

Maintenance along the regional trails.  
Image Credit: Three Rivers Park District

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## OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE PLANS & DETAILS

The Park District will operate the WMRRT using a wide variety of professional staff and in accordance with Park District policies, guidelines, and ordinances. This chapter outlines the operations and maintenance guidelines; however, as with all regional trail initiatives, further maintenance expectations are solidified within subsequent Trailway Cooperative Agreements with local municipalities, Hennepin County, MnDOT and/or other governmental partners as needed.

### GENERAL OPERATIONS

The Park District Ordinance specifies rules and regulations in order to provide for the safe and peaceful public use of Park District areas and facilities; for the educational and recreational benefit and enjoyment of the public; for the protection and preservation of the property, facilities and natural resources of the Park District; and for the safety and general welfare of the public.

Regional trails are open to the public year round, from 5AM to 10PM. The Park District's present policy provides for the operation and maintenance of regional trails from April 1 to November 14. Subsequently, the Park District does not anticipate plowing or otherwise maintaining the WMRRT during the winter season. Local communities may elect to operate and maintain the regional trail segment during winter months with a winter use permit. The Park District may revise this policy at a future date and elect to operate and maintain the trail year-round. Regional trail staffing levels fluctuate to account for seasonal use patterns, maintenance requirements and available funding.

### **the BL** THE BOTTOM LINE key message

WMRRT will be open to the public 7 days a week, 365 days per year - from 5AM - 10PM. It will be maintained by the Park District from April 1 - November 15.

At the time this master plan was written, general regional trail rules to be observed by users are as follows:

- No motorized vehicles or horses.
- Obey traffic signs and rules.
- Dogs must be leashed (6 foot, non-retractable max). Owners must pick up pet waste.
- Yield to slower trail users.
- Keep right except when passing.
- Warn others when passing.
- Respect adjoining landowner's rights and privacy.
- Be alert and be courteous.

### PUBLIC SAFETY

The Park District's Public Safety Department is the law enforcement agency responsible for providing a safe environment for regional trail users. Park police officers strive to provide an excellent experience for visitors by protecting the Park District's facilities, trails and natural resources. The main goal of Public Safety is to educate park guests on the use of the parks and the Three Rivers Park District Ordinances and state statutes.

The Public Safety Department is a full-service POST-recognized law enforcement agency comprised of command staff, administrative staff, Park police officers and campground and large event security.

The Public Safety Section is further supported by a volunteer Trail Patrol program and the statewide mutual aid program which facilitates the sharing of public safety resources in times of emergency or other unusual conditions. This program serves to facilitate assistance from surrounding police agencies.

### Regional Trail Patrol

Park police officers and volunteers (Trail Ambassadors) will patrol the WMRRT utilizing a variety of specialized patrol methods. Patrol frequencies will be adjusted as necessary to account for trail use, incident level, other concerns which may arise, and available funding. As part of routine trail patrol, Trail Ambassador patrollers promote trail etiquette and share information about the Park District and the regional trail system. In addition to routine patrol, Park District park service assistants (PSAs) may be dispatched through the Hennepin County Dispatch System to respond to incidences as they occur.

### Public Safety Staffing

Due to the creative deployment of existing Park Police Officers, utilization of seasonal staff, statewide mutual aid program and a successful Trail Ambassador volunteer program, no additional full-time Public Safety Department positions are anticipated to serve the WMRRT. As such, no additional operational funds are needed to provide public safety services along the WMRRT.



**Park District public safety officers and trail ambassadors patrol regional trails.**  
Source: Three Rivers Park District

### MAINTENANCE

The Park District is responsible to maintain parks and trails in a safe, clean and usable manner. Maintenance will include both typical, routine maintenance such as mowing, sweeping and trash clean-up as well as specialized maintenance such as small building construction, non-paved trail repair and grooming.

Maintenance will be done by a wide variety of highly skilled and trained maintenance professionals including carpenters, mechanics, park workers and electricians complemented by seasonal staff.

