

Board of Commissioners votes to move forward with Dakota Rail Regional Trail

The Three Rivers Park District Board of Commissioners unanimously approved a resolution directing staff to move forward with development and construction of the Dakota Rail Regional Trail. In approving the resolution at their April 5 meeting, commissioners pointed to the overwhelming support this regionally-significant project has received from numerous government agencies, civic groups, community organizations and the general public.

The 13.5-mile Dakota Rail Regional Trail will begin near County Road 15 in Wayzata. It will follow the former Dakota Rail Corridor through Wayzata, Orono, Minnetonka Beach, Spring Park, Mound, Minnetrista and St. Bonifacius. Although the portion of the trail built by Three Rivers Park District will end at Hennepin County's western border, Carver and McLeod counties are expected to extend the trail an additional 31.5 miles west to Hutchinson.

"The Board is united in moving forward with this development, which will connect the communities of Lake Minnetonka and enhance their access to the benefits of this unique resource," said Board Chair Larry Blackstad.

Offering scenic views of Lake Minnetonka's northern bays and the picturesque countryside west of the lake, the paved trail will be ideal for walking, biking, running, in-line skating, commuting, dog walking and other non-motorized uses. Tentative plans call for construction of the trail to start this fall.

In 2001, the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRRA), along with the Carver and McLeod County Regional Rail Authorities, purchased the Dakota Rail Corridor. Three Rivers Park District intends to lease a 16-foot-wide section of right-of-way for the trail, and the HCRRA will remain the owner of the property. Three Rivers Park District operates an extensive network of regional trails throughout the western Twin Cities area.

About Three Rivers Park District

Three Rivers Park District is a natural resources-based park system that manages park reserves, regional parks, regional trails and special-use facilities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The Park District offers facilities for every season, including picnicking, swimming, creative play, boating, fishing, downhill skiing, snowboarding, golf, camping and sledding; extensive trails for hiking, biking, in-line skating, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, as well as program sites for nature, recreation, historic and farm education. Three Rivers Park District's mission is to promote environmental stewardship through recreation and education in a natural resources-based park system. The Park District owns and operates over 27,000 acres and serves more than 5 million visitors a year.