

Minnesota River Valley Master Plan - Draft Recommendations

This document describes draft recommendations relative to the four goals of the Minnesota River Valley Master Plan.

Goal 1: Enhance Access to the Minnesota River Valley (MRV)

There are several existing access points into the MRV. Most are located on property owned by the City or the USFWS. These range from more fully developed trailheads to simple access points that primarily serve the immediate neighborhood. Existing and proposed trailheads and neighborhood access points are illustrated on Figure 1.

Trailheads: These consist of larger, more developed access points. They typically include off-street parking and identity and informational signage. Major trailheads often include pedestrian amenities, such as picnic tables or benches, trash receptacles, lighting, and restrooms (portable or permanent). They might also include more extensive signage, such as interpretive signs. Minor trailheads have similar, but fewer, amenities and generally do not include permanent restrooms.

While the City does not currently provide any *major trailheads* on its property, there are four major trailheads on USFWS property, including:

- ***Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center*** – located at the terminus of American Boulevard, this trailhead contains the headquarter offices of the MVNW Refuge staff. The building also features an auditorium, exhibit and classroom facilities, restrooms, visitor information and store.
- ***Old Cedar Avenue*** – located at the southern terminus of Old Cedar Avenue. The trailhead features a paved parking lot, informational kiosk and trail connections. The USFWS is currently working in partnership with the City to coordinate trailhead enhancements with rehabilitation of the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge.
- ***Russell A. Sorenson Landing*** – located at the southern terminus of Lyndale Avenue. The trailhead features a paved parking lot, informational kiosk, boat launch and trail connections.
- ***Bloomington Ferry Road*** - located at the southern terminus of Bloomington Ferry Road. The trailhead features a paved parking lot, informational kiosk, pedestrian/bicycling bridge over the Minnesota River and trail connections.

Three sites on City property function as *minor trailheads*. These include:

- ***Pond Dakota Mission Park*** – located at 401 East 104th Street. Parking and trail connections to the upper bluff trail are provided.