### Maintenance Plan

The Park District will maintain the WMRRT in a safe, clean and usable manner. Maintenance is an important part of

providing high-quality customer service and meeting trail user expectations.

### Routine Maintenance

Maintenance operations will include seasonal condition assessments and periodic inspections, followed by necessary maintenance actions. Inspections will address possible safety issues, vandalism and non-routine maintenance concerns (**Table 13**). The Park District will also respond to maintenance issues identified by the public on a timely basis as funding permits. Extraordinary maintenance will occur in response to storm damage, vandalism or other unplanned circumstances.

**Table 13: Routine Trail Maintenance Calendar**

Source: Three Rivers Park District

Time of Year	Routine Maintenance
<b>SPRING</b> April & May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sign inventory and replacement</li> <li>Spring cleanup</li> <li>Minor bridge and underpass repair (as needed)</li> </ul>
<b>SUMMER</b> June, July, August & September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erosion repair</li> <li>Fence repair</li> <li>Sign and post replacement</li> <li>Trash pickup</li> <li>Bridge and boardwalk repair (as needed)</li> <li>Vegetation control (as needed)</li> </ul>
<b>FALL</b> October & November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bituminous patching and striping replacement (as needed)</li> </ul>
<b>Throughout the season and/or in response to storm-related damage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mowing</li> <li>Periodic trail sweeping</li> <li>Trash pickup</li> <li>General clean-up and similar tasks</li> </ul>

When the 20-mile WMRRT corridor is fully realized, routine maintenance operation costs including additional staffing are estimated to increase by \$48,180/year (2018 dollars). Additional costs for trail surface preservation and rehabilitation (trail surface repairs, striping requirements, and pavement requirements) are anticipated to increase by \$67,360/year assuming a 30 year pavement life. The combined annual maintenance operation estimated cost for both routine and trail surface preventative maintenance is \$115,540/year.

### Maintenance Equipment & Supplies

The majority of the equipment necessary to provide routine maintenance of the WMRRT will be shared with the Elm Creek Work Cluster. Some tools and equipment specific to this regional trail may be needed to adequately and efficiently maintain the regional trail.

### \$100,000 (one time)

A onetime expense of \$70,000 (2018 dollars) is anticipated to cover the cost of additional maintenance equipment which may include an additional vehicle, mower, trailer, utility cart, pull behind blower and miscellaneous hand and power tools.

Maintenance of regional trail segments with limited property rights or segments that do not meet standard regional trail characteristics may require atypical maintenance.

In addition, the following specialized maintenance procedures are anticipated:

### Preventative Surface Treatment

WMRRT will receive scheduled striping, seal coating and redevelopment under the Park District's pavement management program and in accordance with Park District standards and as funding permits. Pavement management is estimated to cost approximately \$3,368/year/mile. The Park District will also seek opportunities



to work with Hennepin County and local cities in conjunction with road projects to improve trail design and surfacing.

**Trail/Bridge Inspection & Maintenance**

Trails are inspected annually in the spring as part of the pre-season maintenance program and are then inspected periodically by Park District maintenance staff as part of ongoing operations. Minor trail repair is handled on a timely basis, and probable major repair needs are evaluated and recommended to Park District management for planning or engineering review. Major trail rehabilitation projects are submitted to the Park District Board of Commissioners for funding as part of the annual operating budget, preservation and rehabilitation program or capital improvement program.

While no new pedestrian bridges and underpasses are anticipated at this time, it is possible that they may be needed at a future date to accommodate changing traffic patterns and volumes and unforeseen safety concerns. The ownership and maintenance responsibilities associated with any new pedestrian bridges/underpasses constructed as part of the WMRRT will be determined at which point funding is requested.

Existing grade separated WMRRT crossings owned by other agencies such as Highways 169, 610 and 694 are the responsibility of MnDOT and/or Hennepin County. The Park District only maintains the trail use of said bridges and underpasses.

