacements, minor bituminous repair and crack-sealing. Revenue for the operation and maintenance of the trail comes from the Anoka County Parks and



Recreation Department's annual operations and maintenance budget, which includes revenues from picnic shelter rentals, room rentals, programs, parks entrance fees and the County general fund. Supplementary funding is provided through the Regional Park Operations and Maintenance Grant Program.

### *Public Engagement and Participation*

The Central Anoka County Regional Trail has been previously identified in the 1996 20/20 vision Plan and the 2006 Comprehensive System Plan for the Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department. Both of these plans conducted public engagement as part of the plan development process. Since the development of those plans, trail has slowly, but surely, continued to be developed.

For this Master Plan Amendment, the public engagement process proposed to engage local cities, population groups and organizations in an inclusive and accessible manner for feedback. The engagement plan includes goals for the project, who was engaged, methods of engagement as well as results from the engagement process.

Goals for the engagement process associated with this master plan amendment include the following:

1. Building positive relationships with local communities and residents.
2. Build community ownership of and understanding of the County's planning process
3. Receive feedback and comments from the public about this proposed change to the regional trail.

The community engagement process is occurring at this time. The County has shared the proposed trail realignment with community members through social media and will be conducting a few pop-up events that will allow the public to review the proposed change and provide comments.

Local and state government agencies will be invited to review and comment on the amendment as well.

While we are still receiving input on the proposed amendment, the County does not anticipate substantive changes to the proposed trail route change. Comments received will be documented in the Appendix with responses and where feasible the comments will be incorporated into the plan.

More information regarding the engagement process can be found in the Appendix.

### *Public Awareness*

Public awareness is an important component to regional park and trail systems. The County will partner with the Metropolitan Council's on their regional-wide awareness program, as well as, provide public information maps, websites ([www.anokacountyparks.com](http://www.anokacountyparks.com) & [www.anokacounty.us](http://www.anokacounty.us)), social media postings, publications and brochure in cooperation with Commute Solutions, the County's Transportation Management Organization (TMO).