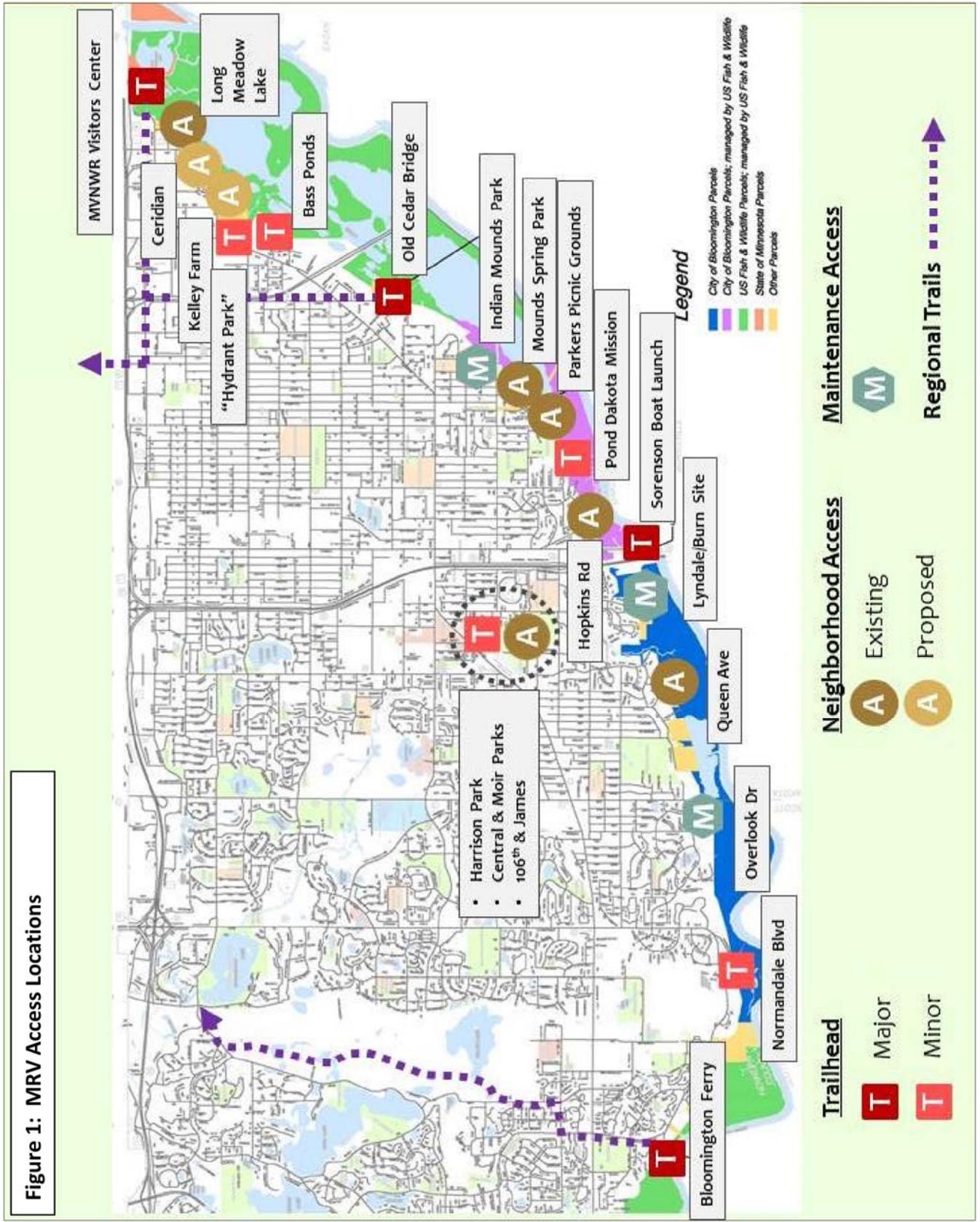
- **Harrison/Moir/Central Park/106th Street** – located between 100th and 106th Streets along Nine Mile Creek, together these provide access to a trail along Nine Mile Creek that connects to the MNRV. All locations provide either on-street or off-street parking.
- **Normandale Boulevard** - located at the southern terminus of Normandale Boulevard. A trail connection to the MNRV is provided.

Neighborhood Access Points – Generally, these do not provide off-street parking and typically only include identity and informational signage. Some access points may include additional amenities such as bike racks, benches, and/or trash receptacles. The City provides a number of access points on its property that primarily serve the surrounding neighborhoods. These include:

- **Indian Mounds Park** – located at 9807 11th Avenue South, accessed through the south edge of Indian Mounds Elementary School.
- **Mound Springs Park** – located at 10201 – 11th Avenue South.
- **Parker’s Picnic Grounds** – located at 10401 Columbus Road.
- **Hopkins Road** – located at the southern terminus of Hopkins Road.
- **Queen Avenue** – located at the southern end of Queen Avenue.

Maintenance Roads - The City also has maintenance roads that provide access into the MNRV. Their primary function is to provide access to maintain storm sewer lines. Use of these maintenance roads by the public is restricted in some areas, as the roads are not designed for safe pedestrian or bicycle usage. The City may want to evaluate the following roads for possible upgrades to foster public use:

- **Lyndale/Public Works maintenance site** – located west of 35W with public access at the south terminus of Lyndale Avenue via the USFWS Russell A. Sorenson Landing trailhead.
- **Overlook Drive** – located off Overlook Drive just west of France Avenue South (on right-of-way for Irwin Avenue S.).



General Recommendations

1. **Interagency Coordination** - While this plan focuses on City-owned land, it is important to work in close partnership with the other agencies with jurisdiction of land and/or facilities in the river valley. Most visitors do not differentiate ownership as they enter and move through the MRV. The goal would be to provide sufficient coordination regarding facility design, signage, and maintenance so that the visitor experience is of similar quality regardless of where they access the river valley. Thus, this plan suggests improvements to USFWS and MnDNR facilities in the river valley. A more complete discussion about agency partnerships is provided in Section III Jurisdiction & Management.

