



**SOO LINE RECREATIONAL TRAIL  
MASTER PLAN**

**MORRISON COUNTY, MN**

**SOO LINE RECREATIONAL TRAIL MASTER PLAN**

*Submitted to*  
MORRISON COUNTY, MN



Approved by the Morrison County Board of Commissioners, September 2017



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Master Plan is to evaluate issues and needs within the existing Soo Line Trail facilities and to identify future site improvements that will reflect the needs and values of all potential users. This document is intended to act as a guide to Morrison County in the planning and implementation of trail improvements.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

The Soo Line Recreational Trail (SLRT) is a Morrison County owned trail built on an abandoned rail road grade. The trail begins at the Stearns/Morrison County line located three miles southwest of Bowlus - where it meets the Wobegon Trail. The facility continues nine miles as a paved (non-motorized) trail in a Northeasterly direction traversing the City of Bowlus, crossing the Mississippi River at Blanchard Dam and eventually tying in to the Park and Ride Trailhead at US Highway 10 approximately three miles north of the City of Royalton. The trail then continues 27.5 miles as a gravel (motorized) facility traversing the small cities of Genola, Pierz, and Hillman and eventually hitting the Morrison/Mille Lacs County line on its way to its termination point at Superior Wisconsin.

The 14 foot wide (average) trail includes 27.5 miles of gravel motorized use, 9 miles of paved non-motorized use and is mostly through wooded terrain with an occasional farm or wetland. The SLRT serves 16 cities and 30 townships within Morrison County in addition to the many visitors from surrounding counties and outstate Minnesota.



### RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATIONS

Morrison County owns and manages the SLRT.

### REGIONAL CONTEXT

**Figure 1** illustrates the SLRT in a regional context. Traversing the county from the Stearns County line to Mille Lacs County, the trail provides recreational opportunity to the surrounding communities and connections to other valued regional destinations.

Within the State of Minnesota, the SLRT has further connections to the Lake Wobegon Regional Trail in Stearns County, MN, providing passage to Fergus Falls/Central Lakes Trail (63 miles), and has a high potential to provide for east-west connection of the Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail, that when complete will provide a connection between Crow Wing State Park and the SLRT, effectively linking the Central Lakes, Lake Wobegon, SLRT, Paul Bunyan, Heartland and Mi-Gi-Zi Trails into one continuous recreational route. **This system would create one of the longest connected trail systems in the country.**

FIGURE 1 - REGIONAL CONTEXT



## 2. SITE INFORMATION

The Soo Line Recreational Trail (SLRT) includes 27.5 miles of gravel motorized use, 9 miles of paved non-motorized use and is mostly through wooded terrain with an occasional farm or wetland. The existing right-of-way throughout the corridor varies with an average width of 100'. Having been constructed on an old rail bed, the trail is centered on the 18' rail bed with side slopes of 2:1 or sometimes 1:1. The SLRT serves 16 cities and 30 townships within Morrison County in addition to the many visitors from surrounding counties and outstate Minnesota.

### SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The varied landscapes of the SLRT creates a unique and thoroughly enjoyable experience for users. Traveling the trail, one will pass farm fields, wooded corridors, quiet lakes, meandering streams, as well as wetlands and waterfowl areas. Deer, wild turkey, pheasants, songbirds, and grouse are some of the wildlife that can be seen throughout.

### EXISTING SITE FACILITIES

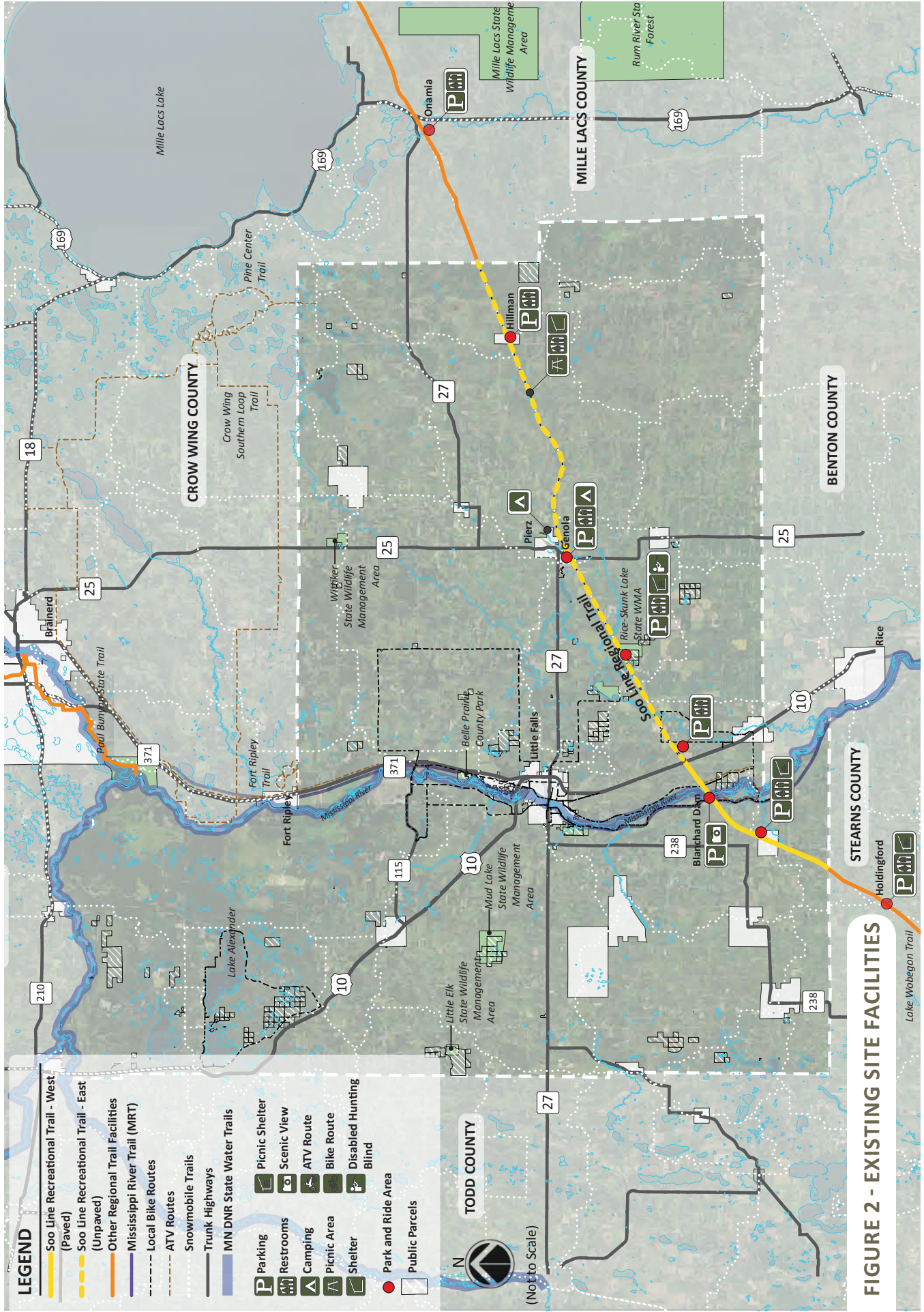
The following list identifies the existing facilities and amenities available to users of the Soo Line Recreational Trail. Refer to **Figure 2** for locations.

1. Asphalt Paved Trail
2. Aggregate Surfaced Trail (Gravel)
3. Trail Bridges (9)
4. Trailhead Parking
5. Trailhead Information Kiosks
6. Trailhead Restrooms
7. Benches along Trail
8. Picnic Shelter at Trailhead
9. Disabled Hunting Blind

#### Available Trail uses:

	Soo Line Trail - West (Paved)	Soo Line Trail - East (Unpaved, Gravel)
~April 1-October 31	Pedestrians, in-line skaters, bicyclers	Pedestrians, bicyclers, horseback riders, class 1 and class 2 all-terrain vehicles as defined in MN Statute 84.92 Subd.8
~December 1 - March 31	Non-studded snowmobiles and cross-country skiers as long as there is adequate snow of 3"+	Snowmobiles and cross-country skiers as long as there is adequate snow of 3"+

*NOTE: The Soo Line Trail is closed during the month of November in order to avoid conflict between recreation users and hunters*



**LEGEND**

- Soo Line Recreational Trail - West (Paved)
- Soo Line Recreational Trail - East (Unpaved)
- Other Regional Trail Facilities
- Mississippi River Trail (MRT)
- Local Bike Routes
- ATV Routes
- Snowmobile Trails
- Trunk Highways
- MN DNR State Water Trails
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Camping
- ATV Route
- Bike Route
- Disabled Hunting Blind
- Shelter
- Picnic Shelter
- Scenic View
- Park and Ride Area
- Public Parcels

**FIGURE 2 - EXISTING SITE FACILITIES**

## PROPOSED SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Input from the Park and Trail Master Plan Task Force members and the general public (through survey responses) were used to identify potential trail improvements for the SLRT. **Figure 3** illustrates these potential improvements, which are outlined below in no particular order:

**NOTE:** Paving the remainder of the Soo Line Trail, to the Mille Lacs County line, was discussed in great length at the Task force meetings. The merits, consequences, and implications to various user groups were considered. It was concluded not to include expanding the pavement material as an improvement in this master planning document. This decision was reached for several reasons:

- The completion of the Camp Ripley Veterans Memorial Trail will greatly expand the option for bicycle routes from the existing paved Soo Line Trail.
- Paving the remainder of the trail would likely push out the ATV users due to a corridor too narrow and steep to safely accommodate motorized and non-motorized users on the same path.
- High costs to the county associated with re-grading, paving, and maintaining the remaining 27.5 miles of trails. (trail is currently maintained by local ATV club)

### Improvement #1

Obtain necessary approvals to allow for ATV traffic to cross the Mississippi River Bridge.

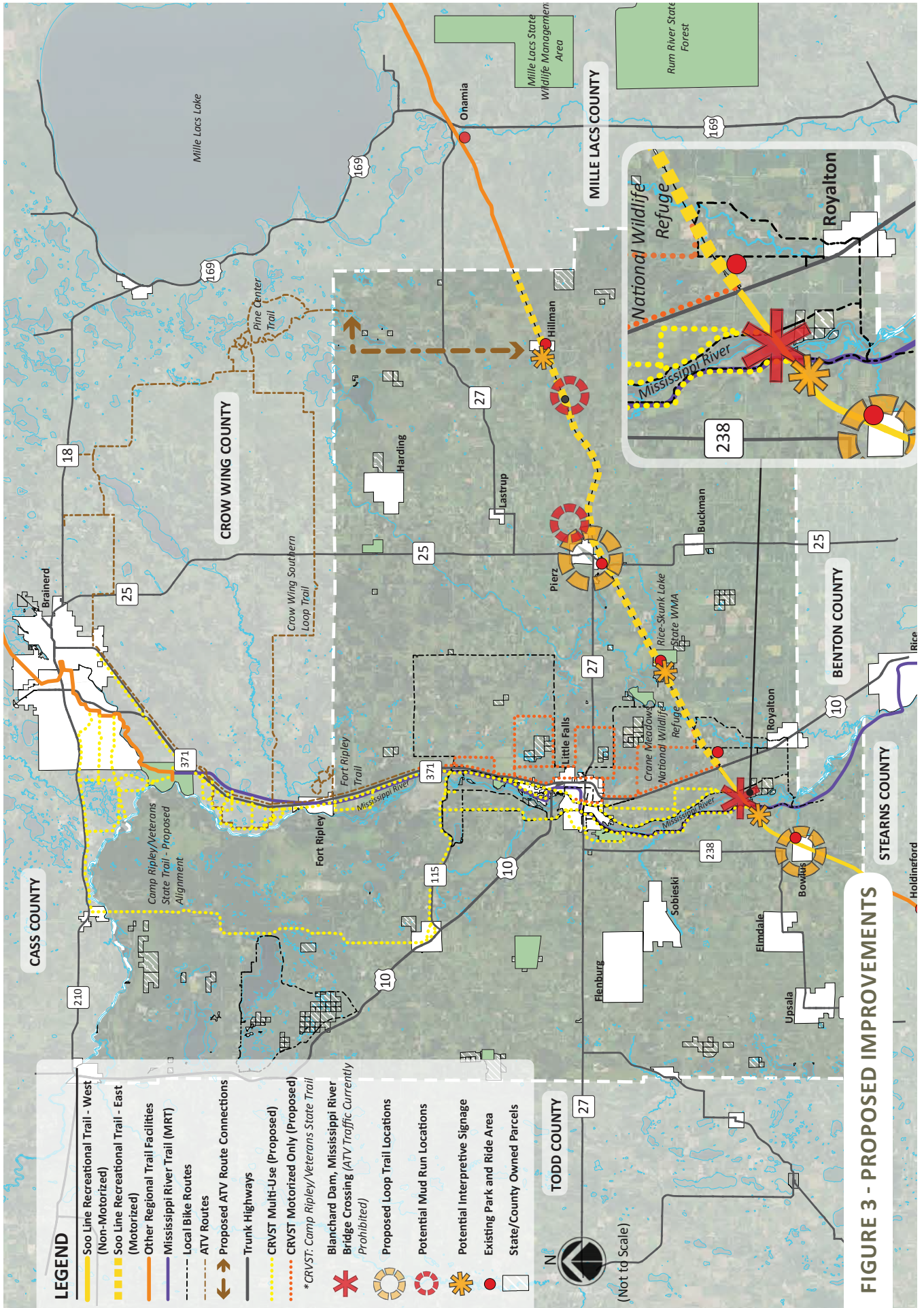
The trail bridge across the Mississippi River is one of the greatest assets of the SLRT with picturesque view of the Blanchard dam. The bridge also acts as a barrier to those using ATVs as they are not currently permitted to cross. A detour along local roads with narrow shoulders and potential vehicle conflict is the only option for riders trying to cross from one side to another. This route has been determined to be unsafe and is not considered a viable alternative. This disconnects the trail, destinations, and users on the North and South sides of this pinch point.

The county was able to appeal to The US Secretary of Transportation in order to allow ATV traffic across the Highway 10 bridge at the trailhead. It is recommended that similar steps are taken at the river location to design a safe crossing for all users.

Safety of all users is the highest priority. A variety of potential improvements were identified such as cameras, flexible bollards, different pavements surfaces, painted lines and expanding the bridge deck. These alternatives will all undergo further analysis as the process to allow ATV's to the bridge is implemented.