## Central Anoka County Regional Trail

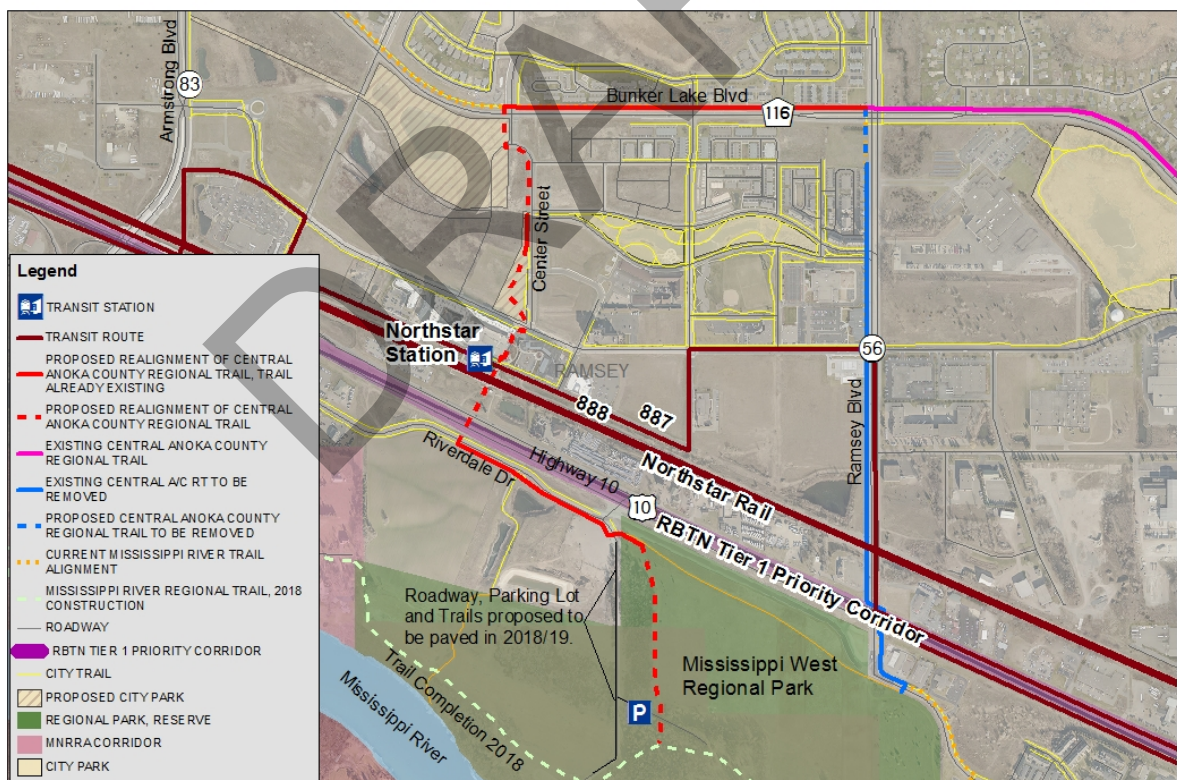


A partnership with the local cities, the Parks and Recreation Department and the County TMO, developed a free bike/walk map for the entire County and to increase the public's awareness of how easy the parks and trails system is to access and increase education regarding health, wellness and outdoor recreation, Anoka County is continually updating and installing way finding maps, such as Figure 4, throughout the system. These signs include a map of the area showing the regional and local trails, as well as the facilities and amenities in the area.

### Accessibility

Anoka County continually strives to provide equal access to all residents of Anoka County and the region. Park and trail use is open to any and all citizens. While there is a nominal parking fee in some of the regional parks, there is not a fee for trail use. This eliminates any economic barriers for trail users.

While transit access to the trail is limited in some other areas of the trail, the segment addressed in this amendment is directly connected to the Met Transit 887 Bus Route and the Northstar Light Rail Line. In addition, the Anoka County Traveler Transit Link and Metro Mobility dial-a-ride services provide transportation for a minimal fee. Transit Link will pick up and drop off passengers anywhere there is an



Transit and Accessibility for  
Central Anoka County Regional Trail  
Realignment

Figure 6



address or cross street, or anywhere along the regional trail as long as the vehicle does not have to back up. Currently, all of the vehicles are equipped with bike racks so passengers wishing to bike on the trail could use public transportation for access. A map of transit accessibility is shown in Figure 6.

Once built, the trail will provide a valuable connection to the local parks and trail system, the regional transportation network, regional bicycle transportation network, the regional park system and the Mississippi National River Recreation Area.

The trail and any facilities and amenities along the trail will conform to the standards mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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*Appendix*

# Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) Corridors

**PROPOSED**

## RBTN Corridors with Alignments

- Tier 1 Alignments
- Tier 2 Alignments

## RBTN Corridors (Alignments Undefined)

- Tier 1 Priority Regional Bicycle Transportation Corridor
- Tier 2 Regional Bicycle Transportation Corridors