Actions:

- **Old Cedar Avenue Bridge** - Continue to coordinate with USFWS on the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge rehabilitation project and trailhead improvements.
 - **Sorenson Landing (Lyndale Ave.)** - Approach the USFWS regarding the following potential enhancements to the Sorenson Landing trailhead:
 - Add bicycle racks and a portable bike repair station. The City's *Alternative Transportation Plan (ATP)*, currently being updated, identifies Lyndale Avenue as a Linking Trail, making this a key north-south bicycle access point into the MRV.
 - Coordinate pedestrian/bicycle enhancements related to the proposed 2017-18 reconstruction of 35W bridge over the Minnesota River.
 - Consider adding restrooms and water fountain.
 - Improve the access to the PW maintenance site.
 - **Bloomington Ferry Bridge**
 - Consider adding restrooms, bicycle racks, a portable bike repair station and water fountain.
 - **Minnesota Valley State Trail** - The City supports the MnDNR's plan to install the Minnesota Valley State Trail across the City's MRV properties. The City and the MnDNR are currently negotiating an agreement to facilitate the installation and maintenance of the State Trail. The State Trail will consist of two trails within an approximately 100' trail corridor to accommodate a broad spectrum of users. The two trails include: a 10-foot wide bituminous trail and a natural surface trail. Connections to the State Trail via trails on City property are needed to provide reasonable access for MRV users.
2. **Access Point Maintenance** – All access points intended for public use should receive a consistent, minimum level of maintenance. If the City decides to condone access at any location, it should be maintained and signed to clearly convey that it is open and safe for use. Unkempt access points (tattered signs, weeds, broken pavement, etc.) convey a poor image and potentially invite unwanted users. If public access is not condoned, the access should be clearly marked as such, and existing improvements (parking lots, paths, etc.) should be removed, unless needed for non-public use (City maintenance, utilities, etc.).

Actions:

- **Enhance Maintenance** – Annually budget adequate funds to achieve a basic level of maintenance at all access points intended for public use.

3. **Coordinated Signage** – Trails in the river valley traverse land owned by both the City and the USFWS. The proposed State Trail will be a MnDNR facility. Implementing a coordinated system of signage is critical to establish a clear identity for the area and provide continuity to the visitor experience. Currently, trails are partially signed with directional and mileage signs that display the State Trail logo that was jointly developed by the City, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the United States Fish & Wildlife staffs.

The City is currently working with the USFWS to develop signs for the Old Cedar Bridge trailhead. This is intended to provide a good model and basis for a comprehensive set of sign design guidelines that could be used throughout the river valley.

**Actions:**

- **Design Guidelines** - Prepare comprehensive sign design guidelines with assistance from a sign design professional. Involve USFWS, MnDNR, and other stakeholders (Three Rivers, Dakota County, etc.) in the planning process. At a minimum, the guidelines should:
 - Recommend a consistent pallet of materials and colors
 - Establish a hierarchy of sign types and functions
 - Establish graphic standards for maps and wayfinding information
 - Establish criteria for use and placement of individual jurisdictional logos
 - Recommend approach to consolidate regulatory signs
 - Identify locations for interpretive and educational signs (cultural, natural resource)
- **Sign Inventory** - Conduct an inventory of existing signs and prepare a schedule for replacement/upgrades. The condition of existing signs varies greatly. In general, signs that are relatively new and in good repair should remain in place until their useful life is expired, as determined by the inventory.

Specific Access improvements

Recommended improvements at each of the City-owned access points shown on Figure 1 are described in Table 1.1, below. Many of the recommendations are also listed in the *Bloomington Parks and Recreation Master Plan and/or Alternative Transportation Plan*. Suggestions for improvements at access points on land owned by other (primarily the USFWS) are described in Table 1.2 below. Recommendations in these tables focus specifically on the access area improvements. Recommendations specific to trail improvements are described under the section on Utilization (see Table 2).