**FIGURE 3 - PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS**

## Improvement #2

### Rehabilitating/ Replacement of Existing Bridges

The nine bridges associated with the Soo Line Trail through Morrison County shall be inspected and re-evaluated on an annual basis to determine rehabilitation and or replacement plans to ensure the public's safety and least amount of disruption for trail users.

Because of the number of bridges along the trail and the higher costs associated with replacing or rehabilitating these structures, the bridge improvements shall be considered and evaluated in all three time frame categories. This will allow Morrison County time to evaluate potential funding sources and project partners associated with the bridge and trail.

The nine bridges associated with the Morrison County Soo Line Trail are (from southwest to northeast):

1. South Two River
2. Two River
3. Little Two River
4. Hay Creek
5. Mississippi River
6. Platte River
7. Mud Lake
8. Skunk River (1)
9. Skunk River (2)

Additional study of the existing bridge structures and their current status will be necessary to generate a conditions and priority list. This study shall be revisited on a regular basis to ensure priorities are accurate and safety is not compromised. The structural study will also assist funding pursuits and Morrison County's CIP development.

## Improvement #3

### Incorporate Interpretive Signage

Interpretive signage for ecological or historic features along the trail should also be included in this wayfinding strategy. These signs communicate topics of interest, aid in creating a sense of place, and can be as simple as a sign or elaborate as a structural memorial.

Specifically, it will be important for these signs to clearly connect the SLRT to other trail systems, as fostering and solidifying these connections was raised as a top priority in the public engagement process.

Potential Interpretive Sites:

- Blanchard Dam/Soo Line Railroad Bridge over the Mississippi River
- Rice-Skunk State Wildlife Management Area
- Information related to area watersheds
- The history of settlement in the area
- Area biological communities

FIGURE 4 - CITY OF BOWLUS

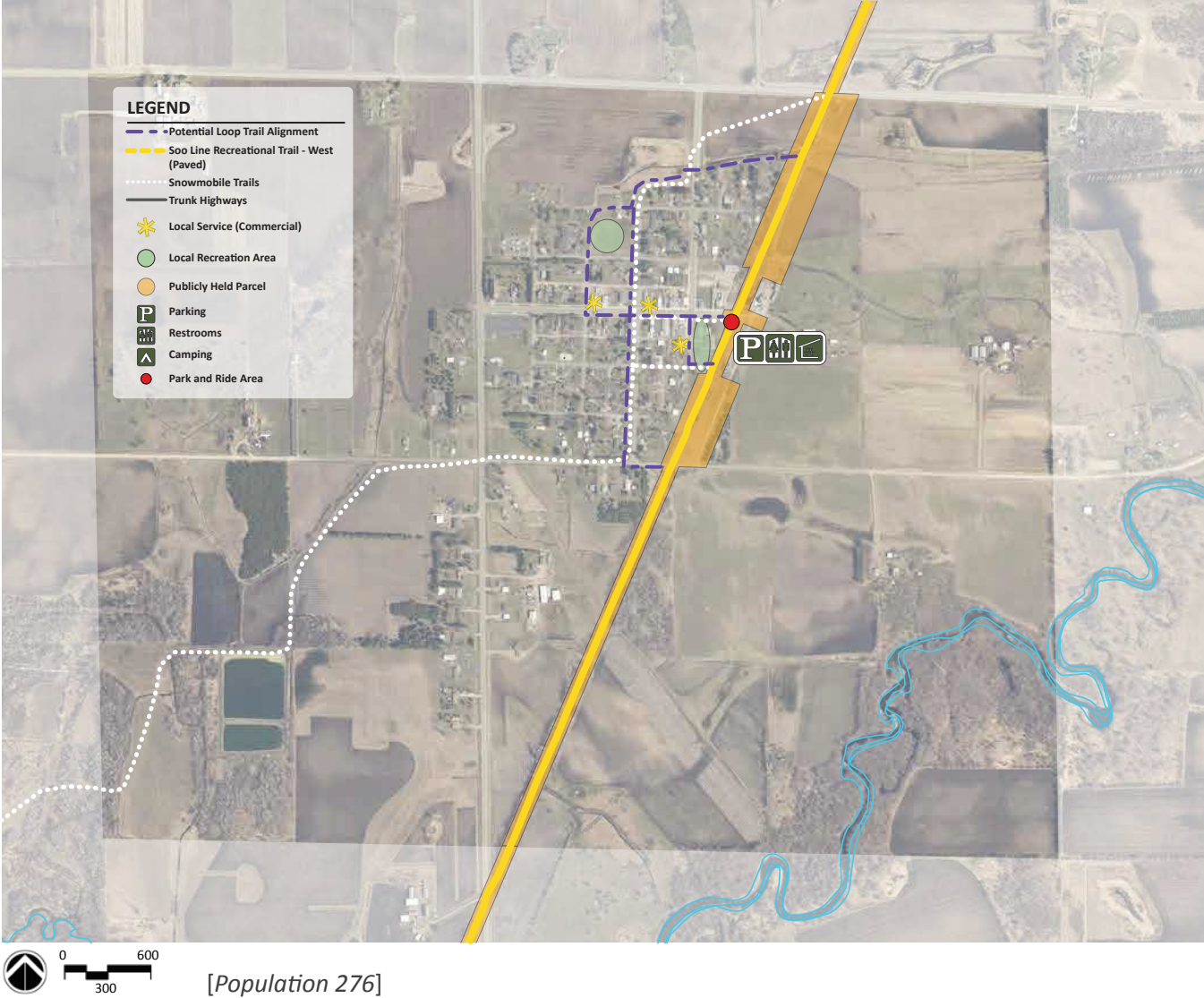
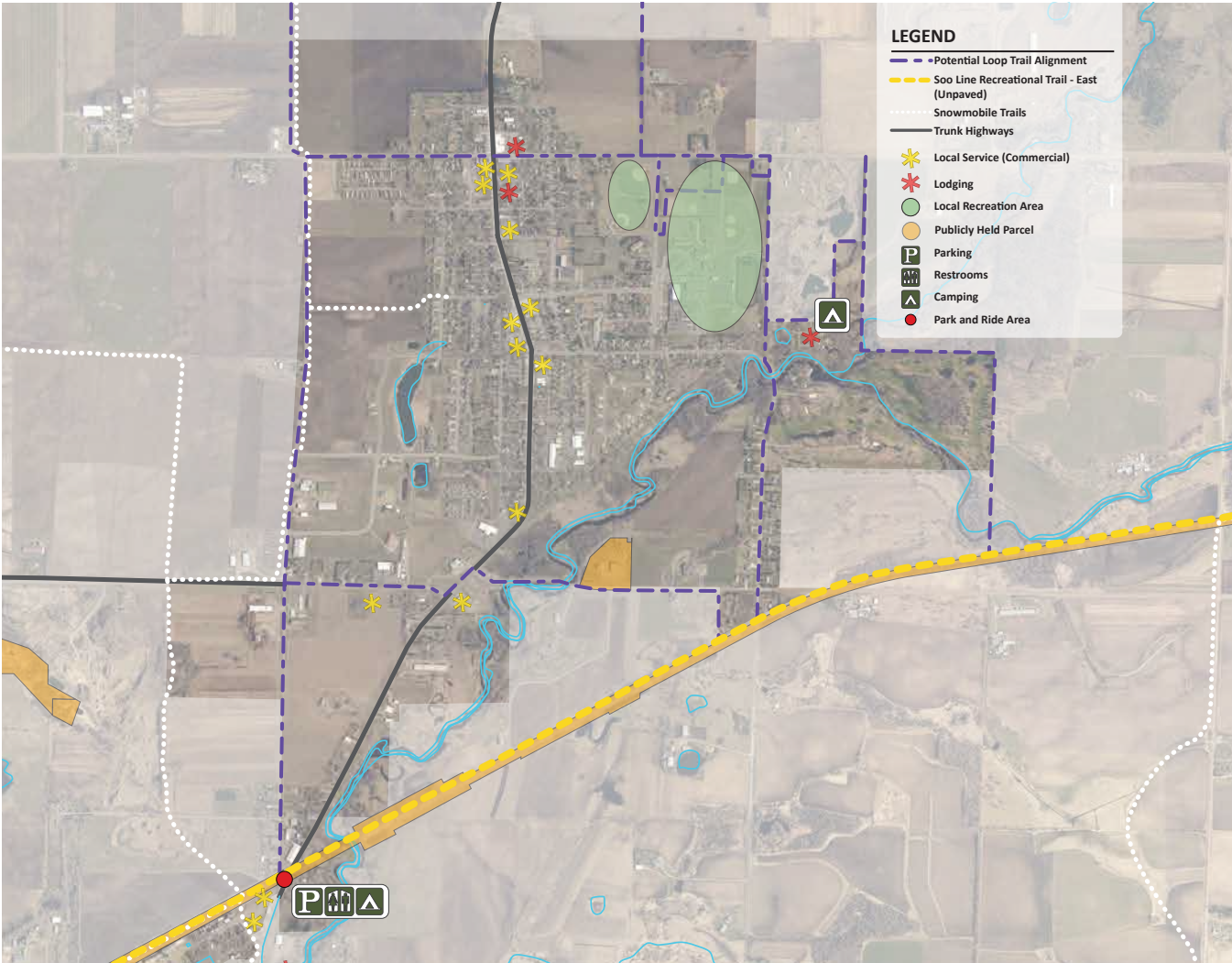


FIGURE 5 - CITIES OF PIERZ & GENOLA



NOTE: The illustrated trail alignment in the above figure was taken from the feasibility report for the Pierz Loop multi-use trail as presented by Scott Hedlund, Pierz City Engineer (Short Elliott Hendrickson - SEH) and accepted by the Pierz City Council on January 23, 2017.

[Combined Population 1,451]

### Improvement #4

Incorporate additional Wayfinding Signage

Developing a consistent treatment for signage is important aspect to branding the SLRT, making the entire system more visible and connected. It will also make it easier to find facilities along the trail and to find the trail from nearby communities.

The existing wayfinding signage includes distance to cities along the SLRT (see photo, top right). It is recommended that a family of wayfinding signage is developed to include:

- Local destinations
- Local and regional parks
- Local and regional trail systems
- Commercial districts (restaurants, shops, lodging, etc.)



### Improvement #5

Create loop trail systems in cooperation with cities along the SLRT

The cities of Bowlus, and Pierz/Genola are situated along the SLRT and provide ideal opportunities for the creation of loop trails. This will bring both additional users to the trail, as well as bring trail users into those communities and to local businesses. This, in combination with *Improvement #5: Incorporate Additional Wayfinding Signage* will aid in creating a symbiotic relationship between the trail and its neighboring communities.

The following figures (figures 4 & 5) illustrate potential loop trails in these communities and local destinations. It is recommended that Morrison County collaborate with these communities to identify local values and desires in a trail system that closely ties into the Soo Line Trail.

### Improvement #6

Create additional ATV route connections

Additional trail connections for ATV users was discussed at length in the task force meetings and commented on in the public survey. It is recommended that the County take the necessary steps to identify a route connection from the SLRT to the Crow Wing Southern Loop and Pine Center Trails. This connection would fill a missing link in creating a loop around the northeastern corner of the County and into Crow Wing County.

While riding on Township roads is permissible, designation is needed to sign routes for which the County should coordinate with local townships. Signage and designation is important for funding and for those not as familiar with the area.

### Improvement #7

Add additional mud runs/loop trails for ATV use

Currently, the SLRT serves as a way to get from point A to B for many ATV users. Mud runs and loop trails will create more variety in trail experiences and transform the trail to a destination in and of itself.

Public land for this purpose is limited and it is therefore recommended that the County explore potential land acquisitions or strategic partnerships to identify dedicated areas for this use. The Tri-City Pit (east of Pierz School) was identified by task force members as a possible DNR sponsored ATV area.



### 3. TRENDS/PUBLIC VALUES

#### PUBLIC INPUT

It is important to Morrison County to incorporate public involvement in the master planning process to ensure that this document reflects the values and interests of the community.

A Park and Trail Master Plan Task Force, consisting of seven community leaders and residents, was created and engaged throughout the process to provide input. Additional input was sought from the public through an online survey linked to the county website and social media pages. Meeting details and the results of this survey can be found in **Appendix A**.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

The following demographics, from the U.S. Census Bureaus, paint a picture of the population make up of Morrison County and potential users of the SLRT.

Population		
Population Estimate: July 1, 2015	Census (Estimate Base): April 1, 2010	Percentage Change from April 1, 2010-July 1, 2015
32,775	33,198	-1.3%

Age Distribution (Percent) - July 1, 2015			
Persons under 5 years	Persons under 18 years	Persons 65 years and over	Female Persons
6.0%	23.5%	17.9%	49.5%

Families, Living Arrangements, and Income (2011-2015)		
Households 2011-2015	Persons per Household	Median Household Income (2015 dollars)
13,352 total	2.43	\$50,049

Education and Workforce (2011-2015)			
High School Graduate or Higher (Age 25+)	Bachelor’s Degree or Higher (Age 25+)	In Civilian Labor Force (Age 16+)	In Civilian Labor Force, Female (Age 16+)
89.5%	17.0%	67.5%	64.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau estimates  
Numbers based on April 1, 2010 Census

## RECREATIONAL TRENDS AND PUBLIC VALUES

*The following section is an excerpt from the “Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan,” adopted by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission on April 22, 2015.*

A key factor in making sound resource allocations is basing decisions on reliable information related to participation trends and changes in demand for various types of outdoor recreational facilities. Review of available research findings proved enlightening but also limiting, with the following being the most pertinent.

### PARKS AND TRAILS: A HISTORY OF SUPPORT AND SUCCESS IN MINNESOTA

Each year, state and regional parks and trails receive tens of millions of visits, with Metro-regional parks and trails alone receiving an estimated 40 million+ visits. In 2009, there were 8,926,000 visits to the state park system, including nearly 1,082,000 campers and other overnight guests. Eighty-four percent of the visitors are Minnesota residents. Some 30% of all Minnesotans visit a state park at least once each year – a number that DNR is committed to increasing. In Greater Minnesota, many millions more use local and regional parks and trail, although no formal counts currently exist.

Based on 2007 research by DNR, satisfaction ratings of Minnesota State Parks visitor experiences are at an all-time high. Although traditional outdoor activities have indeed seen varying degrees of per capita decline in participation, new trends – such as providing “high service” items like park programs that cater to children and the opportunity to rent equipment and attend special events – are increasingly popular with many families and are bringing new populations to parks.

