



## Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

### 2026 Request for Proposal

#### General Information

**Proposal ID:** 2026-264

**Proposal Title:** River to River Greenway - BMPs, Underpass, Reconstruction

#### Project Manager Information

**Name:** Tony Wotzka

**Organization:** Dakota County

**Office Telephone:** (952) 891-7966

**Email:** tony.wotzka@co.dakota.mn.us

#### Project Basic Information

**Project Summary:** Regional trail improvements that will include ADA alignment revisions, new stormwater Best Management Practices, local trail connections, vegetation restoration, smaller plazas, and a grade separated tunnel under Highway 149.

**ENRTF Funds Requested:** \$1,400,000

**Proposed Project Completion:** May 31, 2028

**LCCMR Funding Category:** Education and Outdoor Recreation (C)

#### 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 and south of Marie Avenue regional 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, Interstate Valley Creek water quality best management practices (BMPs), 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) as a barrier, and the 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 Lebanon Hills Greenway that will eventually end in Eagan within 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 is located adjacent Interstate Valley Creek and the project is proposing improvements within the tributary drainage area to reduce peak stormwater and pollutant loads via strategic BMPs to provide improved stormwater management.

**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 easement 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: Design Development and Approvals

**Activity Budget:** \$100,000

**Activity Description:**

This objective of this activity is to finalize the design, obtain necessary approvals and advertise the bid for the project. existing local trails and Interstate Valley Creek bridges to Dakota County regional greenway standards in the city of Mendota Heights. Tasks include completing design review with the Department of Administration and SHPO, approving final designs, and going out to bid for the project. The design process will be led by Dakota County and include design development through construction documents and incorporate community feedback, building on the existing efforts of Dakota County. County Park staff will work with design consultants to finalize design plans and prepare all necessary documentation for reviews and going to bid. Park staff will oversee the advertising of the bid and move the project into the pre-construction phase.

The design phase of this project will incorporate feedback from community and stakeholder engagement and the expertise of park staff into final designs. Trail reconstruction activities assumes a 10' wide paved trail, includes removals, grading, base, pavement, retaining walls, construction limit vegetation restoration, installation of new stormwater BMPs, seating nodes, trail wayfinding and a tunnel under Highway 149.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Design review process with MnDOT, ESA Checklist, and Other Agency Review	January 31, 2026
Development and approval of final designs (DD-CDs) and bid documents	June 30, 2026

### Activity 2: Bidding and Pre-Construction

**Activity Budget:** \$100,000

**Activity Description:**

Once the design and construction documents are finalized, the second main activity of this project will address the bidding process and contractor preparation for construction. Tasks include contractor selection, acquiring all necessary permits and funding, and construction preparation.

County Park staff will oversee the selection of contractors during the bidding process and help as agreed upon with construction administration and oversight. Contractors will complete pre-construction tasks including site preparation.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Selection of contractors for pre-construction and construction of project	July 31, 2026
Pre-construction process, construction preparation, permit acquisition, all funds secured	September 30, 2026

### Activity 3: Construction

**Activity Budget:** \$1,200,000

**Activity Description:**

This activity brings the proposed improvements through construction to project completion. Tasks include construction,

construction oversight and administration, and project close-out.

Trail reconstruction activities assumes a 1.5 mile 10' wide paved trail, includes removals, grading, base, pavement, retaining walls, construction limit vegetation restoration, installation of stormwater BMPs, seating nodes and trail wayfinding.

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, utility relocations, guardrail, retaining walls, pavement and turf and vegetation restoration within the construction grading limits.