Table 1.1: Proposed Access Improvements on City Owned Property

Minor Trailheads				
Location	Existing Amenities	Proposed Improvements	Partnership	Timing
Pond Dakota	Parking (gravel 20 spaces) Restrooms (portable) Historic buildings Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Regulatory • Maps/wayfinding • Interpretive 	Benches Trash receptacles Bike racks Water fountain Restroom (<i>permanent</i>) Security lighting Security gate (<i>restrict private vehicle access to lower area</i>)	Gideon Pond Heritage Society Bloomington Historic Society	Mid term (6-10 yrs)
Harrison/Central/Moir/106 th St	Parking (Harrison, Moir, 106 th) Restrooms (Moir, Harrison -portable) Water fountain (Moir) Picnic shelter (Moir) Picnic tables (Moir, Harrison) Benches Play equipment (Moir, Harrison) Trash receptacles Security gates Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Regulatory • Maps/wayfinding • Interpretive (stormwater) 	Sign upgrades Bike racks (add) Explore potential for separate bike trail Security lights at Harrison and 106th		Mid to Long term (6-10+ yrs)
Normandale Blvd	Paved access road (disrepair) Security gate Historic railroad swing bridge Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory 	Evaluate potential for off and on-street parking Sign upgrades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Maps/wayfinding • Interpretive [RR bridge] Bike racks Benches Trash receptacles	TC&W Railroad	Mid term (6-10 yrs)
Neighborhood Access Points				
Location	Existing Amenities	Proposed Improvements	Partnership	Timing
Indian Mounds Park	Natural surface trail Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory 	Evaluate potential for off-street parking Sign upgrades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Maps/wayfinding New ped/bike natural	Bloomington School District #271	Long term (10+ yrs) <i>[trail maintenance short term]</i>

		surface connecting trail Road maintenance (erosion)		
Mounds Spring Park [evaluate making Minor Trailhead]	Unused parking lot Security gate Paved (new) access road Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Regulatory 	Parking (improve or remove) Sign upgrades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maps/wayfinding • Interpretive Benches Trash receptacles Bike racks Security lighting	Gideon Pond Heritage Society Bloomington Historic Society Dakota community	Mid term (6-10 yrs)
Parkers Picnic Grounds	Off-street parking Grills Natural surface trails to MRV	Picnic shelter and tables Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Regulatory • Maps/wayfinding 		Mid-term (6-10 yrs)
Hopkins Road	Old gates Natural surface trail (overgrown) Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory 	Signs (upgrade) Security gate (upgrade) Benches Trash receptacles Bike racks On-street parking Mountain bike skills course		Mid – long term (6-10+ yrs)
James Ave	On-street parking Paved trail Security gate Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory • Maps/wayfinding 	Sign upgrades Routine maintenance		Long term (10+ yrs)
Queen Ave	Natural surface trail On-street parking Security gate Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Regulatory • Maps/wayfinding 	Sign upgrades Evaluate pedestrian-only trail use policy Clarify boundaries (ex. mark w/plantings)	Work with adjacent property owners	Short term (0-5 yrs)
Overlook Drive (Maintenance Access)	Paved access /maintenance road Security gate Regulatory Signs	Evaluate for public use		Mid to Long term (6-10+)

*NOTE: Additional improvements to these sites may be recommended in the *Bloomington Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2008)* and/or *Alternative Transportation Plan (updated 2014-15)*.

Table 1.2 below describes suggested improvements on property owned by others. These are ideas the City will bring forward to the respective property owner(s), and work cooperatively with on implementation, to the extent practical and feasible.