## Other Trail Systems

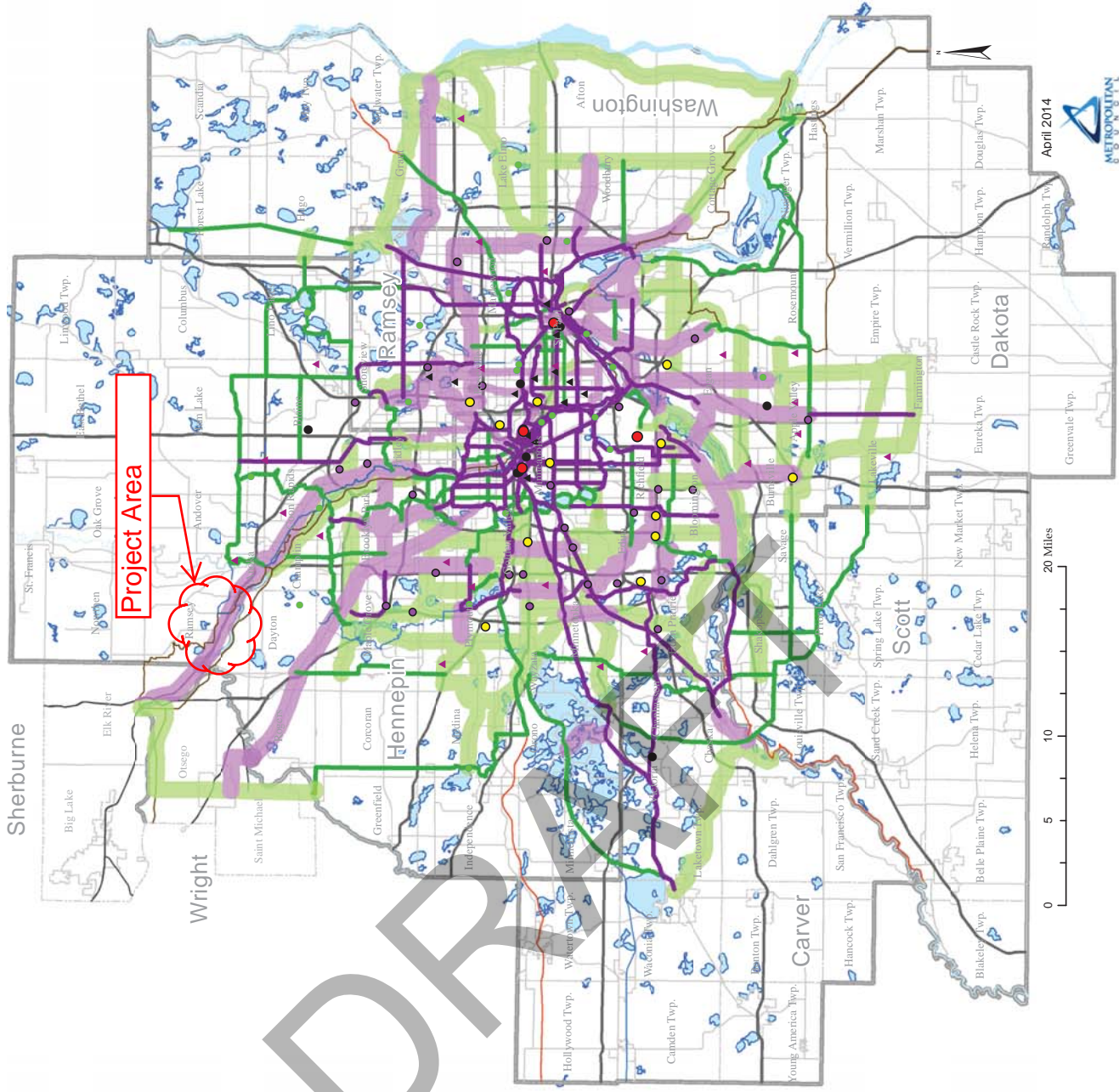
- Regional Trails (Regional Parks Policy Plan)
- Mississippi River Trail (US Route 45)
- State Trails (DNR)