Clearly, Minnesotans across the state value parks and trails and find them important to their quality of life. Voter approval of the Legacy Amendment further reinforces Minnesotans’ general commitment to preserving the natural qualities of the state and having access to quality parks and trails. This history of success provides a sound platform to work from as the Commission considers how to best allocate its future resources in ways that will have lasting value to Minnesotans.

### BUILDING ON PAST SUCCESS REQUIRES RECOGNIZING AND ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

Importantly, building upon past successes and furthering the cause for parks and trails in Minnesota requires an understanding (and recognition) of new challenges, evolving trends, and changing participation patterns in outdoor recreation. With overall participation over the past decade flat or even in decline, paying attention to key trend indicators cannot be taken lightly if the Commission is to ensure that future investments of time and resources are well-targeted. The following highlights some of the trend indicators to pay attention to and address through informed investments.

### TRAIL-RELATED FINDINGS

DNR trail-related research provides some interesting and at times cautionary findings, including:

- Trail-use trends are generally negative (i.e., declining use levels) – for both state trails and Twin Cities regional trails, with larger declines being realized with tourist trails (e.g., Paul Bunyan, Heartland, and Root River/Harmony-Preston Valley); one reason offered – but hard to measure – for the downward trend is expansion of trail opportunities, which basically results in the spreading out of existing users among more trails, versus actually adding new participants



- Market area has a large effect on trends in trail use – with use declines the least (or increases the most) for the local market, and declines the most (or increases the least) for the longer-distance tourist markets
- Attractiveness and quality of experience of a given trail matters to potential users – with four values rising to the top:
  1. scenic quality
  2. quietness/peacefulness
  3. place for exercise, and
  4. being away from motorized vehicles

Findings from several other studies paint a similar picture and provide some additional insights. A study by the University of Minnesota had similar findings relative to desired user experience, with top reasons people use trails including viewing scenery, being close to nature, getting away from life demands, being physically active, and discovering new things.

## **ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

Maintaining a high quality recreation facility and making targeted improvements that work to attract visitors, attract and retain businesses, increase tourism, and link tourist attractions will aid in promoting economic growth in the area. The SLRT runs adjacent to or directly through many small communities in Morrison County. Many trail users patron local businesses; taking these users into consideration and exploring ways to increase the number of users was of paramount importance to the creation of this master plan.

## 4. CLASSIFICATION DETAILS

Soo Line Trail has been Identified as a high potential trail well positioned to become designated as a Regional Trail according to the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC). This is the first step to become eligible to receive Clean Water, Land and Legacy Funding. For a Park or Trail to receive regional designation four criteria are evaluated and scored using a criteria rating scale and assigned weights to determine the overall value of the Park or Trail. The following identifies how the trail aligns with the associated criteria.

### *Criteria #1:*

#### **PROVIDES A HIGH-QUALITY “DESTINATION” TRAIL EXPERIENCE**

The Soo Line Recreational Trail (SLRT) is located in a regionally desirable setting within central Minnesota, approximately 8 miles south of Little Falls, MN. The Western segment of the SLRT was dedicated in the summer of 2007 becoming one of the most remote and scenic paved non-motorized recreational trails in Minnesota. This location is adjacent to US Highway 10 and is the division between the East and West portions of the trail; the SLRT-West transverses from US Highway 10 west to the Morrison/Stearns County boundary and is a paved trail the crosses the Mississippi River at the down slope of the Blanchard Dam; the SLRT-East transverses from US Highway 10 east to the Morrison/Mille Lacs County boundary, with the trail overall, terminating at Superior, WI. The SLRT is an important destination as it is the only pure pedestrian bridge (summertime) over the Mississippi River, connection the east and west portions of the SLRT, with further connections to the Lake Wobegon Regional Trail in Stearns County, MN, providing passage to Fergus Falls/Central Lakes Trail (63 miles), and has a high potential to provide for east-west connection of the Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail, that when complete will provide a connection between Crow Wing State Park and the SLRT, effectively linking the Central Lakes, Lake Wobegon, SLRT, Paul Bunyan, Heartland and Mi-Gi-Zi Trails into one continuous recreational route. **This system would create one of the longest connected trail systems in the country.** The trail bridge is parallel to the Blanchard Dam on the southern side of the dam, and is one of the few locations in the United States that Cross Rocks can be found, a popular way-point and destination for tourists.

### *Criteria #2:*

#### **WELL-LOCATED TO SERVE REGIONAL POPULATION AND/OR TOURIST DESTINATION**

This trail more than adequately provides at least an hour of outdoor recreation opportunity, and connects to other trails and facilities that can provide at least an hour of recreation in total. While the west portion of the SLRT proper extends to the Morrison/Stearns County boarder, it provides approximately 20 miles round-trip alone, with further connections to Lake Wobegon Regional Trail in Stearns County, MN. These trails currently provide further passage to Fergus Falls/Central Lakes Trail (100 miles) to the northwest, and 28 additional miles to the Southeast to St. Joseph, with a proposed extension to Waite Park and St. Cloud, MN. Additionally, maintaining this connections has high potential to provide for the east-west connections of the Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail, that when completed, will provide a connection between Crow Wing State Park and the SLRT, effectively linking the Central Lakes, Wobegon, Soo Line, Paul Bunyan, Heartland and Mi-Gi-Zi Trails into one continuous recreational route.

**Criteria #3:****ENHANCES CONNECTIVITY TO OTHER REGIONAL AND STATE LEVEL TRAILS WITHIN THE REGION, AND CONNECTS TO REGIONAL DESTINATIONS**

The SLRT-West, is a paved trail available to pedestrians, in-line skaters and bicycles during the spring, summer and fall seasons, and available to non-studded snowmobiles, cross-country skiers, and Fat-Bikers as long as there is adequate snow of 3"+, throughout the winter season. This trail provides the public natural high quality recreational opportunities, attracting regional clientele from multiple communities (communities within Morrison County: 16 cities and 30 townships), drawing tourists, generating economic impact from outside the local area through visitors from outstate Minnesota. The 14 foot wide, quiet, forested trail is mostly through wooded terrain with an occasional farm and wetland. This ten-mile section starts at US Highway 10 just north of Royalton, where there is a parking lot and trailhead, runs approximately ten miles over the trail bridge which crosses the Mississippi River parallel to the Blanchard Dam, through the City of Bowlus, ending at the connection to the Lake Wobegon Trail between Bowlus and Holdingford at the Morrison and Stearns County line. The Blanchard dam and bridge over the Mississippi River is the most breathtaking portion of the trail. The City of Bowlus has a restored train depot with bathrooms and parking. Additionally, the trail is also close to the City of Little Falls and Charles Lindbergh State Park and has very high potential to connect to the future Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail.

**Criteria #4:****FILL A GAP IN RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY WITHIN A REGION**

This ten-mile section starts at US Highway 10 just north of Royalton, where there is a parking lot with restroom facilities and trailhead, runs approximately ten miles over the trail bridge, which crosses the Mississippi River parallel to the Blanchard Dam, through the City of Bowlus, ending at the connection to the Lake Wobegon Trail between Bowlus and Holdingford at the Morrison and Stearns County line. The City of Bowlus has a restored train depot with bathrooms and parking. Additionally, the trail is also close to the City of Little Falls and Charles Lindbergh State Park. The trail provides a high quality traffic-free, motorized-vehicle free, recreational opportunity available to pedestrians, in-line skaters and bicycles during the spring, summer and fall (available to cross-country skiers, Fat-Bikers and non-studded snowmobiles as long as there is adequate snow of 3"+ during the winter months), not otherwise available within a reasonable distance.

## 5. DEVELOPMENT/ACQUISITION PLAN

At this time, development plans for the trail extend no further than the improvements outlined in this planning document. Additionally, there are no current plans to acquire additional lands in association with the SLRT development. Should any bordering properties become available in the future, the County would consider acquisition at that future date.

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The following section describes the implementation plan for the potential trail improvements, including specifics about investments to-date, cost projections and phasing.

### INVESTMENTS TO-DATE

**Table 6.1**

Investment	Cost (\$)
Grade widening, gravel base, paving (Stearns County Line to U.S. Hwy 10 and pavilion construction at Bowlus)	2,354,000
Overpass bridge, Bellevue Township	225,000
River Crossing Bridge (9 total)	Undetermined
U.S. Highway 10 Park and Ride	247,000
U.S. Highway 10 Trail Ramp	120,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,946,000</b>

### COST PROJECTIONS AND PHASING PLAN

Identifying priorities for phasing implementation will allow the County and its stakeholders to focus their efforts in developing the proposed trail improvements in a systematic manner, taking advantage of opportunities for implementation as they arise. The following implementation time frames were developed for the recommended SLRT improvements: **Short Term (0-5 years); Mid-Term (5-10 years); Long-Term (10+ years).**

This is not to say for example, that some projects identified in the mid-term category could not be built before others in the short-term category. The key is to identify needed improvements that the County and its stakeholders can implement as opportunities arise, whether that is through local funding, grants, or reconstruction projects.

**Table 6.2** categorizes each recommended improvement within the implementation time frames and outlines estimated cost projections.

**Table 6.2**

<b>Proposed Trail Improvement</b>	<b>Construction Cost Estimate (\$)*</b>	<b>Implementation Time frame</b>
Obtain necessary approvals to allow for ATV traffic to cross the Mississippi River Bridge	Undetermined	Short-Term
Rehabilitating/ Replacement of Existing Bridges (10 total)	Undetermined	Short-Term
Incorporate additional Wayfinding Signage	20,000	Short-Term
Incorporate Interpretive Signage	15,000	Short-Term
Create additional ATV route connections (10' wide unpaved)	844,800 (8 mi@\$20/ft)	Short-Term
<b>SHORT-TERM SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>\$879,800</b>
Create additional ATV route connections (10' wide unpaved)	Determine at future date	Mid-Term
Rehabilitating/ Replacement of Existing Bridges (10 Total)	Undetermined	Mid-Term
<b>MID-TERM SUBTOTAL</b>		Determine at future date
Add additional mud runs/loop trails for ATV/ Snowmobile use (10' wide unpaved path)	105,600 (1 mi@\$20/ft)	Long Term
Create loop trail systems in cooperation with cities along the SLRT (10' wide paved path)	227,040 (1 mi@\$43/ft)	Long Term
Create additional ATV route connections (10' wide unpaved)	Determine at future date	Long-Term
Rehabilitating/ Replacemetn of Exsiting Bridges (10 total)	Undetermined	Long-Term
<b>LONG-TERM SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>\$332,640</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$1,212,440</b>

*\*These cost estimates are general guidelines for budgetary purposes only. Cost can vary due to a variety of factors. More detailed cost estimates will need to be developed prior to application for funding, during preliminary design, and prior to bidding for construction.*

## 7. OPERATIONAL PLAN

In order to keep the existing and new facilities along the SLRT in good condition, it will be important to practice regular and proactive trail maintenance. Therefore, a typical trail maintenance component should be included within the County's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget in order to keep the trail and its amenities at peak performance. Typical trail maintenance includes:

- Shoulder maintenance
- Re-painting any pavement markings
- Crack filling and seal coating
- Pavement Repair
- Resurfacing
- Re-grading and Aggregate Application
- Structure Improvements

The following section describes the operational plan for the trail, including responsible organizations and estimated annual costs. The operational costs for the existing trail facilities are outlined in **Table 7.1**. **Table 7.2** outlines the estimated annual operational cost increase associated with each proposed park improvement.

It is important to note that the County has a lease agreement with a local ATV club for maintenance of the motorized portion of the trail. The Club estimates that they spend \$14,000-16,000 annually in trail maintenance. Funds are generated through fundraisers (bingo, meat raffle, etc.) and through grant funding.

**Table 7.1**

Public Works Expense	Year			Three Year Average (\$)
	2014 (\$)	2015 (\$)	2016 (\$)	
Labor	6,104.40	13,200.14	12,748.60	10,684.38
Equipment	6898.00	4,191.25	14,004.25	8364.50
Supplies	352.75	43.69	410.15	268.86
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>13,355.15</b>	<b>17,435.08</b>	<b>27,163.00</b>	<b>19,317.74</b>
<b>Purchases*</b>				
	4,304.20	39,998.99	14,696.26	19,666.48
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,659.35</b>	<b>57,434.07</b>	<b>41,859.26</b>	<b>\$38,984.22</b>

\*Purchases include costs associated with: consulting, electricity, travel, equipment rental (from others), misc. expenses, insurance, toilets, repairs and maintenance, supplies, and park management projects.

**Table 7.1**

Proposed Park Amenity/Facility Improvement	Estimated Annual Maintenance Cost (\$)	Notes
Obtain necessary approvals to allow for ATV traffic to cross the Mississippi River Bridge.	Undetermined	
Rehabilitating/ Replacement of Existing Bridges (10 total)	Undetermined	Each Bridge Structure Shall be Evaluated Independently
Create additional ATV route connections	6,000	Assume 50 year lifespan
Incorporate additional Wayfinding Signage	1,000	Assume 20 year lifespan
Incorporate Interpretive Signage	750	Assume 20 year lifespan
Add additional mud runs/loop trails for ATV/Snowmobile use	1,000	Assume 50 year lifespan
Create loop trail systems in cooperation with cities along the SLRT	1,000	Assume 50 year lifespan
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,750</b>	

## 8. PROGRAMMING PLAN

The SLRT facilities support a variety of recreational programming including: walking, biking, ATV and snowmobile riding, and bird watching among others. With the additional improvements, these activities can be enhanced and additional programming may be incorporated. Programming and marketing strategies should be assessed with each improvement to the facilities. Some examples of this may include:

- Interpretive signage may include family friendly components that not only inform, but also engage with viewers. Kid friendly riddles or scavenger hunts that link all the interpretive signs in the system are examples. The Minnesota DNR’s Hiking and Passport Clubs can serve as models for this.
- Similarly, with the addition of loop trails through adjacent communities, “crawls” or tours can be arranged. These can be self- guided with maps or can take place on specific days as special events on the trail. This will engage more people with trail and bring them to local businesses.





**APPENDIX A**  
**PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS**

October 13, 2016

[Invitee Name]  
[Invitee Address]

26

RE: Soo Line Trail Master Plan

Dear [Invitee]:

Bolton & Menk, Inc. will be assisting Morrison County in providing a long term plan for your Regional Trail system that will address both short term needs and long term vision for our growing and changing community. It is anticipated there will be 2-3 stakeholder meetings regarding the trail Master Plan.

