



## Planning & Public Process

Planning for the Baker/Carver Regional Trail began in 2010 as a City of Minnetrista initiative. Minnetrista city staff began discussions with the Park District on the possibility of a north/south regional trail connection between Carver Park Reserve, Lake Minnetonka Regional Park, Dakota Rail Regional Trail, Gale Woods Farm and the Luce Line State Trail. When the Park District assumed planning responsibilities for the regional trail in 2012, further connections were extended to include Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail, Kingswood Park, Baker Park Reserve, and the Lake Independence Regional Trail. The *Baker/Carver Regional Trail Master Plan* is intended to reflect and expound upon the work done by Minnetrista and further incorporate the larger aforementioned regional context and destinations.

### Background

Initial discussions regarding the Baker/Carver Regional Trail began with the Woodland Cove residential development, a 500-acre subdivision located on the southern shore of Halsted Bay (Lake Minnetonka) and adjacent to the western boundary of Lake Minnetonka Regional Park. The Woodland Cove development is expected to generate over 1,000 new housing units and double Minnetrista's population base. It was realized that a significant portion of a regional trail alignment could be achieved through collaboration among the developer, Minnetrista and the Park District, as the trail and natural open space are also desirable amenities to residential development (Figure 4). Preservation of the regional trail corridor also provides an opportunity for the developer to achieve park dedication requirements.

During the Woodland Cove discussions, the regional trail concept was not yet part of the Metropolitan Council's



**Figure 4**

**Woodland Cove Development - conceptual 2010 trail route**

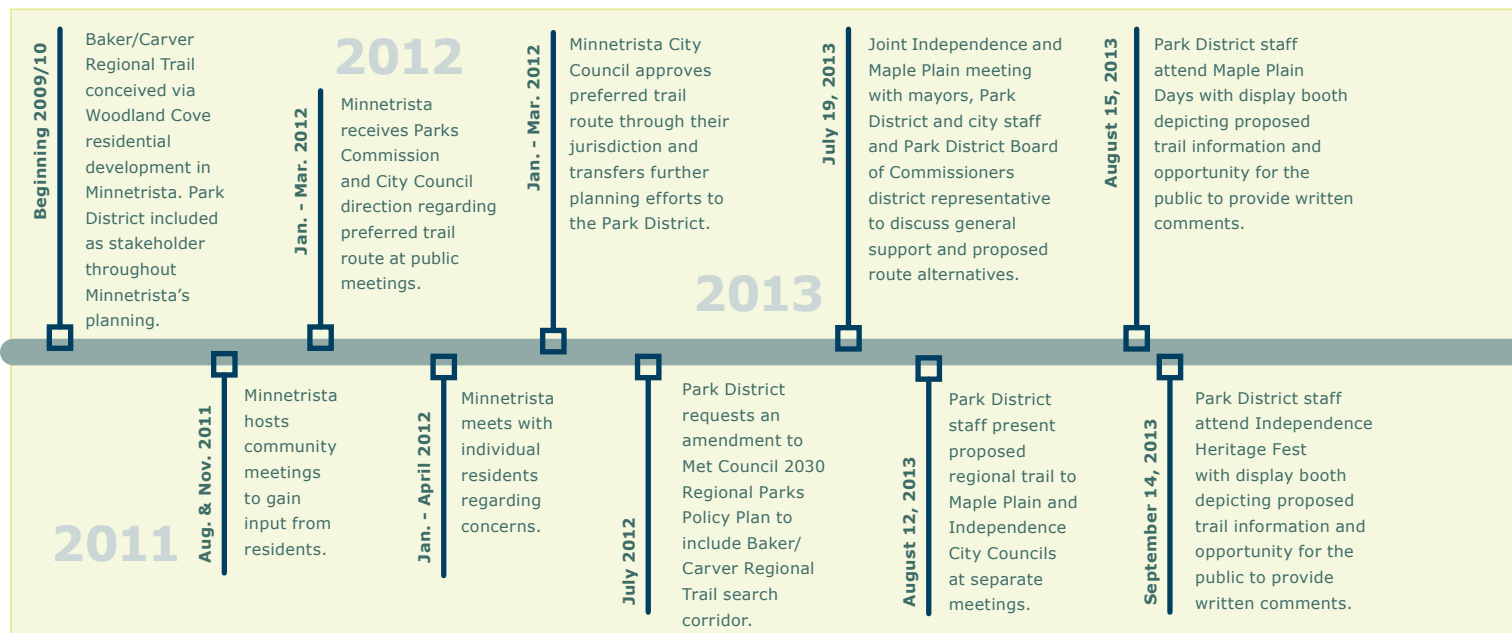
Source: City of Minnetrista & Carlson Real Estate Co.