**Noxious Weed Management**

The Park District mechanically or chemically removes noxious weeds within the defined trail corridor at the request of cities.

**Edge/Trail Shoulder Vegetation Management**

The Park District will maintain vegetative clearances so as not to negatively affect trail use on any sections where trail shoulder vegetation exists.

**Regional Trail Maintenance Staffing**

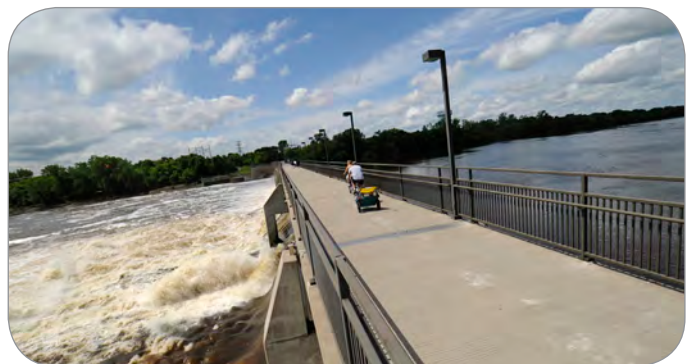
The WMRRT will be primarily maintained by the Park District’s regional trail maintenance crew. The inclusion of existing segments of the WMRRT will add an additional 8.4 miles (2.08 miles already existing/maintained) of regional trail maintenance responsibilities.

In the event additional mitigation requirements are necessary such as rain gardens or other best management practices, additional seasonal staffing may be required to complete the work. If necessary, seasonal staffing budgets will be developed and evaluated during the design development phase.

<p><b>Maintenance Staffing</b></p> <p>Maintenance will be completed by regional trail maintenance crew. In consideration of the future increased responsibilities, an additional 0.5 FTE maintenance position will be required to provide regional trail maintenance in accordance with current Park District regional trail maintenance practices and procedures.</p> <p><b>\$35,000/year</b> 0.5 FTE (full time employee)</p>
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**Regional trail maintenance includes maintaining vegetative clearances (where appropriate, per Trailway Cooperative Agreements).**  
Source: Three Rivers Park District



**Park District regional trails are maintained to a high level of standard for trail user experience and enjoyment.**  
Source: Three Rivers Park District

**NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES**

The Park District will protect and enhance natural and cultural resources along the WMRRT corridor where deemed appropriate.

**Resource Protection Plan**

WMRRT is routed in a manner to maximize visitor access and enjoyment of the Mississippi River and the natural and cultural resources that the regional trail passes through or adjacent to. As a result, the Park District, under the guidance of existing natural and cultural resource management plans, will utilize best practices to minimize any potentially negative impacts, work with adjacent property owners on how to best protect and manage significant resources, and incorporate opportunities to enjoy and interpret the resources present.

If the Park District acquires additional property along the regional trail which encompasses significant natural or cultural resources, the Park District will develop a stewardship plan specific to that resource and in accordance with other Park District natural and cultural resource management plans.

Potential natural or cultural resource impacts as a result of trail design and construction are addressed in Chapter 4.

### Resource Staffing

Much of the WMRRT is routed along existing public road right-of-way with limited natural and cultural resources. Areas of significant width will be more of the exception than the rule and directly relate to the resource value, direct and indirect costs, recreation benefit, willingness of the property owner and support of the local municipality. To account for minimal resource management along the trail corridor, additional seasonal or contract staffing such as Conservation Corps of Minnesota, is anticipated.

### Sustainability

The updated 2016 Sustainability Plan guides the Park District's efforts toward achieving established sustainability goals and targets by outlining broad strategies for organizational implementation.

The following goals provide guidance and intent to the Park District's sustainability efforts in respect to regional trails:

- Manage and operate District parklands and facilities in a manner that ensures ecological, financial and social integrity of the park system in perpetuity.
- Reduce dependence on fossil fuels to minimize green house gas (GHG) emissions and reduce public expenditures.
- Reduce Park District environmental impacts to demonstrate (or model) organizational commitment to environmental stewardship.
- Design parks and trails that maximize the ability of the public to use non-motorized transportation.