Table 1.2: Proposed Access Improvements on Property Owned by Others

Major Trailheads				
Location	Existing Amenities	Proposed Improvements*	Partnership	Timing
Fort Snelling State Park connection	Interpretive center Historic site (Fort) US Air Force shooting range	MN Valley State Trail	MnDNR FWS US Air Force MnDOT	Short-mid term (0-10 yrs)
MVNWR Visitors Center (FWS)	Parking lot Restrooms Classrooms Auditorium Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Regulatory • Maps/wayfinding • Interpretive 	None on-site Signs/banners along American Blvd E from 34 th Ave to Visitor Center	FWS	Mid term (6-10 yrs) <i>(with road reconstruction)</i>
Old Cedar Bridge	Parking lot Boardwalk Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Regulatory • Maps/wayfinding 	Bridge renovation Parking upgrades Sign upgrades Picnic shelter Benches Trash receptacles Bike racks Restrooms Play equipment Water fountain New connecting trails to State Trail, Intercity Regional Trail Security lighting	FWS DNR (State Trail links) Three Rivers Park District Dakota County City of Eagan	Short term (0-5 yrs, in progress)
Lyndale Ave /Sorenson Landing Access to PW maintenance site	Parking lot Boat launch Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Regulatory • Maps/wayfinding • Interpretive 	Sign upgrades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand interpretive signs Bike/ped improvements with I-35W bridge replacement Bike racks Bike repair station Restrooms (permanent) Water fountain	FWS DNR (State Trail connection) MnDOT Corps of Eng.	Mid term (6-10 yrs) <i>(coordinate with ATP priorities and I-35W impr schedule)</i>
Bloomington Ferry (FWS)	Parking (28 spaces) Bridge over river to Savage trail system Security lighting Security gate Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Regulatory • Maps/wayfinding • Interpretive 	Benches Trash receptacles Bike racks Bike repair station Restroom (permanent) Water fountain Expand interpretive signs	FWS Scott County	Ongoing coordination w/FWS

Minor Trailheads				
Location	Existing Amenities	Proposed Improvements	Partnership	Timing
“Hydrant Park” (dog park proposed in SLDP) at OSR/86 th Ave	Informal trails along trout stream Old pavement Cypress parking lot Terminus of 86 th Ave. bike route	Purchase property from MAC Off street parking (share w/Cypress?) Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Regulatory • Maps/wayfinding • Interpretive Picnic shelter and tables Benches Trash receptacles Bike racks Bike repair station Restrooms (portable)? Play equipment Water fountain Natural surface connecting trails (pedestrian only) Dog play fenced areas Security lighting?	MAC (current owner) Cypress (owner of existing parking lot) FWS	Short to mid-term (0-10 yrs) <i>(Depends on property acquisitions and funding)</i>
Bass Ponds (FWS)	Parking (8 spaces) Large area (lower parking lot) for special events Security gate Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Regulatory • Maps/wayfinding • Interpretive 	[lower area] Trash receptacles Benches or picnic table Trail connections around bass ponds	FWS	Long term (10+ yrs)
Neighborhood Access Points				
Location	Existing Amenities	Proposed Improvements	Partnership	Timing
Long Meadow Lake Trail (FWS)	Natural surface trail Security gate Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Regulatory • Maps/wayfinding 	Sign upgrades Trail maintenance Improved water control structure	FWS	Mid - Long term (6-10+ yrs)
33 rd Ave (private - Ceridian)	Office building Informal trails	Evaluate creating connecting trail into MVNWR Sign upgrades	FWS Private property owners (Ceridian)	Long term (10+ yrs)
28 th Ave (private – Kelley Farm)	Existing private home and farm	On-street parking Sign upgrades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity 	FWS Private property	Long term (10+ yrs) <i>(when site</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maps/wayfinding • Interpretive Benches Trash receptacles Bike racks New connecting trails	owner	<i>redevelops)</i>
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Goal 2: Improve Utilization of Land and Resources in the Minnesota River Valley (MRV)

The MRV provides a variety of nature-based outdoor recreational uses. These include, but are not limited to: hiking, biking, fishing, bird-watching, nature & wildlife observation, boating, canoeing, kayaking, environmental education, and trail running. The City’s goal for use of the MRV is to facilitate enjoyable recreational experiences while limiting negative impacts on the natural and cultural resources in the river valley. This will require close coordination among multiple agencies and balancing the many, sometimes divergent interests of the wide spectrum of users.