1. Meeting #1: kickoff meeting will establish the following:
  - a. Identify or refine the vision statement for the trail
  - b. Gather input from key stakeholders and community members
  - c. Establish trail development standards based on existing documents and input from stakeholders
  - d. Identify trail system needs, both existing and long term (10 years) based on existing and anticipated demographics, regional influences, and economic changes
2. Meeting #2 (optional/as necessary): stakeholder meeting will establish the following:
  - a. Verify trail data received to date
  - b. Identify existing deficiencies and issues in the trail system
  - c. Discuss funding, programming and maintenance budget
3. Meeting #3: stakeholder meeting will establish the following:
  - a. Meet with County staff to review document and prepare for approval

We believe a small stakeholder group of 3-4 people is necessary to complete the Master Plan process. The proposed commitment level will be relatively minimal. It is anticipated the commitment will require 2 or 3 meetings based on data gathering and participation.

The objective of the Soo Line Master Plan is to provide a clear direction and approach to how the County's recreational infrastructure will evolve and continue to be a vital asset. This document will also assist in possibly securing grant funding from a variety of sources.

# Belle Prairie County Park and Soo Line Trail Master Plans

## PARK AND TRAIL MASTER PLAN TASK FORCE KICKOFF MEETING

January 9, 2017 – 4:00 PM

Morrison County Public Works Building

27

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### AGENDA

#### 1. Introductions and Master Plan Overview

- a. Parks and Trails Legacy Grant Program
- b. Final Documentation

#### 2. Inventory

[Identify Park and Trail System needs according to Task Force]

- a. County Map and Soo Line Trail
  - i. Review Existing
  - ii. Needs/Improvements
- b. Belle Prairie County Park
  - i. Review Existing
  - ii. Needs/Improvements

#### 3. Vision Statements

#### 4. Review Survey Questions

[Review and refine survey to be distributed digitally]







- a. Send additional feedback via e-mail by Wednesday January 18 - survey will be finalized and distributed on this day.

#### 5. Next Steps

- a. Next meeting in February

## Trail Committee Meeting

Meeting Date: January 9, 2017

Committee Members	Representing	Signature
Jeff Jelinski	Comm-District 2	
Mike Wilson	Comm-District 4	
David Lanners	ATV's	
Al Stangl	Snowmobiles	
Paul Nieman, Jr	Belle Prairie Twp	
Sam Beam	LFCHS Env. Student	
Alice Sunde	MC Trail Committee	

\$50.00 PerDiem

Mileage	Rate	Total
n/a	n/a	n/a
n/a	n/a	n/a
52	0.535 \$	-
52	0.535 \$	-
24	0.535 \$	-
7	0.535 \$	-
	0.535 \$	-

Approved by County Engineer

# Belle Prairie County Park and Soo Line Trail Master Plans

## PARK AND TRAIL MASTER PLAN TASK FORCE KICKOFF MEETING

January 9, 2017 – 4:00 PM

Morrison County Public Works Building

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### MEETING NOTES

#### 1. Inventory

[Identify Park and Trail System needs according to Task Force]

- a. County Map and Soo Line Trail
  - i. Review Existing
    - 1. Add:
      - a. ATV/Snowmobile can cross Hwy 10 Bridge. Cannot cross Mississippi River Bridge.
      - b. 2018 grant to improve Mississippi River Bridge piers and abutment.
    - ii. Needs/Improvements
      - 1. Solve bottleneck issue for ATV at dam – pass legislation to allow for multi-modal use on bridge
        - a. Will open trail to everything south of river. Will open everything north of river to those in Stearns County.
        - b. Expand ‘regional’ connectedness of trail for uses
      - 2. Create larger regional scale loop
        - a. Loop with veterans trail
      - 3. Make the Trail a Destination (Rails to Trail Examples)
        - a. mud runs
      - 4. Connect Trail to Destinations
        - a. Mutually beneficial “side trips” – example: connect to Pierz trail system. Bring town to trail, bring trail users into town.
- b. Belle Prairie County Park
  - i. Review Existing
    - 1. Existing uses:
      - a. Popular location for Weddings, birthday parties, anniversaries
      - b. Forestry Class removes buckthorn
      - c. Hiking trails are mown grass.

- d. Fishing
  - 2. Add:
    - a. Oak Savanna
    - b. Prairie Restoration
- ii. Needs/Improvements
  - 1. Additional Grants to improve biomes (oak savanna, virgin pine, prairie)
    - a. Clear understory in virgin pine, clear out widow-makers, brush
  - 2. Define hiking trails more clearly and increase width to 12' minimum to allow for xc ski grooming equipment in winter months. (HS Cross Country School Team)
  - 3. Expand disc golf from 9 to 18-hole.
  - 4. Add additional picnic shelter – on South side, between virgin pine and disc golf course
  - 5. Replace asphalt pavement through park (original paving)

## **2. Vision Statements**

- a. Soo Line Trail
  - i. Make a destination “Line is boring.”
- b. Belle Prairie Park
  - i. Year round use,
  - ii. Maintain balance between developed play and natural resources
  - iii. Highlight diversity of special natural resources

# **Belle Prairie County Park and Soo Line Trail Master Plans**

## **PARK AND TRAIL MASTER PLAN TASK FORCE MEETING #2**

**March 7, 2017 – 4:00 PM**

**Morrison County Public Works Building**

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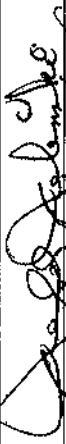

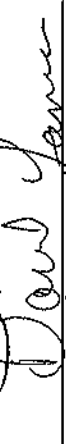




### **AGENDA**

- 1. Review Meeting Notes from Kickoff Meeting**
- 2. Soo Line Trail**
  - a. Review Existing
  - b. Proposed Improvements
  - c. Survey Results
- 3. Belle Prairie County Park**
  - a. Review Existing
  - b. Proposed Improvements
  - c. Survey Results
  - d. Implementation Priorities
- 4. Next Steps**
  - a. Review document and maps and provide any additional feedback to Steve, Joel, or Maddie.
  - b. BMI to incorporate feedback into Master Plan Reports and review with County Staff to prepare for approval.

**COPY**

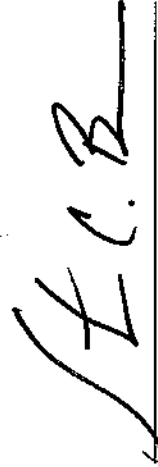
Park & Trail Master Plan Task Force  
Trail Committee Meeting

Meeting Date: March 7, 2017

Committee Members	Representing	Signature
Jeff Jelinski	Comm-District 2	
Mike Wilson	Comm-District 4	
David Lanners	ATV's	
Al Stangl	Snowmobiles	
Paul Nieman, Jr	Belle Prairie Twp	
Sam Beam	LFCHS Env. Student	
Alice Sunde	MC Trail Committee	

Mileage	Rate	Total
n/a	n/a	n/a
n/a	n/a	n/a
—	0.535 \$	rode with Al-Stangl
52	0.535 \$	27.82
24	0.535 \$	12.84
7	0.535 \$	3.75
44	0.535 \$	23.54

\$50.00 PerDiem



Approved by County Engineer



# Belle Prairie County Park and Soo Line Trail Master Plans

## PARK AND TRAIL MASTER PLAN TASK FORCE MEETING #2

March 7, 2017 – 4:00 PM

Morrison County Public Works Building

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### MEETING MINUTES

#### 1. Soo Line Trail

- a. Motorized Trail Pavement Type (Gravel vs Paved)
  - i. Paved trail would cut down on dust
    1. Chloride to cut down on dust is short term solution – ATV club utilizes this on trails close to homes
  - ii. Paved would result in higher speeds
  - iii. Gravel and paved side-by-side as option – Gravel often ends up on paved surface (Mille Lacs County as example), width requirements to accommodate two paths most likely could not be met due to R.O.W. width, slope and existing conditions.
  - iv. Gravel as preferable to ATV riders
  - v. ATV riders supporting local economy – stopping in stores, restaurants, bars
  - vi. Agreement was made when trail head at Highway 10 was added that non-motorist/cyclist have paved trail to South-West and ATV/motorized usage to North-East
  - vii. Explore alternative bike routes North-East of the Highway 10 trailhead
- b. Mud Runs/Loop Trail
  - i. Show potential (specific or generic) locations for these and if funding were to become available, can determine if there is land available to purchase
  - ii. Hillman may not be best candidate for loop trail
  - iii. Explore Tri-City Pit (east of Pierz school) as possible DNR sponsored ATV area
- c. Other trail connections

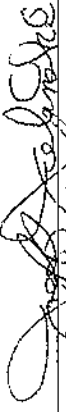
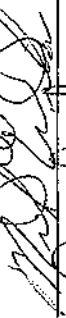

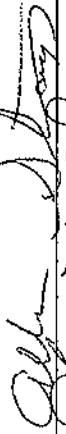
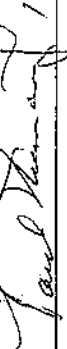


- i. Top priority to connect up to Crow Wing Southern Loop Trail – would open up large loop trail. Idyllic scenery.
      - ii. Riding on Township roads permissible, need designation to sign ATV route – coordinate with local townships on this. Signage and designation important for funding and those not as familiar with area
      - iii. Would rather spend money on an alternative trail or loop connection to the Soo Line route rather than paving the existing Soo Line route thru Morrison County.
      - iv. Connect to the recently funded Veteran’s State Trail
- d. Maintenance
  - i. County has lease agreement with local ATV club for maintenance of the motorized portion of Trail.
    - 1. Club estimates that they spend \$14,000-16,000 annually in trail maintenance. Funds raised through pull tabs, bingo, meat raffle, grant funds each year (~\$8,000)
  - ii. County maintains non-motorized (paved portion of trail) – mow, cut brush, pavement repair, structure improvements (bridges, culverts, etc)
- e. Mississippi River Bridge
  - i. Have obtained \$150,000 grant for piers
  - ii. Evaluate if secondary trail could be cantilevered off one side, or if bridge could be widened to accommodate ATV crossing traffic along with existing uses
  - iii. If bridge cannot accommodate ATV crossing, improvements necessary for detour route as safety is big concern for most riders.

## **2. Next Steps**

- a. Will schedule third task force meeting to present final plan for review. Send out plan documents to group beforehand.

Park & Trail Master Plan Task Force  
Trail Committee Meeting

Meeting Date: June 22, 2017

Committee Members	Representing	Signature
Jeff Jelinski	Comm-District 2	
Mike Wilson	Comm-District 4	
David Lanners	ATV's	
Al Stangl	Snowmobiles	
Paul Nieman, Jr	Belle Prairie Twp	
Sam Beam	LFCHS Env. Student	
Alice Sunde	MC Trail Committee	

\$50.00 PerDiem

Mileage	Rate	Total
n/a	n/a	n/a
n/a	n/a	n/a
58	0.535 \$	31.03
-	0.535 \$	-
24	0.535 \$	12.84
7	0.535 \$	3.75
44	0.535 \$	23.54

  
6/22/17  
Approved by County Engineer

# Belle Prairie County Park and Soo Line Trail Master Plans

## PARK AND TRAIL MASTER PLAN TASK FORCE MEETING #3

June 22, 2017 – 4:00 PM

Morrison County Public Works Building

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### MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: S. Beam, J. Jelinski, D. Lanners, P. Nieman Jr., A. Stangl, A. Sunde, M. Wilson, S. Backowski, J. Odens (Bolton & Menk)

#### 1. Belle Prairie County Park Master Plan

- a. Bolton & Menk reviewed the online survey results (136 responders)
  - i. Most urgent need according to the survey is facilities and maintenance
  - ii. Most common park use is walking/running followed by picnicking
  - iii. Top items to focus on are trails and restroom facilities
  - iv. Most users visit during the summer, followed by fall, spring and then winter
- b. Bolton & Menk then reviewed the park plan with the Task Force and discussed the fifteen identified improvements
- c. The river access points were reviewed and the question of ADA river access was discussed. It was agreed that at least one river access point shall explore the incorporation of an ADA ramp. It was also agreed the ADA accessible point shall also be associated with the accessible fishing pier if possible. This directive will need further study and analysis as the Park begins addressing the various improvements identified.
- d. It was also noted that one existing stairway/river access point was missing from the map. The stairway in the middle of the boat launch area will be called out in the final master plan map.
- e. After the improvements were presented, it was agreed upon to move the building of a parking lot (along the entry roadway) to the top of the improvement list.
- f. There was a motion to approve the Belle Prairie Park master plan with the understanding that these slight revisions would be made to the plan and document.

## 2. Soo Line Trail Master Plan

- a. Bolton & Menk reviewed the online survey results (136 responders)
  - i. Most urgent need according to the survey is maintenance
  - ii. Most users access the trail by driving and parking
  - iii. Top initiatives for the next 5-10 years are the bridge crossing and expanding the trail system and other trail connections.
  - iv. Over half (>60%) of the people who completed the online survey stated they would feel comfortable with multi-modal usage of the Mississippi River Bridge.
  
- b. Bolton & Menk then reviewed the Master Plans proposed site improvements:
  1. Incorporate interpretive signage to highlight ecological or historical features and aid in creating a sense of place.
  2. Incorporate additional wayfinding signage to aid in establishing a unified network of trails and promote local businesses.
  3. Create loop trail systems in cities along the SLRT
  4. Obtain necessary approvals to allow for ATV traffic to cross the Mississippi River Bridge
  5. Create additional ATV route connections
  6. Add additional mud runs/loop trails for ATV use
  
- c. The decision to not pave the remainder of the Soo Line Trail through Morrison County was reviewed/discussed. The three main factors contributing to this decision are; cost, would limit user groups and completion of Camp Ripley Veterans Memorial Trail.
  
- d. The Mississippi River Bridge crossing and a possible alternate route was discussed. Within the Task Force it was determined there is no other safe alternative to ATV's using the existing Blanchard Dam Mississippi River Bridge. The group then discussed how this may be implemented. Safety was also discussed. Cameras, flexible bollards, different pavement surfaces, painted lines, expand the bridge deck, etc. were all discussed. The method and safety elements were not finalized but it was agreed the crossing should be a top priority.
  
