



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2024 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2024-060

Proposal Title: River to River Greenway – Underpass and Trail Reconstruction

Project Manager Information

Name: Tony Wotzka

Organization: Dakota County

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Two-mile trail reconstruction of the Dakota County River to River Greenway through Valley Park, connecting from Trunk Highway 13 to a proposed underpass of Trunk Highway 149, in Mendota Heights

Funds Requested: \$3,942,000

Proposed Project Completion: December 31, 2026

LCCMR Funding Category: Land Acquisition, Habitat, and Recreation (G)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): Metro

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): Metro

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Narrative

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

The future completion of the two-mile Valley Park trail improvements will not only increase safety and usability for all ages and abilities, but will also complete the final segment of the 8-mile regional Dakota County River to River Greenway. The reconstructed trail will include safety and accessibility upgrades, which will include widening of the trail width to 10 feet, wider pedestrian bridges crossing Interstate Valley Creek, improved curve radii throughout, improved drainage to reduce ice buildup in the winter and spring, and minor re-alignments to address sharp curves and slope issues. The Minnesota Trunk Highway 149 underpass will be located approximately 100 feet north of the intersection of Trunk Highway 149 and Trunk Highway 62. The underpass of Trunk Highway 149 is identified in the Metropolitan Council Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN), and a proposed underpass will improve local and regional connectivity. It will also improve safety as it will provide a completely protected crossing and will remove cyclist and pedestrian traffic from the busy, skewed intersection of Trunk Highway 149 (AADT of 9,900 in 2015) and Trunk Highway 62 (AADT of 34,000 in 2019).

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.

This important two-mile regional trail segment connects the Minnesota River Greenway with the Mendota to Lebanon Hills Greenway that will eventually end in Eagan near Lebanon Hills Regional Park and have future connections with the Veterans Memorial Greenway taking users from Eagan to the Mississippi River Greenway in Inver Grove. The grade separated crossing plays an important role in the RBTN network and Dakota County's River to River Greenway, an 8-mile east-west route connecting the Mississippi River at Lilydale to the Mississippi River in South Saint Paul. The regional trail navigates through residential areas in Mendota Heights, West St. Paul and South St. Paul, providing linkages to north-south RBTN routes and other Dakota County greenways, linking to employment and commercial areas. The underpass will also leverage a recently completed grade separated crossing of Trunk Highway 62 to the east of this project area, to facilitate north-south non-motorized transportation, along with a future trail connection along Trunk Highway 149 to the north of the project area. The existing trail has vertical and horizontal cross-slopes that are not ADA compliant as well as sharp curves that do not currently meet Dakota County Greenway Standards.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

The first stewardship priority is restoring native habitat in greenway corridors themselves. Aligning the trail reconstruction and underpass projects in collaboration or in partnership with other natural resource, stream bank restoration or water quality projects by fostering partnerships with the SWCD, WMO and City and County Natural Resource Management System Plans (NRMSP) would be a priority. In addition once the trail is converted to a County Greenway a 30' trail allows the County to implement restoration projects identified in the NRMSP with 100% County cost and maintenance responsibility and cost sharing up to 300' from the Greenway alignment.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Greenway Trail Reconstruction and Improvements

Activity Budget: \$1,872,000

Activity Description:

Upgrade existing local trails and Interstate Valley Creek bridges to Dakota County regional greenway standards in the city of Mendota Heights. This 1.4 mile River to River Greenway segment would have a northern termini at the Minnesota River Greenway / Big Rivers Regional Trail trailhead in Lilydale and then head south through Valley Park to the Mendota to Lebanon Hills Greenway, which is at the intersection of Trunk Highway 149 and Trunk Highway 62 in Mendota Heights. Trail reconstruction activities assumes a 10' wide paved trail, includes removals, grading, base, pavement, retaining walls, construction limit vegetation restoration, removal of existing bridge/abutments, construction of new abutments, installation of new bridges, seating nodes and trail wayfinding.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
100% Construction Plans	November 30, 2023
Award Construction Contract	February 28, 2024
Complete Greenway Trail Improvement Construction Project	December 31, 2024