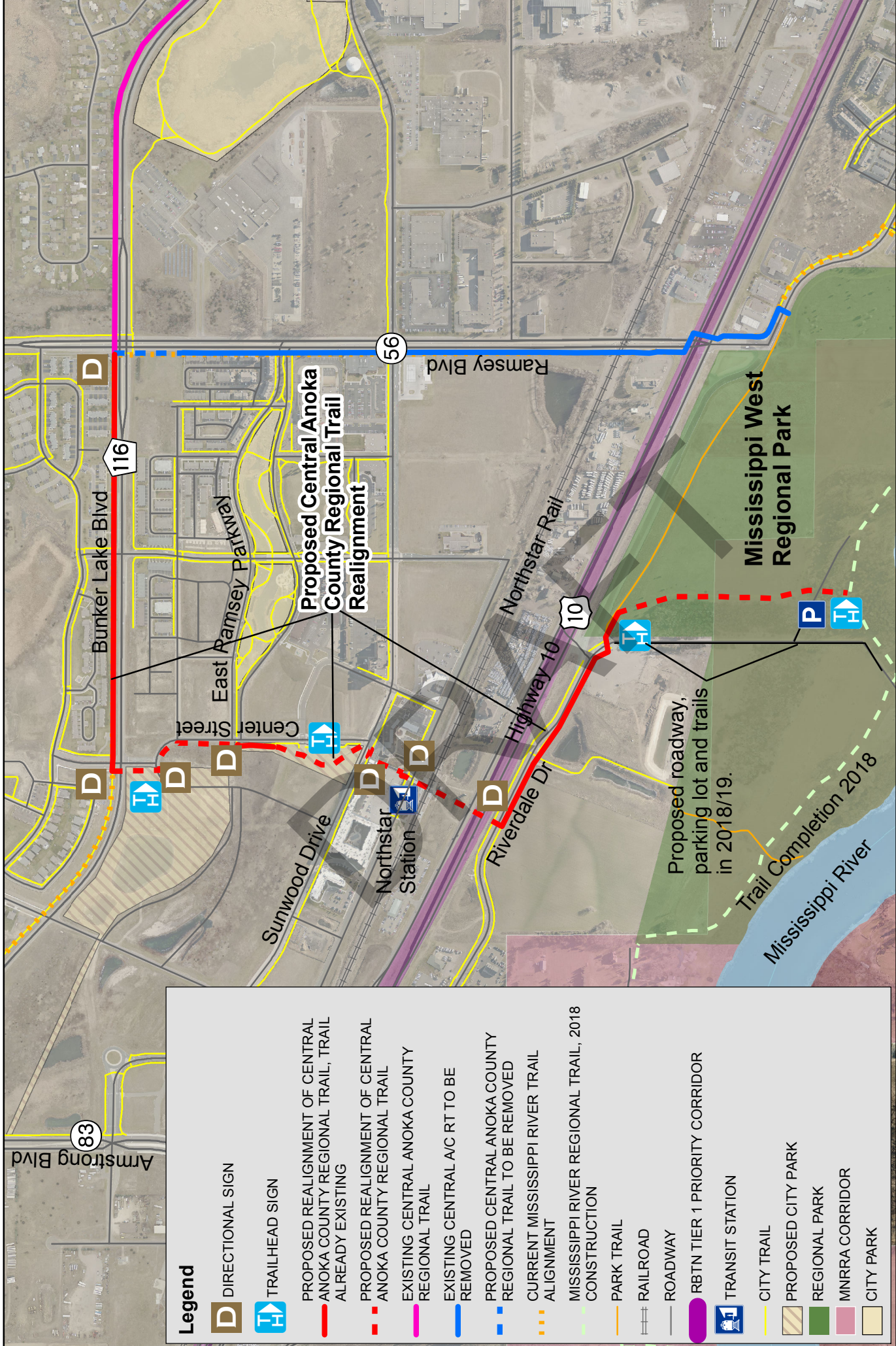
## Regional Destinations

- Metropolitan Job Centers (50,000+ jobs)
- Regional Job Centers (15,000 - 50,000 jobs)
- Subregional Job Centers (7,000 - 15,000 jobs)
- Large High Schools (2000+ Students)
- Colleges & Universities (2000+ Students)
- Major Sport & Entertainment Centers
- Highly Visited Regional Parks (400,00+ visits per year)

## Reference Items

- Principal Arterial Roads
- Lakes and Rivers
- City Boundary
- County Boundary
- 2040 Municipal Urban Service Area
- MPO Area