- e. There was a motion to approve the Soo Line Trail master plan with the understanding that these slight revisions would be made to plan and document.



MORRISON COUNTY

**NOTICE OF OPEN HOUSE**  
**Wednesday, August 2, 2017**  
**Meeting Room 1 at the**  
**Morrison County Government Center**  
**anytime between 4 pm and 6 pm**

Morrison County Public Works will be holding an open house for interested residents to review, discuss and comment on the proposed Master Plans for Belle Prairie Park and the Soo Line Trail.

The Master Plans have been developed utilizing on-line survey results with oversight by the County Board appointed Task Force.

No presentation will be made. Interested residents may stop in to review and discuss the plans with county staff and representatives of Bolton & Menk.

715940so7/30/17



## **NOTICE OF OPEN HOUSE**

Morrison County Public Works will be holding an open house for interested residents to review, discuss and comment on the proposed Master Plans for Belle Prairie Park and the Soo Line Trail.

The Master Plans have been developed utilizing on-line survey results with oversight by the County Board appointed Task Force.

No presentations will be made. Interested residents may stop in at Meeting Room 1 at the Morrison County Government Center on August 2, 2017, anytime between 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm to review and discuss the plans with county staff and representatives of Bolton & Menk.

MORRISON COUNTY  
PLEASE SIGN IN  
August 2, 2017

Name

Address

Pat Redford

....., L.F.

Dick Redford

.....

Jim Allert

" ....., L.F.

Jay Lazar

Bowling MN

Bruce Miller

Little Falls Md

Bruce Geyer

Little Falls, MN

Gail Goyer

Little Falls, MN

Tyler JENSEN

.....

Carol Meyer

..... L.F.

Darrel Welle

..... 2021049 86449

Jordin Stuy

..... Bowling



## COMMENT FORM



Morrison County Belle Prairie Park & Soo Line Trail Master Plans

Public Open House

August 2, 2017

(OPTIONAL)

Your Information:

Name/Business:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

E-Mail:

Comments/Concerns:

My concern is for safety of bicycles and pedestrians to share the bridge with motorized traffic.

Also, I'm concerned for the loss of quiet space we currently have on the bridge with motorized traffic allowed.

The HWY 10 crossing is a different matter. People don't hang out there and enjoy nature, hardly anyone goes that way, but there are lots of people on the bridge.

If this goes through, the permission should be temporary with an annual HView and public input.

Please drop comments in box at the meeting or submit comment via one of the following means:

Mail to: Bolton & Menk, Inc.  
Attn: Joel Odens  
12224 Nicollet Avenue  
Burnsville, MN 55337-1649  
Email to: [joelod@bolton-menk.com](mailto:joelod@bolton-menk.com)



# COMMENT FORM



Morrison County Belle Prairie Park & Soo Line Trail Master Plans

Public Open House

August 2, 2017

(OPTIONAL)

Your Inform

Name/Busi

Address: //

City, State,

E-Mail: Jo

Comments/

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

my wife (who could not be here today, and respectfully against the bike trail being placed on Amesbury Drive south, especially on the west side of the road.

Thank you.

One more thing. last year, when the surveyors came through, I was asked to direct any questions to the DNR Sauk Rapids office. A gentleman there told me, via telephone conversation, that this project would not come into fruition for "a few years, if ever."

Please drop comments in box at the meeting or submit comment via one of the following means:

Mail to: Bolton & Menk, Inc.  
Attn: Joel Odens  
12224 Nicollet Avenue  
Burnsville, MN 55337-1649  
Email to: [joelod@bolton-menk.com](mailto:joelod@bolton-menk.com)



## **Steve Backowski**

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**From:** dpstumpf@charter.net  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 16, 2017 11:29 AM  
**To:** Jeffrey Jelinski; Mike LeMieur; Randy Winscher; Mike Wilson; Duane Johnson; Steve Backowski  
**Subject:** Draft master plan for Belle Prairie Park and the Soo Line Trail

First let me thank you for your service and commitment to the public good.

You and others have previously identified the Soo Line Trail as an public recreation and tourism asset. Steps have been taken to maintain, manage, and promote this asset. Your vision is noted and appreciated.

I understand that a current draft master plan for Belle Prairie Park and the Soo Line Trail would ATVs to cross the Mississippi at the Blanchard Dam, This would mean the bridge would be shared with those walking, running, biking, nature watching and so on.

I strongly request that you reconsider this. Allowing ATV use of the Blanchard Dam Bridge at this time would be a step backward, create an obvious unnecessary risk to public safety, would damage a significant community resource, and adversely impact economic and tourist development of the trail system in central Minnesota. People are pedestrians, runners, bicyclist, and those seeking quiet enjoyment of natures beauty do not seek a section of trail shared with ATVs.

Having performed ATV, snowmobile and water patrol duties as a deputy for Crow Wing, Todd, and Pope Counties I submit that the draft plan would put ATVs in close proximity to pedestrians and bicycles and create an unnecessary danger. Its not if an accident would happen, but when. This is a bottleneck and area of obvious distraction, there are no shoulders or areas for people to move to avoid injury or collision. One would be hard pressed to find a worse area for ATVs, pedestrians, and bicyclists to share.

You are creating risk not avoiding it. According to the County Engineer, having ATVs cross on Highway 27 or go down to a crossing near Bowlus and Royalton and cross on High 26 isn't what is best for ATVs. Why is what is best for ATV the controlling factor? According to Backowski. "This is a very difficult location to cross.". Few if any accidents are happening at current ATV river crossings. Crossing on well designed multiply purpose bridges such as Highways 26 and 27 are bad areas for ATV crossing, but a bridge designed for pedestrians and bikers in the summer and snowmobiles in the winter is a good place for them to cross? The Blanchard Dam Bridge would not be any easier to cross and you are NOT increasing safety, you are diminishing it. If you doubt me why not have a traffic safety analysis done of the proposed plan?

I strongly encourage you to better publicize the draft master plan. If you think it is well publicized I suggest you check the Morrison County web site and use the search function and see if you can easily find it.

If you look at other areas you will find that ATV and bicycle/pedestrian traffic convergence is avoided whenever possible. You don't see bridges like this being 'shared' on the Iron Range, North Shore, Iowa's High Tressle Bridge, or Minnesota's Root River Trail area. The desire to ATV users to access this area does not create a need.

ATV usage should be restricted to areas north of the Highway 10 trail head. ATVs and other motorized vehicles (besides snowmobiles in season) should not be allowed to use the Blanchard Dam Bridge or any other sections south of the Trail Head.

You are starting down a slippery slope. The ATVs accessing the trail are not the three wheel 250 cc ATVs some of us grew up with. Current ATVs include Class 1 and Class 2 vehicles. They can be 1000 cc (and probably more) and seat up to 6 people. Allowing some access and not others would create an enforcement situation that would be nearly impossible to control. How are you going to allow use by ATVs and not other OHVs? Would a modified quad with a wheelbase of greater than 50 inches be prohibited? How could you allow a two-up ATV to use the bridge, but not a 2 person side by side? Why would an ATV be allowed, but not a OHM?

I realize I am rambling somewhat, but there are too many questions and the draft has been poorly publicized and is not easily accessible. The public need and public good for allowing ATV usage of the Blanchard Dam Bridge has not been demonstrated to the public.

I remain available should you have any questions or comments.

David P. Stumpf  
14535 Ryan Street  
Little Falls, MN 56345  
[dpstumpf@charter.net](mailto:dpstumpf@charter.net)  
320-616-2001 Home  
320-766-7776 Cell

## Steve Backowski

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**From:** Jan Lasar <cmnbikeclub@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 17, 2017 10:21 AM  
**To:** Steve Backowski  
**Subject:** Comments on the Soo Line Master Plan

Good Morning, Steve. This is a copy of the letter I sent to the commissioners with my comments on the master plan.

Thanks again for the opportunity to voice my opinion.

Happy Trails, whatever they may be.

Jan

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on the proposed Master plan for the Soo Line Trail. After visiting the open house on August 2 and speaking with county engineer Steve Backowski, and county commissioner Jeff Jellinski, I took some time to think about the idea of allowing ATVs to cross the Blanchard Dam bridge.

Before I get into the details, I want to make sure you know that I am not against ATVs and I respect everyone's choice of recreation. I'm in the Central Minnesota Bicycle Club and many of our members do both, ride bikes and ATVs.

The argument I heard from Steve and Jeff was that allowing ATVs to cross the bridge at Blanchard (currently open to pedestrians, bikes and snowmobiles) would be safer than ATVs riding road shoulders on Hillton Road and Nature Road and crossing the river at the bridge near the Royalton Sportsmen's Park. The argument was one of increased public safety.

I was told the proposed speed limit for ATVs over the bridge would be 5mph and there would be some kind of temporary physical barrier that would be put up in the warmer months and removed for winter so the snowmobile groomer could pass over the bridge. Another argument was that there had been no incidents at the Highway 10 bridge north of the Blanchard Dam bridge since ATVs were allowed to share it with non-motorized traffic.

I think we can all agree that total physical separation between motorized and non-motorized traffic is the safest way for the two to coexist. That's why I'm puzzled that anyone would think that re-routing ATVs from a road and bridge with a wide shoulder to a narrow bridge shared with pedestrians and people on bikes would increase public safety. You would be taking motorized vehicles weighing in excess of 700 pounds off the highway and putting them in close proximity to walkers and bikers who have no protection at all against a collision.

Another point is weighing wants vs. needs. Currently, we have no idea how many ATVs use the Highway 10 bridge to get to Blanchard Dam or cross the river on Nature Road.

Of course, people would want to cross at Blanchard Dam, but do they need to? If ATV traffic is expected to be high it would be more dangerous to non-motorized users. If the traffic is expected to be minimal, I don't see the point in retrofitting the existing bridge with temporary dividers and putting motorized and non-motorized users close together when ATVs can cross the river elsewhere. It would be more convenient, but to get to the other side of the dam, an ATV rider would have to go out of their way about seven miles, which would take only eight minutes at 50 mph and thirteen minutes at a modest 30mph. This is on roads with a wide shoulder.

There's also no guarantee that allowing motorized traffic across Blanchard Dam bridge would decrease the amount of ATV traffic over the bridge at Nature Road.

My next point concerns the way in which the Highway 10 bridge and Blanchard Dam bridges are used. On the face of it they're both bridges used to cross an obstacle, such as a road, river or railroad tracks. However, they differ in the way users interact with them. Because it's currently a bike/pedestrian bridge, Blanchard Dam bridge invites people to stroll, stop and look at the river, watch birds and enjoy themselves. It has become a destination.

The Highway 10 bridge sees a lot less use. People do not drive out there with friends and family to watch traffic on the highway or spot birds on the railroad tracks.

Putting a temporary divider to keep motorized and non-motorized traffic apart would make a portion of the bridge inaccessible to leisure walking and allowing motorized vehicles would have a negative impact on the natural character of the area.

In summation:

- Total physical separation is best for motorized and non-motorized trail users.
- Rerouting motorized traffic from a road to a trail shared with pedestrians and people on bikes does not increase overall public safety.
- If motorized traffic across Blanchard Dam is expected to be low, putting up barriers would make part of the bridge inaccessible to walking and biking for no reason.
- If motorized traffic across Blanchard Dam is expected to be high, pedestrians and people on bikes would be at greater risk than before, thus decreasing overall public safety.
- Allowing motorized traffic across Blanchard Dam bridge would have a negative impact on the current user experience of the natural area with additional barriers, noise and smell.

I suggest that to bring ATV riders safely across the Mississippi River, that ditches and/or shoulders on Hillton and Nature Roads between Blanchard Dam and the Nature Road bridge be made a designated ATV route. At the Nature Road bridge, signs should be put up alerting motorists that the bridge is shared with ATVs, maybe the speed limit could be lowered.

Again, I respect everyone's choice of recreational vehicles.

But the Blanchard Dam bridge is a destination for the residents of Morrison County and national and international visitors. Please keep it motor-free for all to enjoy.

I am also puzzled why the Morrison County Trail Committee wasn't covered for this master plan. A few years ago we met regularly and discussed allowing ATVs to cross the Highway 10 bridge, among other things. It seems the committee should have had a voice in this.

I'm open for comments and welcome a response,

Jan Lasar

## Steve Backowski

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**From:** Steve Backowski  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 24, 2017 7:42 AM  
**To:** Mike Wilson; Mike LeMieur (MikeL@co.morrison.mn.us); Duane Johnson; Randy Winscher; Jeffrey Jelinski  
**Subject:** FW: Blanchard overpass

FYI master plan comment.

**From:** russel frey [mailto:adventure.frey299@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 23, 2017 11:14 AM  
**To:** Steve Backowski <SteveB@co.morrison.mn.us>  
**Subject:** Blanchard overpass

Dear Steve,

The proposed mixing of atv and pedestrian, cycle traffic on the blanchard overpass is a very bad idea and is a recipe for problems.

ATV traffic does utilize roadways and (ditch) right of ways now and will continue to do so, even if you mix them with other pedestrian, cycling traffic.

The concern that atvs are at risk with automobile traffic just doesn't add up.

I urge that the blanchard overpass be specific to pedestrian, cycling traffic only!

As a morrison county resident and a bicycle business owner i think this would preserve the trail in a better way.

Feel free to contact me for any ideas and input.

Russell Frey

September 1, 2017

Steve Backowski and the Morrison County Commisioners:

I am writing as a Representative of the Eastern Morrison County ATV Club in the support of the ATV travel over the Blanchard Dam Bridge so ATV's can cross the river from either side in safety. It is only to get across the river not to use the whole trail. The only way for ATV's to cross the river now is to cross on Nature Road or County Road 26. We as a club see this as a safety issue. In the last couple years there has been deadly accidents just on the west side of river on the same road not even including ATV's.

After thinking about the options we have, and looking for the safest option, we truly believe that crossing the Blanchard Dam bridge is safest for all involved. Considering if ATV's cross the Bridge on Nature Road with all other vehicles such as farm equipment, trucks, Semi's and cars, if an accident would occur chances are pretty slim against a ATV. On the other hand, if we crossed the bridge at Blanchard Dam ATV's would be going at a slow pace because of the view and pedestrians and bicyclists around. They would all be there for the same reason, to enjoy family time also to share time with friends and enjoying what our community has to offer. Chances of an accident would be slim and if it ever to happen very mirror with everyone surviving.