Activity 2: Greenway Underpass of State Trunk Highway 149

Activity Budget: \$2,070,000

Activity Description:

Construct a grade separated trail underpass of State Trunk Highway 149. Assumes a 16'x10' box culvert; includes removals, box culvert sections, end sections, box culvert lighting, storm sewer, MnDOT signal cabinet and signal infrastructure replacements, guardrail, retaining walls, pavement and turf and vegetation restoration within the construction grading limits.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
100% Construction Plans	November 30, 2023
Award Construction Contract	January 31, 2026
Complete Greenway Underpass Construction Project	December 31, 2026

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Ryan Ruzek	City of Mendota Heights	Public Works Director. Assists in reviewing plans, processing agreements and facilitates local agency coordination.	No
Joe Barten	Lower Mississippi River WMO	Administrator. Assists in reviewing plans and facilitates WMO agency coordination.	No
Bryant Ficek	Minnesota Department of Transportation	MnDOT Metro North Area Engineer. Facilitates internal MnDOT functional review of plans and agreements.	No

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?

The results would be used for construction costs associated to the trail reconstruction, Interstate Valley Creek Bridge replacements, TH 149 underpass construction and corresponding construction limits restoration work adjacent to the trail. Future work will be phased and include additional site and restoration work for achieving target communities in Valley Park where the majority of the trail travels through, as well as Valley Creek stream stabilization projects and BMP project as identified in a 2023 Lower Mississippi River WMO - Interstate Valley Creek stabilization and volume reduction study. This work will be funding in part by grants and local CIPs.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Reintroduction Of Bison To Spring Lake Park Reserve	M.L. 2021, First Special Session, Chp. 6, Art. 6, Sec. 2, Subd. 08q	\$560,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Tony Wotzka

Job Title: Senior Project Manager, Landscape Architect

Provide description of the project manager’s qualifications to manage the proposed project.

In my current role and previous positions, I have had a wealth of opportunities to work with internal and external stakeholders on projects from planning to post construction maintenance. My primary role has been to provide leadership, supervision and support of project teams and coordination with project partners. In these roles I've been responsible for developing project plans, budget needs, project schedules, agreements, communications strategy and providing project management oversight to ensure the plans aligns with the project scope, risk and complexity. In these positions I have led various projects and agency initiatives that involved project management and technical design oversight including budgeting, project stakeholder meetings, and construction plan development and administration as well as asset management planning and coordination. These roles have required the coordination with stakeholders; from the local volunteer group and city council to the consultant project managers and technical design staff, maintenance staff, project managers, senior leadership and other agency leaders.

Organization: Dakota County

Organization Description:

Located in the southeast corner of the seven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul area, the Dakota County Park System serves the state's third most populous county. With more than 5,000 acres and a rapidly growing network of greenways, Dakota County Parks is a nature-based system that exists to help meet the needs of over 400,000 county residents. Dakota County Parks has an active and professional capital development program that oversees park development to provide residents with facilities to enable natural resource-based recreation, a natural resource program that is restoring, maintaining, and enhancing hundreds of acres of prairie, forest and woodland, and a professional outdoor education program that manages and interprets the cultural sites within the Dakota County Park System.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Trail Construction				-		\$1,872,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Underpass Construction				-		\$2,070,000
							Sub Total	\$3,942,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								

							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$3,942,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
Cash	Dakota County CIP	Trail Construction	Secured	\$208,000
Cash	Dakota County CIP	Underpass Construction	Secured	\$230,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$438,000
			Funds Total	\$438,000

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [2dac699e-28d.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Map representing the project location in relation to the entire River to River Greenway in Dakota County....

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
Dakota County Board Resolution 23-130	27d22125-444.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Mendota Heights resolution supporting the River to River Greenway Master Plan	c90d9c49-b7f.pdf
River to River Greenway - 30% Preliminary Layout	e5615d28-54b.pdf
Project Overview & Project Coordination Opportunities	4febc570-467.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Does your project include the design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other capital asset costing \$10,000 or more?

Yes

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services, as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7?

No