Specific to regional trails, the 2016 Sustainability Plan provides the following strategies:

- Place priority on regional trail routes that have the potential for the greatest number of non-motorized commuting trips over routes with lesser commuting potential;
- Work collaboratively with municipalities and neighborhoods to reconfigure park and regional trail access points to encourage pedestrian and bicycle access.

The Park District strives to utilize appropriate sustainable best management practices and guidelines such as the Minnesota Sustainable Building Guidelines (B3 Project) and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Development (LEED) Rating System on construction projects that support the WMRRT. Additionally, for regional trails, best management practices may include utilizing porous pavement, rain gardens and recycled construction materials.

### PUBLIC AWARENESS

The Marketing & Community Engagement Department manages a centralized marketing communications function that oversees the Park District's website, public relations, marketing, media relations, social media, brand management, event planning and promotion. A number of effective marketing and outreach tools are used to promote the Park District, including but not limited to events calendars, maps, digital and social media, direct mail, press releases, a centralized reservation system, brochures, advertising and on-site promotion.

The Park District collaborates with a wide array of community, business and government organizations to promote its facilities, programs and services, and to educate the public about its resources. The Park District also works with the Metropolitan Council Regional Parks System, the State Office of Tourism and other partners to leverage shared opportunities for creating awareness and visibility. Additionally, a focus is placed on developing partnerships and programming opportunities that allow the Park District to better serve all residents of Suburban Hennepin County, especially those with less access to its facilities and programs.

### Share the Trail

Safety for all regional trail users is a top priority. Regional trails are a shared public space which serve a variety of user groups. However, from time to time, trail users may find themselves in conflict with other users. Everyone benefits when people respect each other's mode of travel. The Park District encourages users to respect each other through a "Share the Trail" safety campaign.

The most common conflicts involve cyclists and pedestrians as they move at very different speeds and take up different spaces. Cyclists often do not alert pedestrians when passing at high speeds, which can cause sudden and startled responses from those on foot. Sometimes groups of walkers can take up both lanes, which leaves cyclists nowhere to pass as they move through. Both users have a responsibility to share the trail.

Another common safety concern revolves around obeying traffic signs. Cyclists are sometimes required to stop at roadway crossings and there is often confusion between motorists and cyclists regarding right of way. Overall, cyclists need to obey traffic signs in order to stay safe.



Share the Trail signage example - located along regional trails.  
Source: Three Rivers Park District - artwork by Adam Turman





The WMRRT weaves through Cloquet Overlook Park | Dayton, MN  
Image Credit: Three Rivers Park District

# IMPLEMENTATION

## ESTIMATED COSTS & FUNDING

For the purposes of the WMRRT Master Plan, a cohesive implementation plan is outlined which includes estimated costs and funding strategies. Implementation will occur at the discretion of the Park District and its partners and only when the Park District is financially prepared to assume the operation and maintenance responsibilities and costs of the regional trail.

Construction of non-existing WMRRT segments spanning four communities will occur as opportunities present themselves and as resources allow. A phased approach allows for trail segments to be constructed in a logical manner and respond to the demand and support from the local community, collaboration with other projects and maximizing internal and external funding opportunities. The timing of implementation is also dependent on the acquisition of the corridor (where necessary) which, under a predominantly willing-seller approach, may take decades to realize.

### EXISTING TRAIL SEGMENTS

Over 10 miles of the WMRRT exist, in varying conditions, completing nearly 50 percent of the 20-mile corridor. Those completed segments are currently owned, operated and maintained by the Park District and local municipalities (Table 14). The WMRRT Master Plan directs that the existing WMRRT segments be elevated to regional status, thus allowing the Park District to enter into Trailway Cooperative Agreements with local municipalities to own, operate and/or maintain said segments. The timing of these agreements will occur at the discretion of the Park District. In addition, the Park District will not assume ownership, operation and maintenance responsibilities of existing trail segments until they are regionally significant (i.e. connect to greater regional park and trail segments, are long enough to have regional draw, etc.).