Nature-based uses generally fall into three broad categories:

1. **Trail-based Uses:** Trails, arguably, form the most prominent – and popular – means for people to explore and enjoy the river valley. MRV trails are primarily used for:
 - **Hiking** - the MRV trails are a popular location for hikers, who enjoy the secluded natural setting surrounding the trails.
 - **Trail Running** – the changing topography and natural setting make the MRV trails an outstanding location for those who enjoy trail running.
 - **Mountain Biking** – the MRV trails are one of the best locations for mountain biking in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The single track trails along the bluff provide ideal experiences for both recreational and expert bikers.
 - **Cross-Country Skiing** – although not groomed (i.e., tracked) or maintained for winter use, the MRV trails provide opportunities for skiers to enjoy the river valley in all seasons.

2. **Nature-based Recreation:** A majority of visitors to the MRV participate in some form of nature-based recreation. This can range from informal, individual use to formally organized group or educational programs offered by natural resource professionals, primarily affiliated with the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.
 - **Bird-Watching** – as part of a significant flyway system, the MRV provides habitat for a diverse array of birds. Well over 100 species nest in the area, and over 250 species are attracted to the MRV including: Canada Goose, duck, egret, heron, wild turkey, pheasant, hawk, songbird and Bald Eagle. There are numerous locations that provide ideal bird-watching opportunities.

- **Nature and Wildlife Observation** – Over 50 different mammals can be found in the MNRV including: whitetail deer, mink, muskrat, raccoon, beaver, otter, squirrel, gopher, chipmunk, fox, and coyote. In addition, about thirty species of reptiles and amphibians can be found in the MRV including turtles, snakes frogs, toads and salamanders.
- **Environmental Education** – while mainly a function of USF&W staff, the MRV offers a spectrum of environmental education opportunities.

Most forms of natural-based recreation utilize the MRV trails and do not require special facilities. However, facilities such as benches, interpretive or educational signs, and boardwalks or observation platforms enhance visitor comfort and experience.

3. Water-based Recreation: The Bloomington property in the MRV has frontage on both the Minnesota River and several inland lakes (Long Meadow Lake, Coleman Lake). Activities dependent on access to water generally fall into two categories: fishing and boating. While fishing can be done from the water’s edge without special facilities, boating requires launch sites. More specialized facilities, such as docks and marinas may be appropriate in select locations. However, these often require special maintenance to keep them functioning properly.

- **Fishing** – there are ample opportunities for shoreline fishing along Long Meadow Lake and the Minnesota River. For those wishing to fish from a watercraft, a boat launch is provided at the USFWS’s Russell A. Sorenson Landing, which is located immediately adjacent to City-owned MRV properties. The Minnesota River is inhabited by numerous species of fish including northern pike, largemouth bass, walleye, carp and crappie.
- **Boating/Canoeing/Kayaking** – in addition to the existing boat launch at the Russell A. Sorenson Landing, other opportunities should be explored to provide water access to the Minnesota River, Long Meadow Lake or Coleman Lake. It is noted that the USFWS currently restricts boats on inland lakes due to disturbance of wildlife/waterfowl. Thus, any specific proposals will need close evaluation and coordination with USFWS.

General Recommendations

It is important to consider “big picture” aspects of how City owned property in the MRV should be used. Public input overwhelmingly supports a “small footprint” approach to how the MRV is used and the type and intensity of facilities and programs provided. The following are overarching recommendations regarding the City’s approach to use of its property in the river valley:

- **Retain Natural Character** – The City should continue to operate under the “80/20 Rule”. This is a guideline that aims to limit the area or amount of land developed for active usage/recreation (parking lots, paved trails, structures, etc.) to no more than 20 percent of the City-owned MRV parklands. To retain natural character the City should:
 - Inventory existing paved areas and identify where pavement can be removed and restored to vegetation.