Isn't this what we are looking for as a community. To have great times spent with family and friends enjoying our great Morrison County Outdoors. We as a club have heard what a great job on the Soo Line Trail in Morrison County our Club has done, on how it is such a pleasure to ride for family and friends from everywhere to enjoy. Wouldn't it be great if we could share this with the people on the west of the River safely as well? They could enjoy a safe ride to Royalton with their families and Genola with their friends, but most consider having to go around on Nature Road to cross the River a hazard and most choose not to take that chance with their families.

So, we as a club, would like you to consider ATV's crossing the Blanchard Dam Bridge so both sides of the River can ride safely. It is a situation similar to the Highway 10 crossing and that seems to have worked out well for everyone. There have been no issues that were brought to our attention. This can work the same way, safely.

David Lanners  
Eastern Morrision County ATV Club President

Allan Stangl  
Eastern Morrision County ATV Club Vice-President



# County unveils plans for Belle Prairie Park, Soo Line

Published August 16, 2017 at 6:00 am

By Tyler Jensen

Staff Writer



*The playground at Belle Prairie Park, where updates are planned by the Morrison County Public Works Department. Along with updated playground equipment, the park could see improved trails, buildings and forested areas.*

The Morrison County Public Works Department has unveiled its master plans for improvements to the Belle Prairie Park and the Soo Line Trail.

While there is no timeline, Public Works Director Steve Backowski said the plans are meant to be included on the county's wish list so these two sites are eligible for funding.

Any improvement projects to the sites would be based on when money for them is available, Backowski said.

On the Soo Line Trail, one of the ideas is to incorporate areas where ATV riders can get off the main trail and do mud runs, Backowski said.

If the opportunity ever presents itself, one of the ideas in the plan is to connect the Soo Line to the Crow Wing County trail system northeast of Morrison County.

The Soo Line would also connect to the planned Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail and Pierz trail, Backowski said.

An idea that faces concerns from some is allowing motorized vehicles like ATVs to cross at the bridge over the Mississippi River at the Blanchard Dam.

“It was probably the most intensely discussed issue,” Backowski said of the open house held Aug. 3.

The recommendation from the group of citizens involved in the plan was to allow the ATVs to cross on the trail, keeping them out of highway traffic, before having them get off onto a ramp once they’ve crossed the river.

Because the Federal Highway Commission helped pay for the bridge and trail, Backowski said, the change would need its approval first.

Currently, if ATV riders want to cross the Mississippi, they need to either go up to Little Falls and cross on Highway 27, or go down to a crossing near Bowlus and Royalton and cross on Highway 26, at a location that isn’t the best for ATVs, Backowski said.

“This is a very difficult location to cross,” he said.

The consensus of the group was that the safety aspect made the crossing idea worthwhile.

At Belle Prairie Park, Backowski said the idea is to mostly keep it the same, only better.

“We’re not looking to change a lot of things. We’re looking to enhance and improve the current way the park is being managed,” Backowski said.

Some of these improvements include new parking lots near the playground and shelter area, which will also get updates, including making the bathrooms compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is also writing a plan for Morrison County to go into parts of the park containing virgin pine and remove exotic invasive species like sumac, prickly ash, buckthorn and more.

“They get so thick nothing else can grow,” Backowski said.

Hiking trails around the park would be improved and added, while a fishing pier would be installed on the Mississippi River across from the sheltered areas and river accesses would be improved.

Backowski said this plan is the most comprehensive the park has had.

“As we go through this and as time goes along, this (the plan) will allow us to apply for funding and make these improvements when we can,” Backowski said.

The improvements will not be done overnight, Backowski said. The first year the county can apply for funding is 2018.

“There is no time frame on when this would all get done. It’s just this big view of things we would like to see ,” Backowski said.

It could be five to 10 years before everything in the current plan gets done, Backowski said.

More things can be added to the master plans at later dates, depending on what the county wants to see, Backowski said.

His department is looking for input on the plans, which are available from Public Works.

To comment on the plan, contact Morrison County Public Works at (320) 632-0121 or a county commissioner.

Backowski said he intends to bring the plans to the County Board meeting Tuesday, Aug. 22.

Filed Under: [Belle Prairie Park](#), [Little Falls](#), [morrison county](#), [Motley](#), [Pierz](#), [Randall](#), [Royalton](#), [soo line trail](#), [Swanville](#), [Upsala](#)

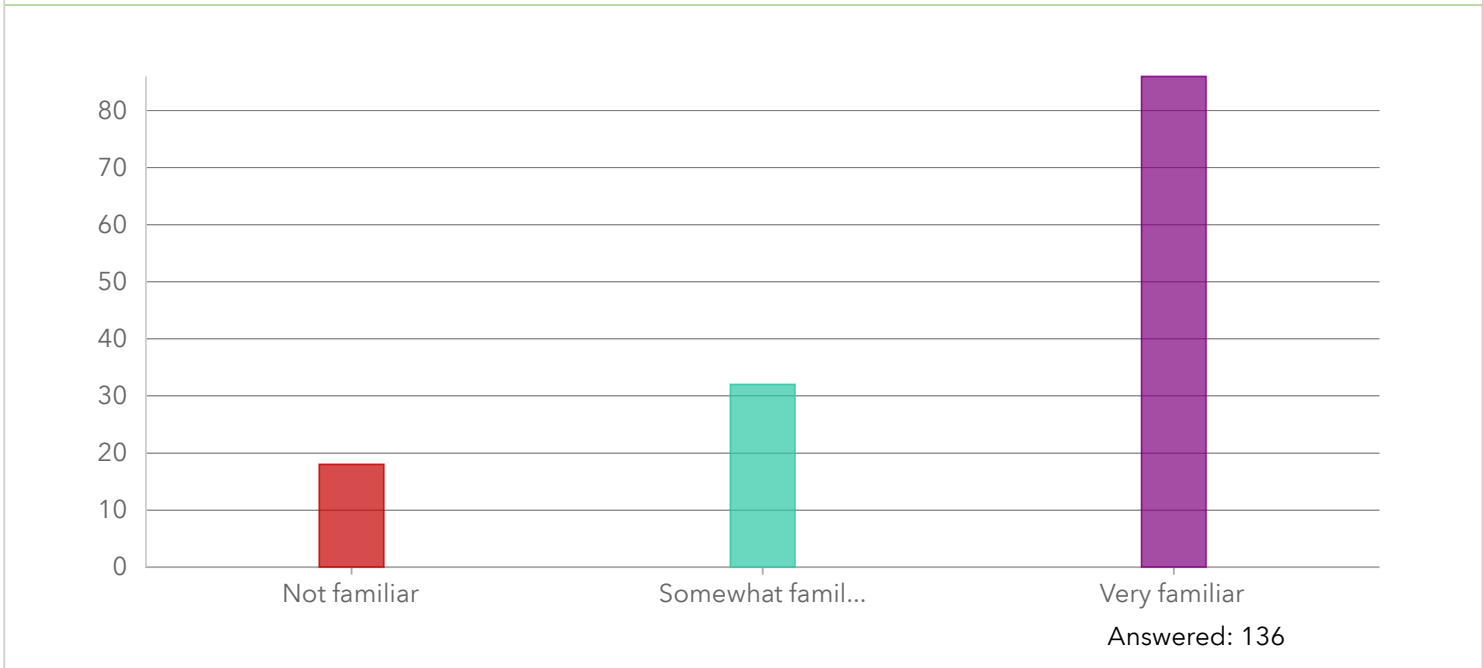


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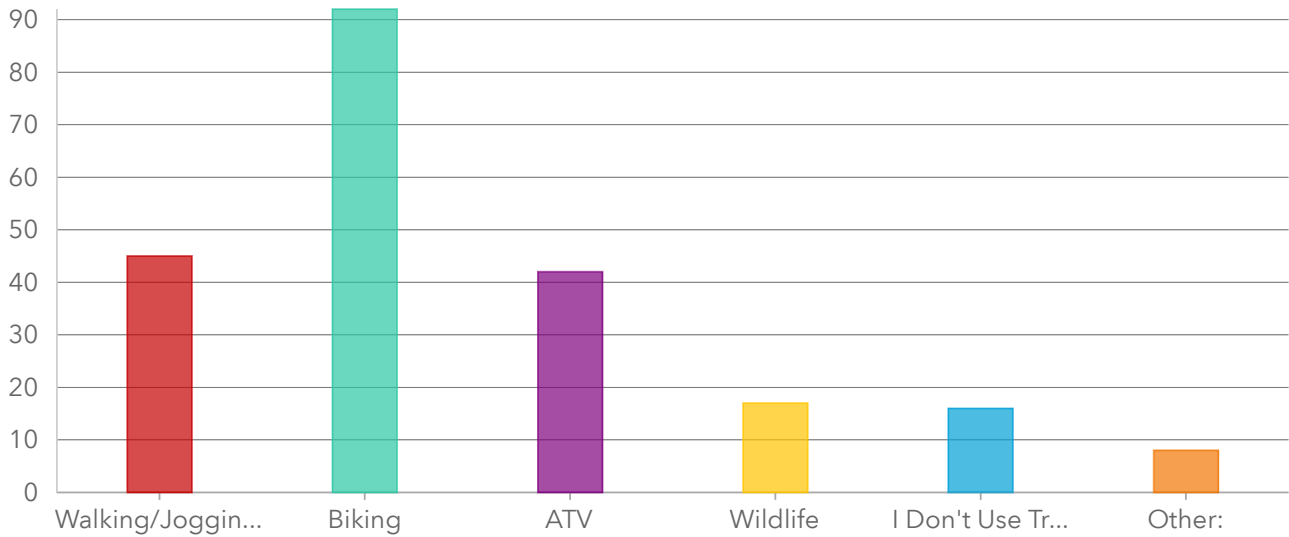
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# Morrison County Master Plan Survey

## 1. How familiar are you with Morrison County's Soo Line Trail?



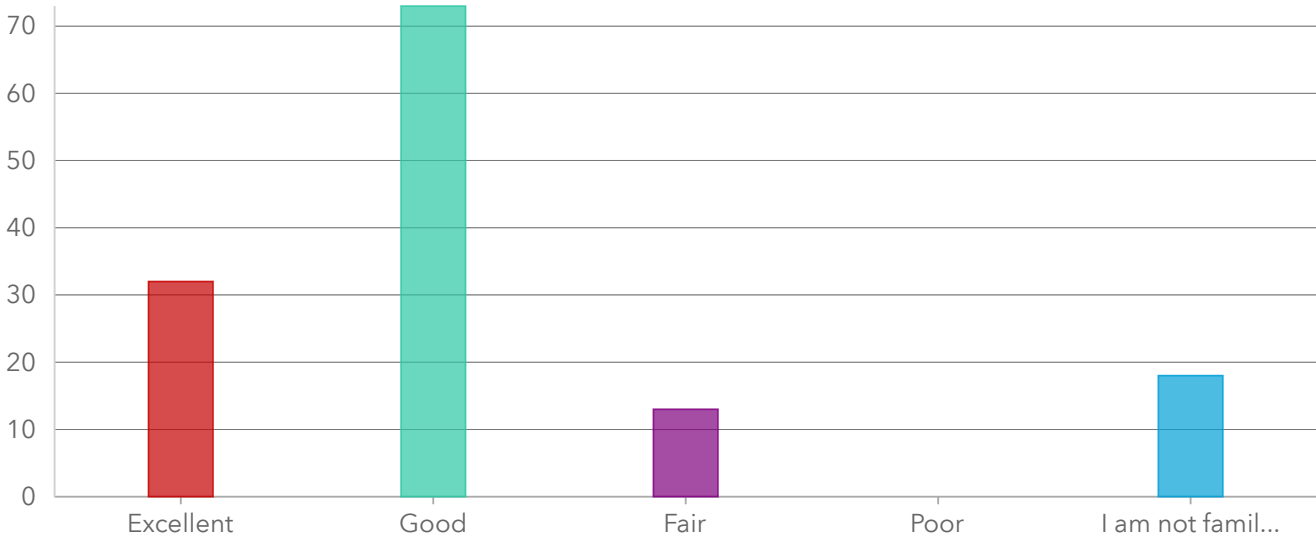
**2. What type of activity do you use the Soo Line Trail for?**



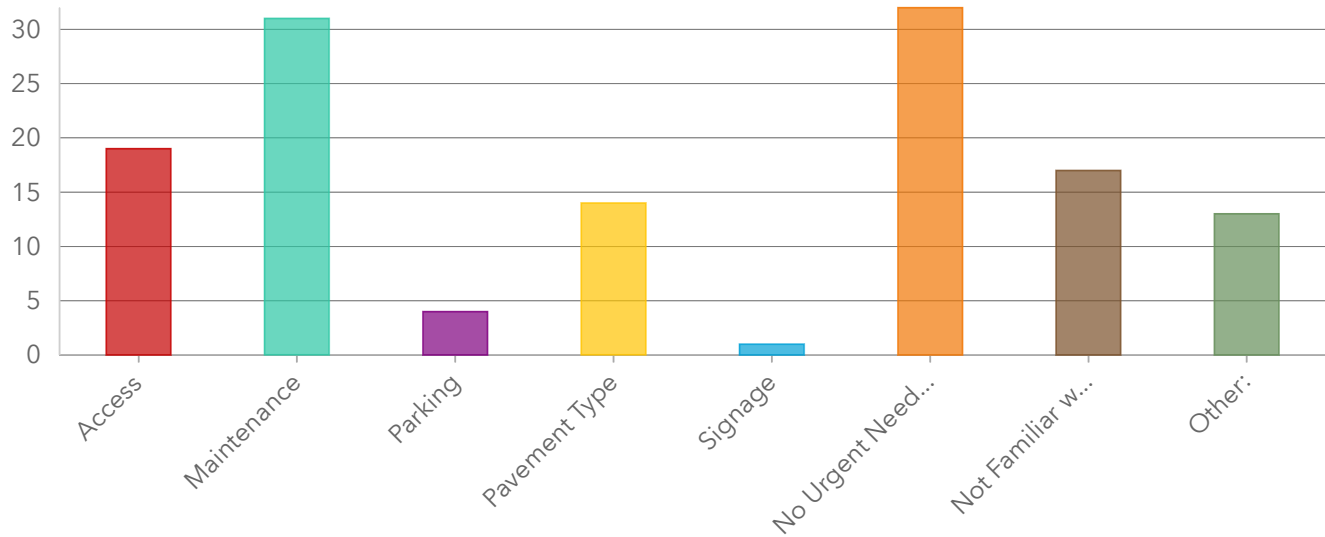
**Other: - 2. What type of activity do you use the Soo Line Trail for?**