County Park staff will help as agreed upon with construction administration and oversight. Contractors will complete construction tasks.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Construction, Oversight and Administration Begins	September 30, 2026
Construction, Oversight and Administration Ends	November 30, 2027
Project closeout, signage with ENRTF logo and open for us	December 31, 2027

## 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 South Area Manager. 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, BMPs for stormwater management, Trunk Highway 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
Completing the Mississippi River Greenway: Dakota County	M.L. 2024, , Chp. 83, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 08h	\$657,000
Spring Lake Park Reserve Restoration and River Access	M.L. 2024, , Chp. 83, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 09g	\$2,925,000

## Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

**Project Manager Name:** Tony Wotzka

**Job Title:** Greenways Manager

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

As the Greenways Manager at Dakota County, Tony Wotzka has experience working with external and internal stakeholders on planning and construction projects. His primary role is to provide leadership, supervision, and support of project teams and to coordinate with project partners to implement the county's Greenway Program and affiliated projects. Tony is responsible for developing project plans, providing management oversight to ensure plans align with project scopes, and overseeing project budgets, schedules, and agreements. Asset management planning, technical design oversight, facilitation of stakeholder meetings with volunteers, county board members, consultants, design and maintenance staff and agency leaders are responsibilities for the Greenway Manager.

**Organization:** Dakota County

**Organization Description:**

Dakota County is part of the 7-county metropolitan area with an operating budget of \$308 million in 2023. Dakota County employs approximately 2,000 staff at three primary service center locations. Approximately 1/3 of the land area is considered developed as urban/suburban and 2/3 remain as rural/agricultural. Dakota County is the third most populous County in the state estimated at 442,038 in 2021. Dakota County is bordered by 3 rivers including the Minnesota River to the west, Mississippi River to the east and the Cannon River to the south.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
TBD	Service Contract	Preparation of the site. Construction of all of the trail and site features included in the construction plans and specifications, including erosion control, and other construction tasks.				0		\$1,200,000
SEH	Service Contract	Regional Trail and Tunnel design and engineering contractor selected by competitive bid and will develop the final site design, engineering, and construction specifications				0		\$200,000
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$1,400,000</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								

							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$1,400,000



Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
---------------	---------------------	-------------	--

## Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
Cash	Dakota County CIP	Predesign/Construction	Secured	\$2,042,000
Cash	Federal Regional Solicitation Award	Construction	Secured	\$2,080,000
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$4,122,000</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$4,122,000</b>

**Total Project Cost: \$5,522,000**

**This amount accurately reflects total project cost?**

Yes

## Acquisition and Restoration

### Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
Proposed Campion Estates	Dakota	Forest, wetland, stream. Regional Trail Easement for construction and permanent alignment of trail.	Easement - Other	0.5	0.25	\$60,000	Private	Dakota County or City of Mendota Heights	Negotiations In Progress
<b>Totals</b>				<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.25</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>			

## Easement (Other) Acquisition

**1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including an explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.**

Parcel is identified for a potential Regional Trail Easement for the construction and permanent alignment of the regional trail and tunnel location. Active updates to the plat may eliminate the need for permanent easements via park dedication

**2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified for the acquisition purposes you propose. Include the URL to the plan if one is available.**

River to River Natural Resource Management Plan.

<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/parks/About/ResourcePlans/Documents/RiverToRiverGreenwayNRMP.pdf>

**3. For any parcels acquired in fee title, a restoration and management plan must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future.**

Restoration and management plan would be consistent to the River to River Natural Resources Management plan

**4. For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained.**

County Board approval will be obtained

**5. If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction.**

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Map*

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

#### *Alternate Text for Map*

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

#### *Financial Capacity*

Title	File
Dakota County Financial Capacity Statement	<a href="#">b7d85f1a-77f.pdf</a>

#### *Board Resolution or Letter*

Title	File
Resolution No. 25-107	<a href="#">3d2d1e10-d2c.pdf</a>

### Supplemental Attachments

#### *Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other*

Title	File
Capital Project Questionnaire	<a href="#">03ac33ee-ab8.pdf</a>
Project Summary	<a href="#">159403c8-b93.pdf</a>
Project Summary	<a href="#">2430cba2-937.pdf</a>
Capital Construction Project Budget Addendum	<a href="#">91090961-e20.pdf</a>

## Administrative Use

**Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?**

Yes: Easement (Other) Acquisition,

**Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?**

N/A

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

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 pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?**

Yes

**Is the purpose of the acquisition for construction of a building(s), trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large- scale stream or wetland restoration, either now or in the future?**

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 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?**

No

**Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:**

N/A

**Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements**

Yes, I understand