- Where additional pavement is deemed necessary, limit to the minimal amount required to meet appropriate design standards and use pervious bituminous where feasible.
- NOTE: invasive species management covered under separate section.
- **Expand Environmental & Cultural Education** – Currently the USFWS is the primary provider of environmental education programs focus on the MRV. In addition to continuing to coordinate with the USFWS on existing programs, the City should:
 - Work cooperatively with USFWS to implement their Urban Refuge Initiative.
 - Build on opportunities to expand cultural and environmental educational aspects in conjunction with established community events (i.e., River Rendezvous)
 - Work with interested groups (Bloomington Geezers, Friends of the Minnesota River Valley, Izaak Walton League, Bloomington Historic Society, Gideon Pond Heritage Society, Dakota community, etc.) to increase capacity to provide regular events (guided hikes, lectures, etc.) focused on and in the MRV.
- **Context-Sensitive Trail Design** – City trails in the MRV consist of two types of natural surface trails: single-track trails and former farm roads (see photo below). New trails constructed and managed by the City should:
 - Be natural surfaced and designed consistent with the design standards in the *Alternative Transportation Plan (ATP)*. [add specific standards here?]



Trail Types

- **Single-track trails** – These are primarily located in the upper bluff areas. Most have been in place for decades and may have started as deer trails. They are typically two to three feet wide with two to three foot clear zones on each side.
- **Former farm roads** – These include aggregate trails that run along the river bank. They are often twelve to twenty feet in width.

- **Enhance Trail Maintenance** – Many of the City’s trails are maintained in partnership with others. This outside assistance is crucial given limit budgets. In addition, active user groups are instrumental in timely identification of needed trail maintenance. The City should:

- Routinely identify and include in the annual Capital Improvement Budget (CIP) specific trail improvement projects, such as boardwalks, bridges and relocation of trail segments to reduce erosion that require hiring of independent contractors.
- Provide adequate funding for the City Maintenance Division to perform routine maintenance of the MRV (i.e. trails, amenities, natural resources, etc.)
- Continue to partner with Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists (MORC) to improve and maintain the bluff trails.
- Identify opportunities to partner with independent groups, such as Izaak Walton’s League, Great River Greening, and the Minnesota Conservation Corps, to improve and stabilize trails and support facilities (i.e., retaining walls).

Specific Improvements

Table 2, below, describes recommendations for improvements to specific facilities related to trail, nature, and water-based uses. The majority of City trails provide connections to trails in the MRV that are under the jurisdiction of other agencies, primarily the USFWS. Recommendations regarding access improvements are covered in a previous section (see Tables 1.1 and 1.2).

Table 2: Proposed Use Improvements

Location	Existing Amenities	Proposed Improvements*	Partnership	Timing
General				
		Complete connection of Intercity Regional Trail to OCAB trailhead	TRPD	Short term
		Local trail connections to the State Trail	MnDNR, FWS	Short (coordinate with State Trail timing)
Specific Sites				
Mounds Springs Park	Off-street Parking	Fishing dock Picnic shelter and tables New ped/bike natural surface connecting trails		Mid term (6-10 yrs)
Parker’s Picnic Grounds	Off-street Parking Grills Connecting trails	Large picnic shelter (allow group rentals) Sand volleyball Horseshoe pits Playground equipment Trail maintenance/enhancement		Mid-term (6-10 yrs)
Pond Dakota Park	Historic home/site Off-street parking Picnic area	Acquire Johnson property Interpretive facility/barn w/restroom Replica log cabin	Gideon Pond Heritage Society Historic Society	Mid-term (6-10 yrs)

			Dakota community	
Hopkins Road		Mountain bike skills course		Mid-long term (6-10+ yrs)
Lyndale/PW maintenance site Sorenson Landing		Mountain bike skills course Improve maintenance road to enhance ped/bike use, safety, comfort.	FWS MnDOT	Mid-term (6-10 yrs) <i>(after I-35W bridge reconstruction)</i>

Goal 3: Increase Awareness and Understanding of the Minnesota River Valley (MRV) Environment and History

[add preamble]