**Legend**

- DIRECTIONAL SIGN
- TRAILHEAD SIGN
- PROPOSED REALIGNMENT OF CENTRAL ANOKA COUNTY REGIONAL TRAIL, TRAIL ALREADY EXISTING
- PROPOSED REALIGNMENT OF CENTRAL ANOKA COUNTY REGIONAL TRAIL
- EXISTING CENTRAL ANOKA COUNTY REGIONAL TRAIL
- EXISTING CENTRAL A/C RT TO BE REMOVED
- PROPOSED CENTRAL ANOKA COUNTY REGIONAL TRAIL TO BE REMOVED
- CURRENT MISSISSIPPI RIVER TRAIL ALIGNMENT
- MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL TRAIL, 2018 CONSTRUCTION
- PARK TRAIL
- RAILROAD
- ROADWAY
- RBTN TIER 1 PRIORITY CORRIDOR
- TRANSIT STATION
- CITY TRAIL
- PROPOSED CITY PARK
- REGIONAL PARK
- MNRRRA CORRIDOR
- CITY PARK

# Wayfinding Plan for Central Anoka County Regional Trail Realignment




























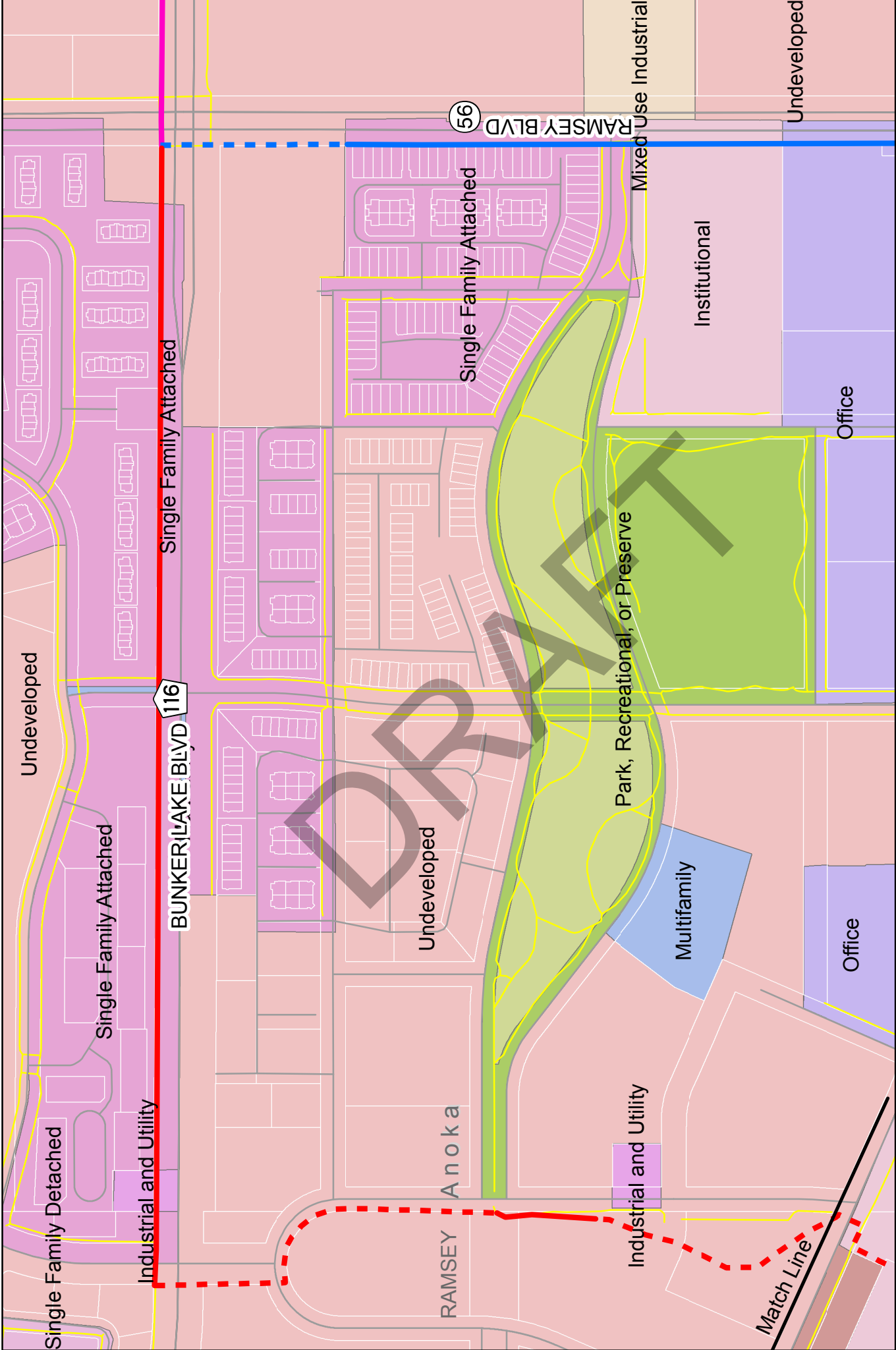
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# LEGEND FOR LAND USE MAPS