2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan and was not identified on Park District long-range regional trail planning maps. As such, Minnetrista led the initial planning with the agreement that the Park District would assume the planning initiative after the City identified a preferred trail route from Carver Park Reserve to the Luce Line State Trail.

Minnetrista’s planning for the Baker/Carver Regional Trail eventually spanned two years, as the City secured the resources of a consultant to manage the regional trail route planning and conducted an extensive public process including community meetings, individual resident meetings, and focused stakeholder engagement with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District and Park District. Several trail alignments through Minnetrista were considered, analyzed and evaluated - with a decisive route selected south of the Dakota Rail Regional Trail and a generalized route selected north of the Dakota Rail Regional Trail to the Luce Line State Trail. The tangible result of the city’s planning was a series of presentation boards entitled *Minnetrista Regional Trail Master Plan* (Figure 5).



**Figure 5**  
**Minnetrista Regional Trail Master Plan Excerpts (2012)**  
 Source: City of Minnetrista (Schoenbauer Consulting, LLC)



**Figure 6**  
**Baker/Carver Regional Trail Planning Timeline: 2009 - 2014**  
 Source: Three Rivers Park District

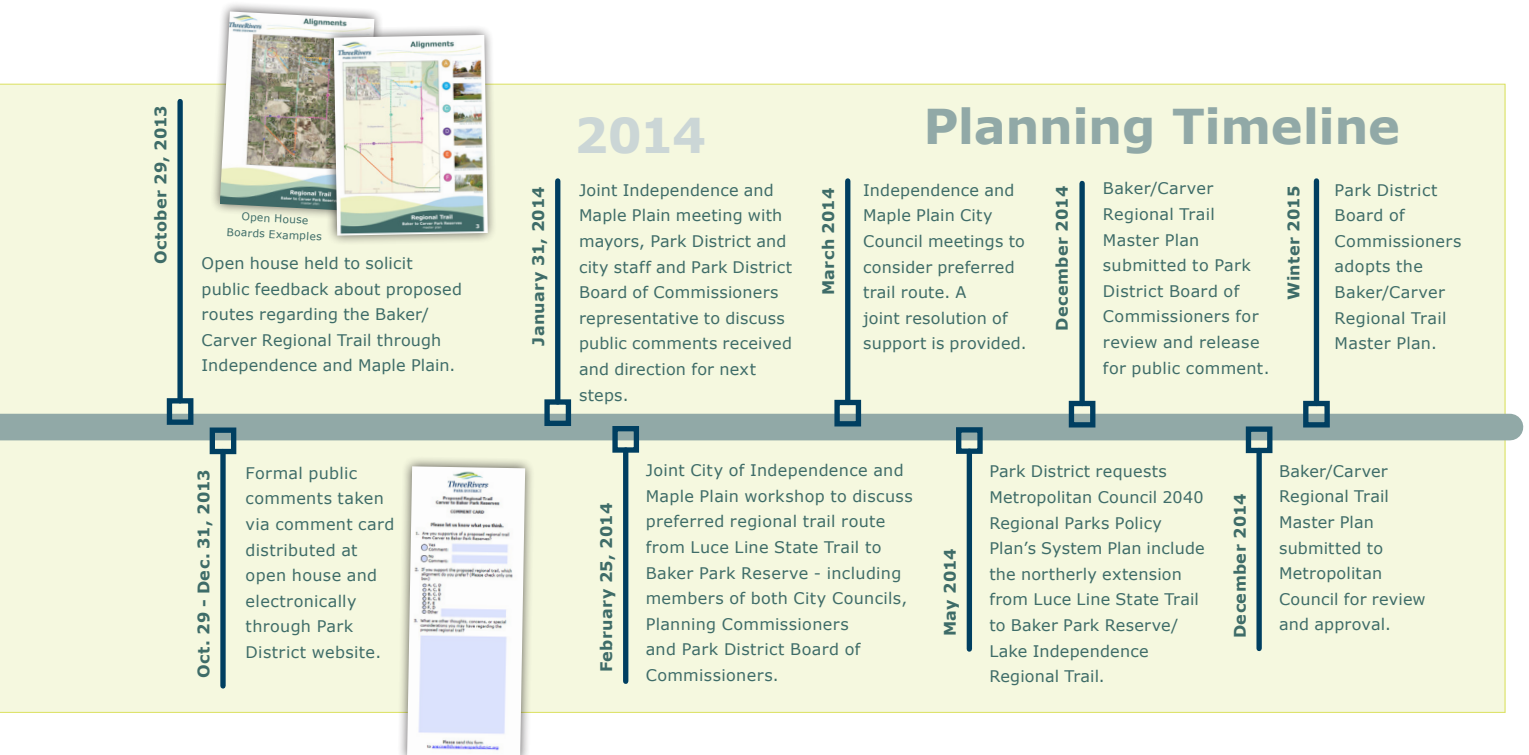
Upon assumption of the regional trail planning effort in 2012, the Park District requested, and was granted, an amendment to the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan to include the new regional trail search corridor as part of the regional parks and trail system plan. During this time, Park District planning staff also explored the extension of the Baker/Carver Regional Trail search corridor to include regional connections to the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail, Kingswood Park, and Baker and Crow-Hassan Park Reserves. This action further expands the regional importance of the north/south connection in western Hennepin County. As such, the Cities of Independence and Maple Plain were included in subsequent trail alignment discussions and efforts to engage the public. The Park District subsequently requested that the Metropolitan Council include the northerly extension from the Luce Line Regional Trail to Baker Park Reserve/Lake Independence Regional Trail as part of the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Regional Parks Policy's System Plan.