Table 3: Proposed Strategies to Increase Awareness and Understanding

Location	Proposed Strategies	Partnership	Timing
	Develop a web page on BloomingtonMN.gov focused on the MRV. Including history, current activities/events, maps, use regulations, links to affiliated agencies, etc.		Short term (0-5 yrs)
	Create a regular column in the Briefing devoted to river-related topics, stories, and “fun facts”.		Short term (0-5 yrs)
	Build on existing, and expand community events that focus on and celebrate the historic, cultural, and natural resource significance of the MRV to Bloomington	FWS MnDNR Gideon Pond Heritage Society Historic Society Dakota community	Ongoing
	Expand/enhance system of wayfinding signage in the MRV.	FWS MnDNR	Short-mid term (0-10 yrs)
	Expand/enhance system of interpretive signage in the MRV. This should cover both cultural and natural resource topics.	FWS MnDNR	Short-mid term (0-10 yrs)
	Install GPS, QR code, or similar locator system on trail mile-markers <i>(consider in conjunction with development of State Trail signage)</i>	FWS MnDNR	Short-mid term (0-10 yrs)
Mounds Springs Park	Add more extensive interpretive signage focused on the Native American mound building cultures that inhabited the river valley.	SHPO Native communities	Medium (6-10 yrs)
Pond Dakota Park	Dakota Interpretive Area development	Dakota community Gideon Pond Heritage Society	Short (0-5 yrs)

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Goal 4: Ensure Protection and Preservation of Natural and Cultural Resources in the Minnesota River Valley (MRV)

[add preamble]

Table 4: Proposed Strategies to ensure protection and preservation of natural and cultural resources

Location	Proposed Strategies	Partnership	Timing
	Work with USFWS to reaffirm and strengthen the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) addressing FWS maintenance on City property.	FWS	Short-term (0-5 yrs)
	Maintain and strengthen partnerships with local organizations and citizen groups to implement specific maintenance and preservation projects (e.g., Buckthorn Bust, etc.)		Ongoing
	Ensure that all projects involving physical alteration of property are reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) consistent with State and Federal requirements.	SHPO	As required
	Consider use of sustainable Best Practices on all public improvement projects. These might include: use of pervious pavement; use of durable (and where practical – recycled) construction materials; etc.)		Ongoing
	Utilize Hennepin County natural resource inventory to prioritize natural resource improvement areas and undertake restoration projects (invasives removal, etc.) in priority areas.		Short-mid term (0-10 yrs)
	Create and fund a staff position to focus on natural resource management and maintenance of MRV property.		Short-mid term (0-10 yrs)
Indian Mounds Park	Implement erosion control measures along maintenance road/hiking trail.		Short term (0-5 yrs)
Mounds Springs Park	Define and implement mound protection strategies		Short-mid term (0-10 yrs)
Pond Dakota Park	Acquire Johnson property		

Implementation Timing

Proposed improvements will be implemented in phases. The tables above assign a general priority for implementation of specific actions within three broad time frames:

- **Short term** reflects the highest priority improvements. The intent would be to fund these improvements in the next five years. These include projects that are currently underway (i.e., Old Cedar Bridge trailhead), are recommended for near-term implementation in other plans (i.e., Hydrant Park is a high priority recommendation in the South Loop District Plan), or represent projects that can be implemented fairly quickly, without significant costs.
- **Mid-term** includes projects that are not currently funded or need further evaluation to more clearly define priority. The recommended timing of implementation falls in a 6 to 10 year period. These projects should be added to the City's annual Capital Improvement Budget (CIP) for specific consideration.
- **Long term** includes "good idea" projects that should be considered, but are not as critical or clearly defined as the short and mid-term projects. Generally, these are projects that will not be implemented for at least 10 years after adoption of this plan, unless unforeseen opportunities arise to hasten implementation.

It is also important to recognize that not all improvements proposed at any specific site are of equal priority. Some improvements can occur in conjunction with other projects or may apply to the entire system. For example, signage upgrades may apply to all access points and be implemented comprehensively.