### FUTURE TRAIL SEGMENTS

The total acquisition and development costs to complete proposed and upgrade existing WMRRT segments are summarized in (Table 15, following page). The estimated master planning level acquisition and construction cost estimate for the unbuilt trail sections and upgrades to existing

segments is estimated at \$15.3 million. In recognition of the anticipated acquisition phase duration and amount of resources and coordination necessary to construct the remaining 10 miles of regional trail, it is anticipated that the WMRRT will not be fully constructed for another 20 to 30 years.

**Table 14: Existing WMRRT Segments for Future Inclusion in Park District Regional Trail System**

Source: Three Rivers Park District

Segment	Miles	Municipal Jurisdiction
A2	0.22	Dayton
A6	0.41	Dayton
B1	1.46	Champlin
B3	0.16	Champlin (including TH169 MnDOT underpass)
B5	0.19	Champlin
B7	0.12	Champlin
C1	1.31	Brooklyn Park
C2	0.23	Three Rivers Park District (Mississippi Gateway RP)
C3	0.13	Brooklyn Park (Mississippi Gateway RP)
C4	0.41	Brooklyn Park (Mississippi Gateway RP)
C5	3.2	Brooklyn Park (including 610 MnDOT bridge)
C7	0.25	Brooklyn Park
D1	0.91	Brooklyn Center
D3	0.11	Minnesota Department of Transportation
D4	1.31	Three Rivers Park District (North Mississippi RP)

**Total 10.45 miles**

## the BL THE BOTTOM LINE key message

WMRRT implementation will be phased as available land and financial resources prohibit the entire 20-mile corridor from being constructed as one project in the near future.

## Acquisition Needs

The proposed WMRRT segments are a combination of trail adjacent to roads (off-street, within road right-of-way), trail through public property and trail through private property (**Table 16**). Acquisition costs could be reduced by waiting for the regional trail to be realized through land use development and/or road reconstruction. A detailed analysis of the acquisition costs area outlined in **Appendix E**.

Due to the willing-seller approach, the WMRRT acquisition phase may take years to fully realize. There may be additional acquisition opportunities to acquire a wider trail and ultimately create a more desirable user experience by buffering the trail from surrounding development, creating and improving river touchpoints and by incorporating areas of natural or cultural resource significance. The acquisition needs presented in this master plan are the minimal acquisition requirements to achieve a continuous and contiguous corridor.

## Development Needs

The development costs for the remaining 10 miles include all foreseeable costs to construct the trail to regional trail standards including site preparation, reconfiguration and upgrade of rural to urban roadways (addition of curb and gutter), modification of drainage patterns, storm water treatment, bridges and boardwalks, wetland mitigation, utility relocation, and installation of signage, striping, kiosks, rest stops, landscaping and similar support elements. A very preliminary implementation and funding plan is summarized in **Appendix E**.

Regional trail development will be phased and significantly tied to opportunities that take advantage of external funding sources, road reconstruction projects, development initiatives and local and regional political will. Several near term projects have been identified and include construction of achievable, small gaps and wayfinding to establish the WMRRT's place within the regional trail network. Mid and long-term projects require significant funding which often take a substantial amount of time to coordinate.

## OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE COSTS

The operations and maintenance cost summary is summarized in **Table 17** by existing and future WMRRT segments. Greater detail is provided in Chapter 5.