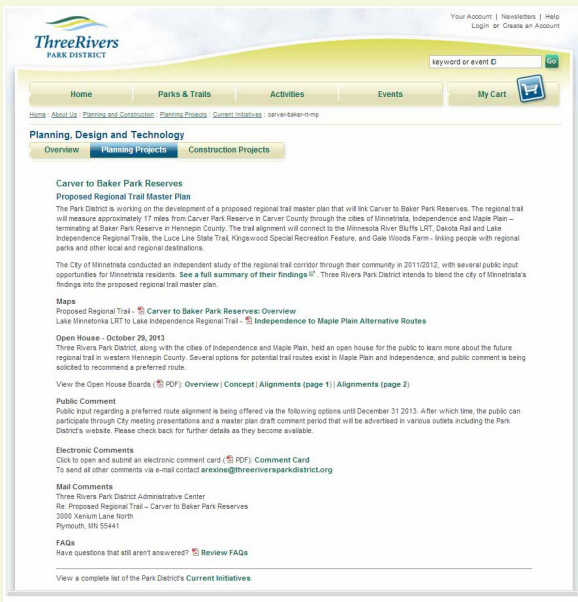
A detailed planning timeline provides an overview of actions required to take the Baker/Carver Regional Trail from inception through public and municipal input, Metropolitan Council review and finally Park District adoption (Figure 6).

The *Baker/Carver Regional Trail Master Plan* is intended to reflect and expound upon the work done by Minnetrista and further incorporate the larger regional context and recreational destinations, support alternative transportation options and provide an ancillary resource for economic development to neighboring jurisdictions. As part of the planning process, the Park District built upon the success of many existing planning efforts, collaborated closely with stakeholders, and utilized a variety of public outreach and engagement techniques.

### Dissemination of Information

A concerted effort was made to ensure that information regarding the proposed regional trail planning was broadcast in multiple formats. The Park District started a project website where the general public could receive background information, maps, notices of public meetings and links to submit electronic and written comments (Figure 7).