- Watching birds and wildlife
- Snowmobile
- Snowmobiling
- Snowmobiling
- walking the dog
- Rollerblading
- I haven't used the trail yet but plan to do so this summer for walking and biking and hopefully see wildlife

**3. How would you rate the quality/physical condition of the Soo Line Trail?**



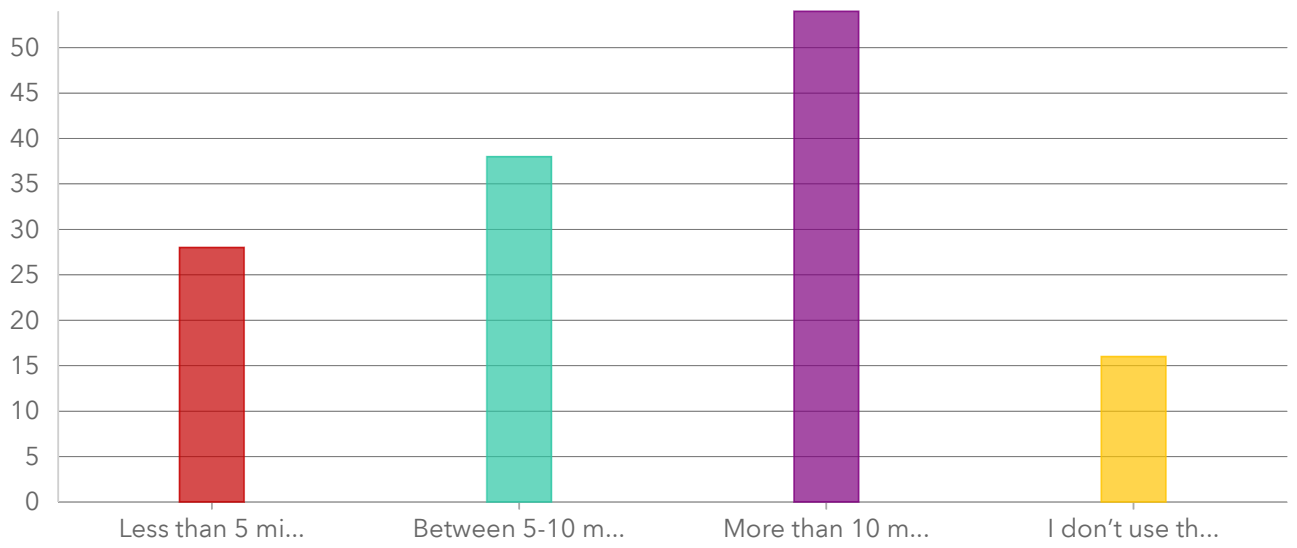
#### 4. What do you feel is the most urgent need associated with the Soo Line Trail?



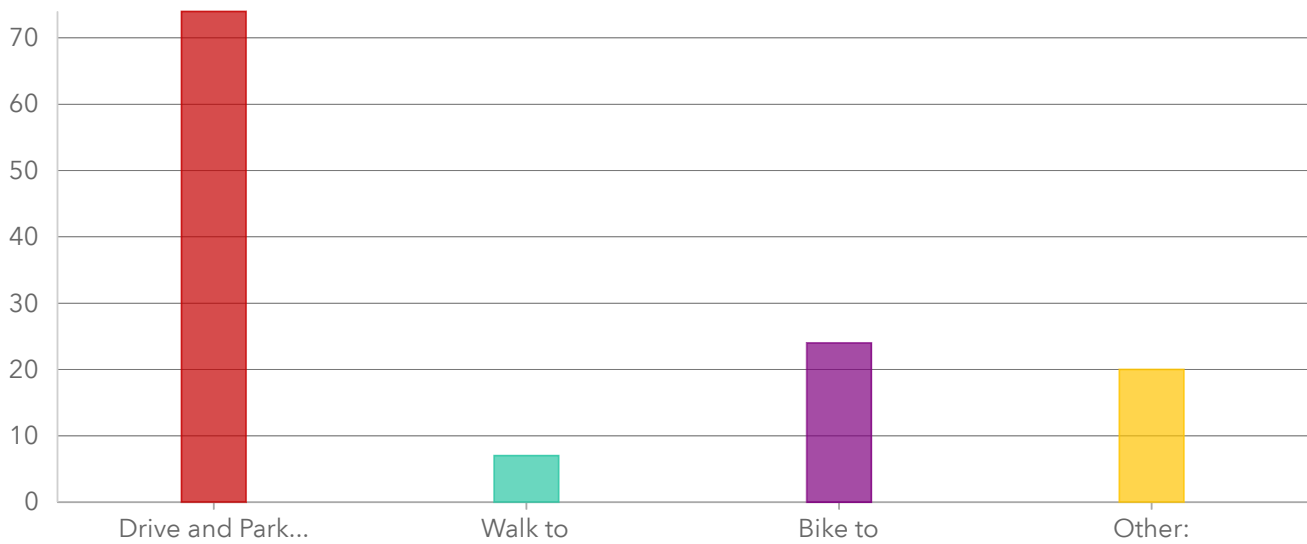
#### Other: - 4. What do you feel is the most urgent need associated with the Soo Line Trail?

- Open the gates in November. There's still good riding weather left and the trail is closed
- pave the bridges
- Connectivity to Parks, Belle Prairie and Crow Wing State.
- Some of the bridges seem pretty rough
- trail head bathroom
- trail connections
- Connect to the other trails
- IT IS FINE THE WAY IT IS.
- crossing the Mississippi
- brushing the trails
- Blacktop deterioration
- The east side of the trail should be paved (from Hwy 10 to Pierz).
- It would be nice to be able to get to the west side of the river from the trail on an ATV

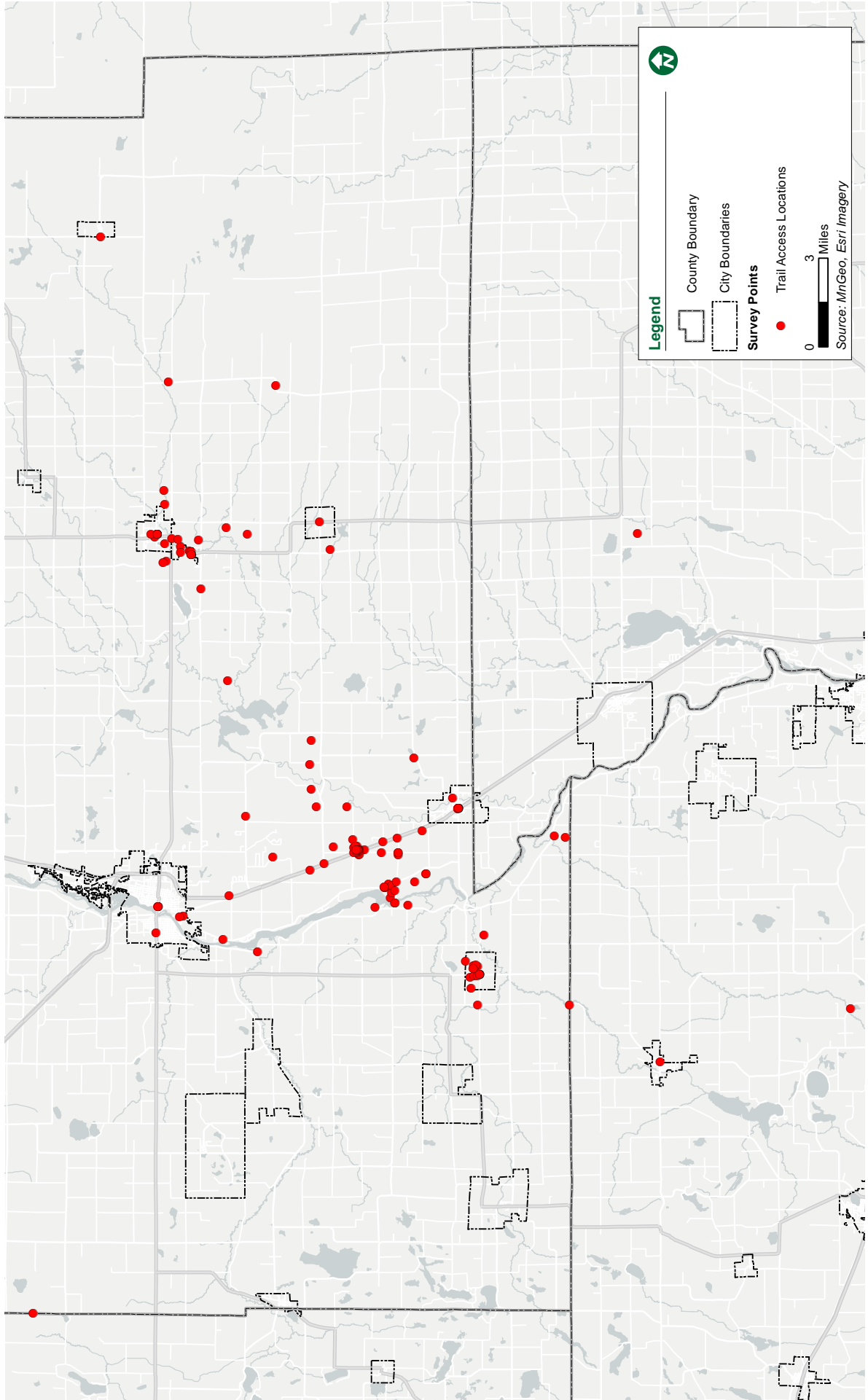
### 5. What distance do you typically travel to use the Trail?