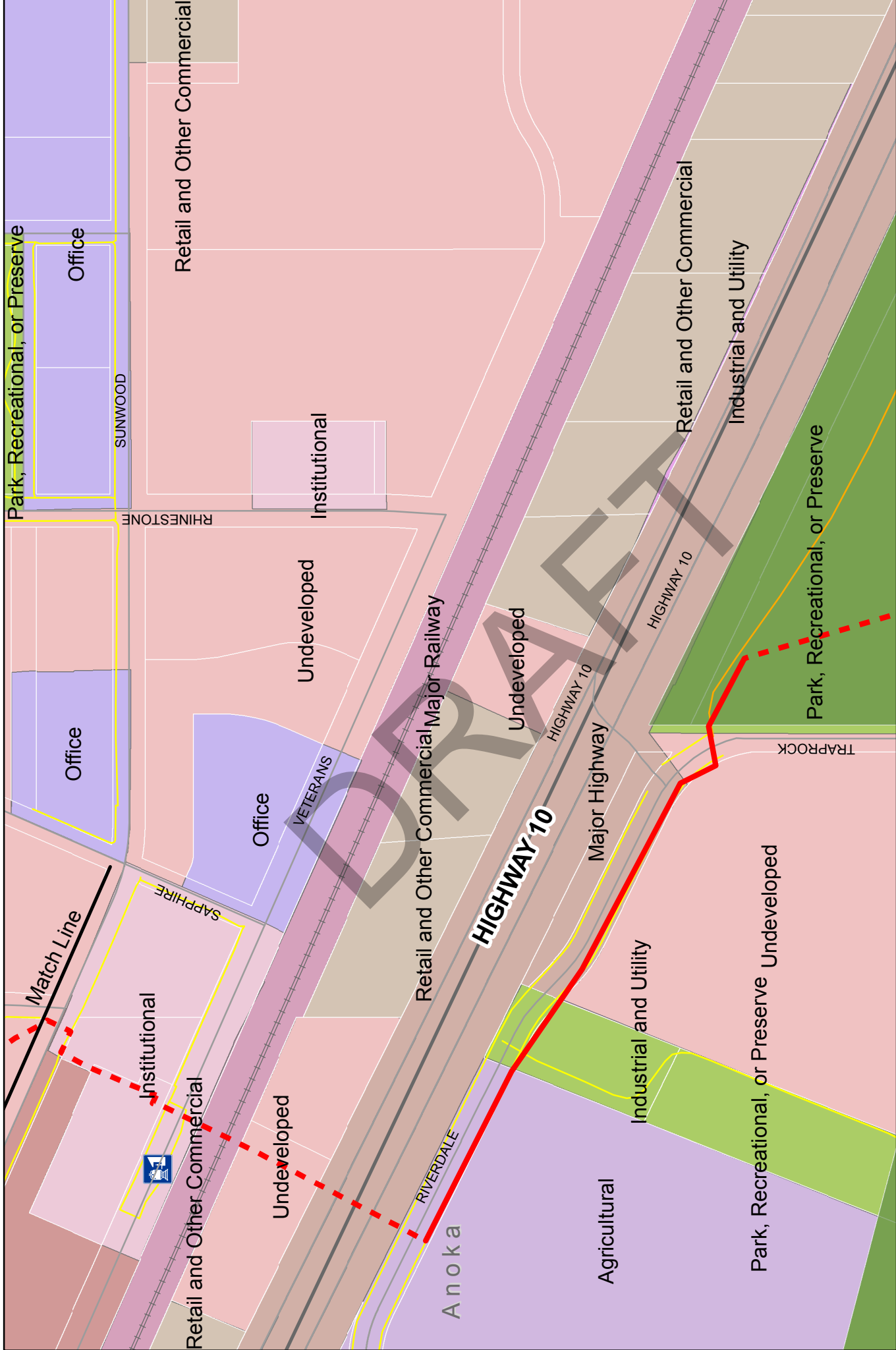
## Land Use 2016

-  Agricultural
-  Industrial and Utility
-  Institutional
-  Major Highway
-  Major Railway
-  Mixed Use Industrial
-  Mixed Use Residential
-  Multifamily
-  Office
-  Open Water
-  Park, Recreational, or Preserve
-  Retail and Other Commercial
-  Single Family Attached
-  Single Family Detached
-  Undeveloped
-  PROPOSED REALIGNMENT OF CENTRAL ANOKA COUNTY REGIONAL TRAIL, TRAIL ALREADY EXISTING
-  PROPOSED REALIGNMENT OF CENTRAL ANOKA COUNTY REGIONAL TRAIL
-  EXISTING CENTRAL ANOKA COUNTY REGIONAL TRAIL
-  EXISTING CENTRAL A/C RT TO BE
-  PROPOSED CENTRAL ANOKA COUNTY REGIONAL TRAIL TO BE REMOVED
-  PARCELS
-  REGIONAL PARK, RESERVE
-  CITY PARK
-  CITY TRAIL
-  ROADWAY



# Central Anoka County Regional Trail 2016 Generalized Land Use Map 1





# Central Anoka County Regional Trail 2016 Generalized Land Use Map 2



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

#	STRATEGIES	DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME	RESULTS
1	Plan your Parks website update	Update website to engage the public.	Nov 2017 – Mar 2018	Website with project information was posted to social media.
2	Comment Cards	Place project information and blank boards for comments at a minimum of 2 location within County Target: Ramsey City Hall, Northstar Station	Feb 2018	A board with pictures and project information will be located Ramsey City Hall and at the Northstar Station. Comments will be received via comment cards.
3	Pop Up Events/ Listening Sessions	Conduct a minimum of 1 event at different locations within the County. Target: Charter School, Northstar Station	Feb 2018	2 events are planned. One in the morning for peak ridership at the Northstar Station and a second one in the afternoon.