**Figure 7**  
**Baker/Carver Regional Trail Project Website**  
 A planning website was maintained to disseminate information to the public, available 24/7.  
 Source: Three Rivers Park District

The October 29, 2013 open house was advertised through a number of avenues. Letters to adjacent trail route properties in Independence and Maple Plain were mailed by the Park District, inviting property owners to the open house and to share their thoughts. Outdoor signage advertising the open house was placed at key locations: at Independence and Maple Plain City Halls and the Baker Park Reserve trailhead parking lot, and along the Lake Independence Regional Trail. A press release was issued by the Park District providing key details to open house prospective attendees.

Local newspapers also published the planning process in both print and on their own websites. The Laker & Pioneer newspaper ran an article entitled, "Park district proposing new regional trail" in August 2013 and the Lakeshore Weekly News ran an article entitled, "Public is invited to comment on future trail" in December 2013.

Maple Plain further advertised the Baker/Carver Regional Trail in its newsletter, the *Maple Plain Insider* in December 2013 - inviting the public to learn more about the regional trail initiative and submit written public comments.

### Feedback Received

Public comments received during the planning process were generally supportive - with Minnetrista's comments documented as an open-ended supportive/non-supportive solicitation (referenced and included in the *Minnetrista Regional Trail Master Plan*). Public comments received by the Park District after its assumption of the master planning process included residents from Independence, Maple Plain and the greater region (*separate document*). Participants were asked if they were supportive of the regional trail, which alternative route they preferred from the Luce Line State Trail to Baker Park Reserve (the segment not included in Minnetrista's planning), and finally if they had any concerns or special considerations. Overall, 84 percent (45 respondents reporting) were supportive of the regional trail; however, a clear, preferred public choice regional trail route was not apparent from the polling. To gather consensus between jurisdictions, the Park District provided



**Figure 8**  
**Public Comment Summary & Preliminary Cost Estimate Document Excerpts**  
*Separate document*  
 Source: Three Rivers Park District

the public comments, cost estimates and a pros/cons matrix to the Independence and Maple Plain elected officials to collectively discuss a preferred regional trail route (Figure 8). The result of this discussion was a mutually agreed upon preferred trail route that included a direct connection to downtown Maple Plain.

In 2012, a Minnetrista City Council resolution included the Baker/Carver Regional Trail in its *Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan* and a joint resolution of support was provided to the Park District by Maple Plain and Independence City Councils in 2014 (*Appendix A*).

### Future Public Engagement

The Park District will continue to engage the public through the design and construction phases of Baker/Carver Regional Trail. While the public engagement process for these phases has not yet been defined, the intent is to engage the public early and often and to balance engagement efforts between those most affected by the trail with the greater community and trail users.

### Related Projects & Plans

The following plans and concurrent efforts were referenced during the planning process to ensure consistency and minimize duplication. Within each of the projects and plans listed below, the intent of the regional trail is apparent; however, the identified route may be slightly different than what is designated as part of this master plan in response to the detailed analysis and public engagement effort.

#### Minnetrista

- *Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan* (2005) and subsequent amendment (2011) to include planning for the Baker/Carver Regional Trail
- *2030 Comprehensive Plan* (2009)
- Woodland Cove development (2010 - present)

#### Independence

- *Comprehensive Park, Trail and Open Space Plan* (1992)

- *Comprehensive Park, Trail and Open Space Plan Update* (2001-2006, draft)
- *2030 Comprehensive Plan Update* (2010)

#### Maple Plain

- *City of Maple Plain Walking and Biking Plan* (2012)
- *2030 Comprehensive Plan* (2008)
- *Redevelopment Implementation Plan* (2009)

#### Hennepin County

- *Hennepin County Bicycle Transportation Plan* (1997 and 2014 draft update)

#### Three Rivers Park District

- *Kingswood Special Recreation Feature Acquisition Master Plan* (2013)

#### Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

- *Six Mile Creek Diagnostic Study* (2013)



Along the Lake Independence Regional Trail near Baker Park Reserve trailhead parking lot.



Along Highway 12, adjacent to Maple Plain City Hall.

**Trail Open House  
Independence City Hall  
Oct. 29 5:30pm-7:30pm**

**Outdoor signage advertising the open house was placed at key locations.**

Source: Three Rivers Park District

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