**Table 15: Future WMRRT Segments** Source: Three Rivers Park District

	Municipality	Acquisition Costs	Construction Cost	Total Cost
<b>A</b>	Dayton	\$177,700	\$6,467,300	<b>\$6,645,000</b>
<b>B</b>	Champlin	\$227,000	\$6,457,000	<b>\$6,684,000</b>
<b>C</b>	Brooklyn Park	-	\$638,000	<b>\$638,000</b>
<b>D</b>	Brooklyn Center	\$96,000	\$1,200,000	<b>\$1,296,000</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$500,700</b>	<b>\$14,762,300</b>	<b>\$15,263,000</b>

**Table 16: Acquisition Needs for Future WMRRT Segments**

Source: Three Rivers Park District

Scenario	Description	Type of Property Right	Acquisition Strategy	Acquisition Cost
<b>Public right-of-way</b>	For segments immediately adjacent to roads	Right-of-way certificates, limited use permits, and/or easements	Secure through Trailway Cooperative Agreement negotiations or development projects	No Cost
<b>Public Property</b>	For segments through publicly held land (Stephens Farm Park, Cloquet Overlook Park, Donnie Galloway Park, Champlin redevelopment property, Mississippi Point Park and Chandler Park)	Limited use permits, and/or easements	Secure through Trailway Cooperative Agreement negotiations or development projects	No cost
<b>Private Property</b>	For segments across and along private property	Fee-title or easements	Willing-seller approach. Acquisition will occur when land owners are ready and interested in selling their property or are considering development of their property - providing an opportunity to negotiate the designation of the regional trail corridor as part of development. Creative acquisition strategies such as easements, lot splits, resale of surplus property, transfer of development rights, and similar to best meet the needs and expectations of all involved parties will be explored.	Minimum: \$500,700

**Table 17: Operations & Maintenance Costs Summary**

Source: Three Rivers Park District

Existing Park District WMRRT Segments		
	Mileage	Additional Basic Operation Services
• Mississippi Gateway Regional Park	0.23	<b>None: Included in existing budget</b>
• North Mississippi River Regional Park	1.31	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.08 miles</b>	
Future Park District WMRRT Segments		
	Mileage	Additional Basic Operation Services
• Existing local segments (to be upgraded to regional status)	8.91	<b>Routine Operations and Maintenance</b> \$48,180/year
• Unbuilt trail segments	10	<b>Pavement Management</b> \$67,360/year
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.91 miles</b>	<b>\$115,540/year</b>



## FUNDING PLAN

The WMRRT Master Plan outlines funding strategies and opportunities for future property acquisition, physical trail development and ongoing operations and maintenance.

### Acquisition

As a component of the Metropolitan Council's Regional Park and Trail System Acquisition, it is anticipated that up to 75% of all acquisition funding will come from the Metropolitan Council. This funding is generated by Metropolitan Council bond funds, Environmental Natural Resources Trust Fund and Parks and Trails Opportunity Legacy Fund, with the remaining 25% of acquisition coming from the Park District's Land Acquisition Development and Betterment Fund or general obligation bonds and its partners.

### Development

Regional trail development is anticipated to be funded through a variety of funding sources and partners including National Park Service: Alternative Transportation Funds; Federal Transportation Department: Federal Land Access Program and Federal Recreation Trail Program, State of Minnesota trail funding opportunities, Metropolitan Council: Bonds and Parks and Trails Legacy Funds, Park District: general obligation bonds, Hennepin County Bikeway Grant Program, local communities and similar.

### Operations & Maintenance

Operation and maintenance costs for new Park District WMRRT segments will be primarily funded through the Park District Operating Budget. The Operating Budget's primary source of funds is local property taxes with some revenue from the State of Minnesota as part of the Operations and Maintenance Fund allocations from the Metropolitan Council.

Additional costs associated with pavement maintenance will be funded from the Park District's Asset Management Program, which includes revenue allocated to the Park District from the State of Minnesota as well as the Park District general obligation bonds. All operation and maintenance costs are subject to the annual budget preparation process approved by the Park District Board of Commissioners.



**Park District regional trails provide various user experiences and wayfinding.**  
Sources: Three Rivers Park District, Ann Rexine

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