4	Open House	Conduct a minimum of 1 open house for public input.	Feb 2018	One open house is scheduled for February 13, 2018 at Ramsey City Offices, prior to City Council meeting.
5	City Staff/Officials Engagement	Share master plan with City Staff/Officials for comment/input/support.	Dec 2017 -Mar 2018	City staff were invited to comment on the plan prior and during the public engagement process. The County is scheduled to attend the City of Ramsey's Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on February 8, 2018 to get feedback on the project.
6	Regulatory/ Other Agency Engagement	Share project info and drafted master plan with other agency's for input. Target: NPS/MISS, MNDOT, LRRWMO	Dec 2017 – Mar 2018	The trail route change concept was shared with regulatory agencies prior to development of the master plan and no comments were received. A draft master plan amendment will be shared with same agencies for additional input.
7	County Staff/Officials Engagement	1. Share project proposal with other County departments 2. Master Plan Review with PCS Committee, Resolution of Support Request 3. Master Plan Review, Resolution of Support from the County Board	April 2018	The County Highway Department, Transit and Commute Solutions (TMO) were asked to comment on the initial concept plan and will be asked to comment on the draft master plan amendment. The Committee was informed of the amendment and will be asked to review the completed master plan amendment and recommend to the County Board to pass a resolution of support for the plan.