### 6. How do you access the Trail?

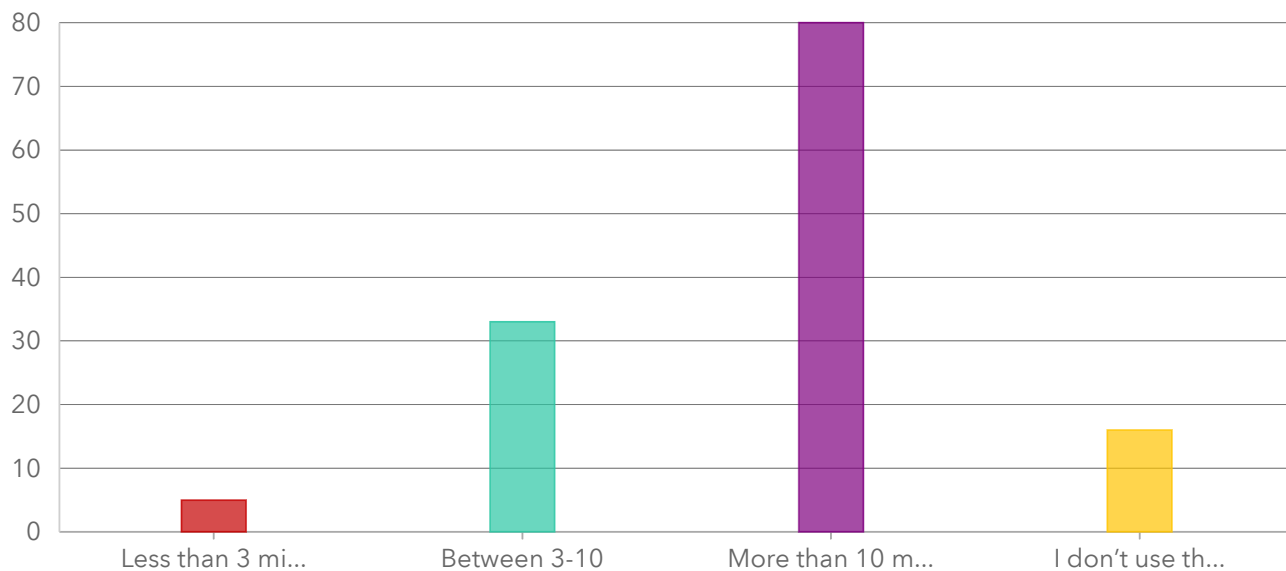


7. Where do you Access the Trail?

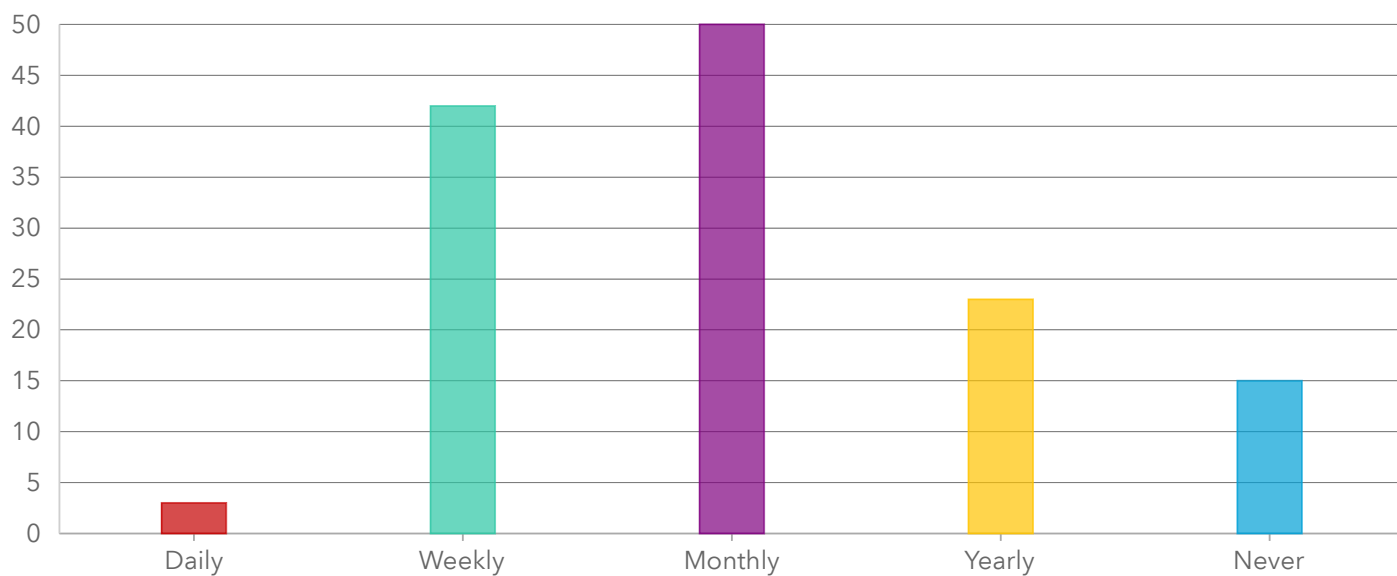




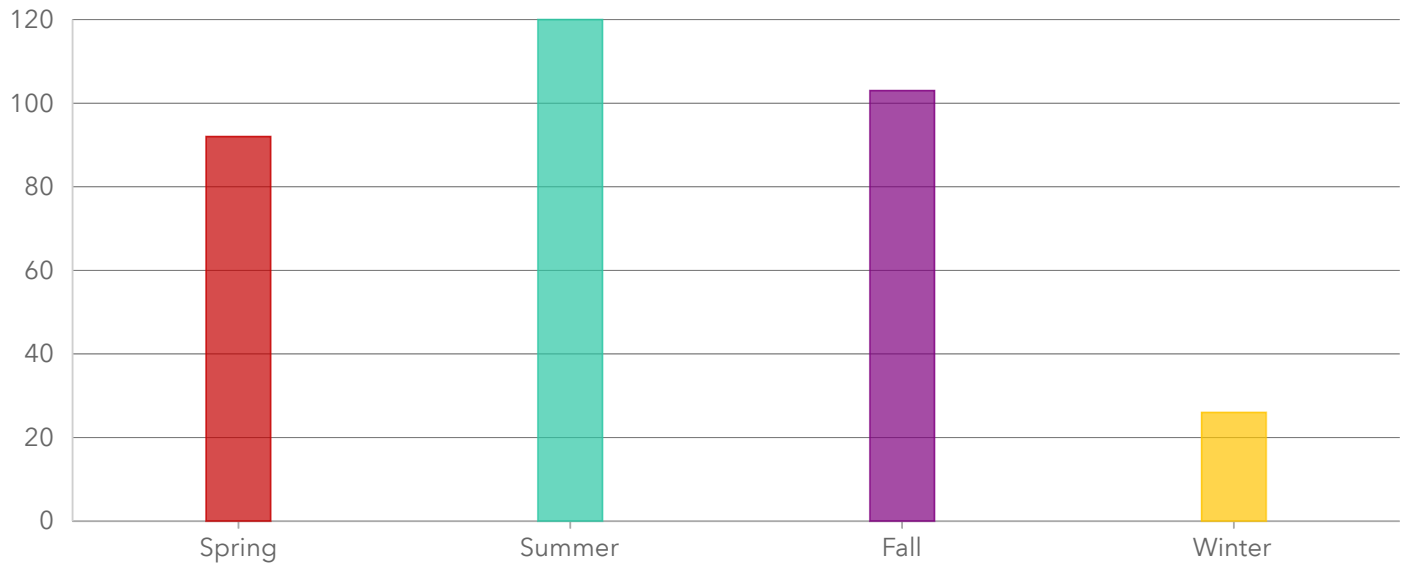
**8. How far do you travel along the Soo Line Trail?**



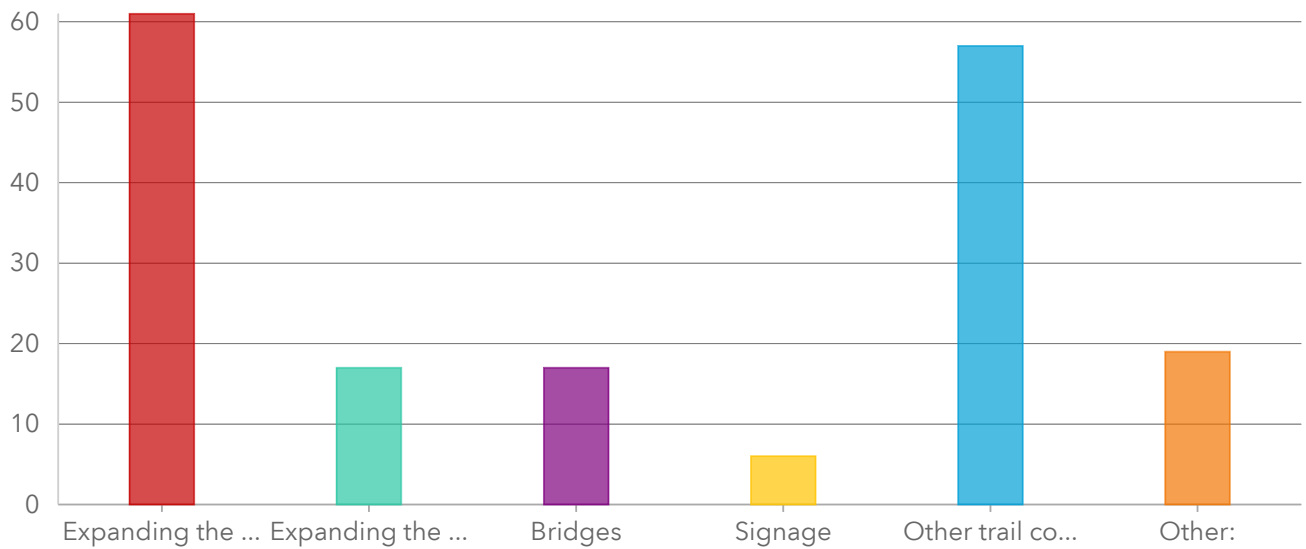
**9. On average, how often do you use the Soo Line Trail?**



**10. I use the Soo Line Trail during the following season(s) (include all that apply):**



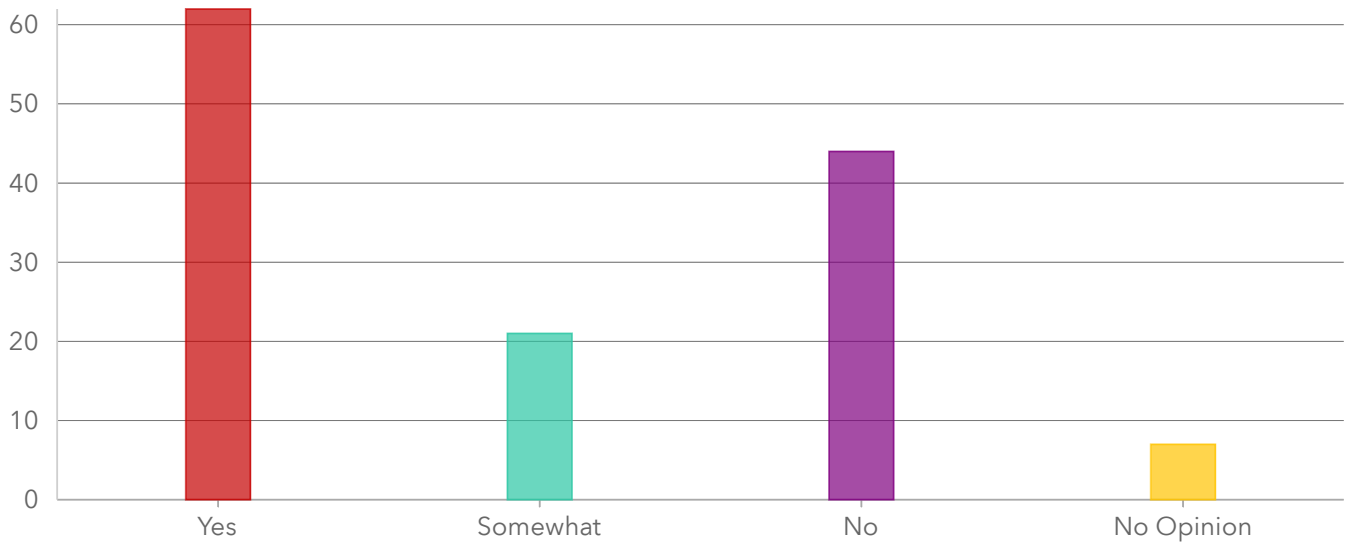
**11. What Soo Line Trail initiatives do you feel the County should focus on in the next 5-10 years?**



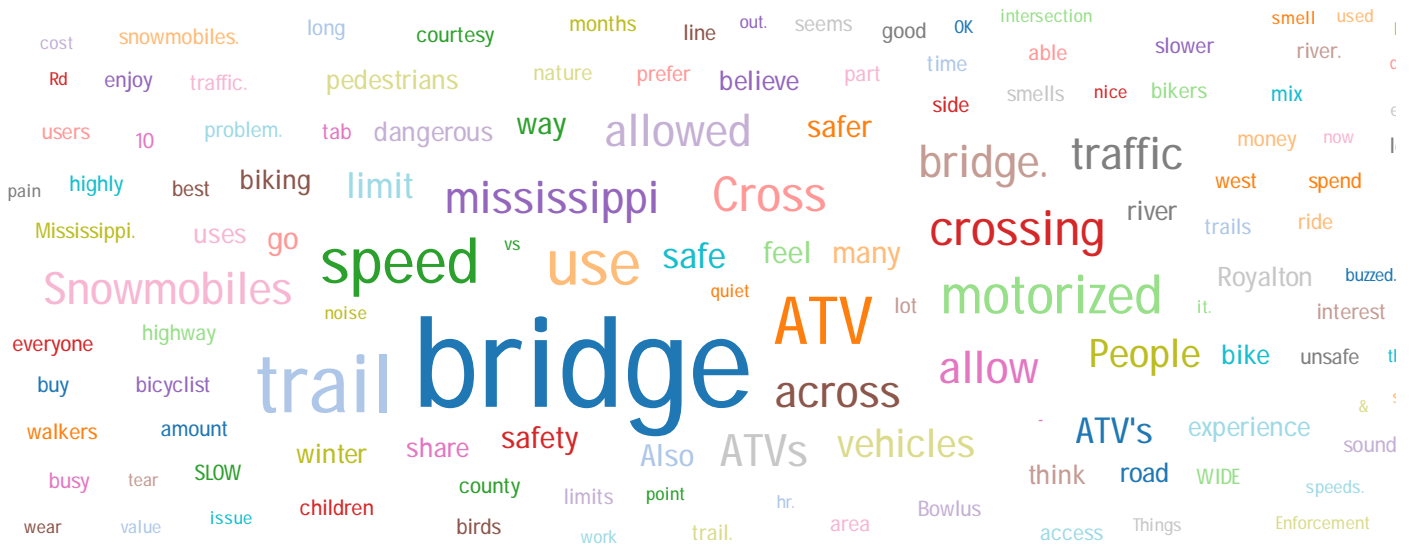
**Other: - 11. What Soo Line Trail initiatives do you feel the County should focus on in the next 5-10 years?**

- Allowing ATV's during winter when no snow. Or tracks on ATV's when snow.
- Parking
- Maintenance
- Maintenance
- Expansion
- Maintenance if top priority, extending the pavement would be nice to increase the mileage we would ride with our road bike, as we can access all miles currently with only our fat bikes.
- Lavatory facilities
- NONE, NOT NOW, NOT EVER
- allowing atvs to use bridge at Mississippi
- connect with the "cc" trail [pine center]
- Connect to Paul Bunyan Trail! Fix holes/frost heaves. Great biking trail!
- Bad trail sections approaching Genola
- Use longer, if not enough snow for snowmobiling, should be open to ATV
- Adding a partial paved surface for better bike trails
- Access across the Blanchard Dam
- Access to blancher dam
- Accessibility of mobility-challenged people to use motorized wheelchairs and scooters to access and travel the trail safely.
- working with the Veterans Trail
- Atv Cross the river

12. Currently, ATV/snowmobiles are not allowed to cross the bridge at the Mississippi River - provided it is deemed safe for all users, would you feel comfortable with multi-modal usage at that bridge crossing? (walking, biking, cycling, ATV, snowmobile, etc.)



13. Additional comments regarding allowing bridge crossing of ATV/snowmobile:



### 13. Additional comments regarding allowing bridge crossing of ATV/snowmobile:

- We are highly for the crossing of the bridge via ATVs.
- I feel it would be safer for the ATVs to share the bridge across the Mississippi. The only other point is to travel across Nature Rd Bridge and that is not a safe crossing due to the traffic and the curvature of the bridge. Also the bridge across highway 10 is shared and it seems to be working out. There would be no difference then the bridge across the Mississippi.
- Crossing the Mississippi River bridge is safer than trying to ride the county road from Bowlus to Royalton where we were almost hit on a few occasions riding on the side of the highway is very dangerous because there no ditches to ride in that area
- I think most people that avid ATV and Snowmobilers will respect anyone else who uses the bridge, most have more common courtesy then walker, bikers and joggers in my honest opinion. If everyone would use the same courtesy there will not be problems with this.
- I think we should be able to cross it with a slower speed limit
- It would safer then run done the county road take the chance of having an accident and be injured
- It would be OK as long as there are identified lanes for motor and non-motor enjoyment.
- I would use the trail if there was better access.
- This bridge is used by a lot of pedestrians and people on bikes. People come here to enjoy the river, watch birds and fish. There should be no motorized traffic over that bridge in the months where it's not groomed for snowmobiles. You can't 'deem' it safe when ATVs share a narrow space with ATVs
- I don't believe it is in the best interest of the trail to allow tab on the trail
- Enforcement of low speeds. Some are doing it already.
- If atv's are allowed to cross, DNR/ Sheriff's Dept. needs to vigorously patrol this area for violations of speed limits, etc. Also speed limit on trail kept to a minimum speed for the safety of non atv users.
- Biking across this bridge in itself is dangerous simply because of the rough surface. If you add ATV riders to this mix it will eventually lead to someone getting hurt.
- ATV use would substantially reduce the amount of time I would spend on the trail, and the amount of money I spend at Bowlus restaurants.
- As a bicyclist, I prefer that motorized vehicles stay off the paved trail. If there's an intersection with other motorized use trails on the west side, AND there would be speed limits on motorized vehicles crossing the bridge and the safety issue is addressed, then it seems reasonable to allow all to cross Hwy 10 on the bridge.
- I feel it is unsafe for motorized vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists to use the bridge together.
- There are many families and young children on that bridge over the Mississippi, children are unpredictable and there is NO WAY to guaranty their safety if motorized vehicles are allowed to share the bridge. Even the number of users of the trail/bridge would prevent safe sharing. Also, most users are there to enjoy nature, the sights, sounds and smells, the rushing water, chirping of birds, laughter of children. None of those would be enjoyed over the sounds of motorized vehicles or the acrid smell of gasoline/exhaust left behind.
- If ATV crossing is considered, speed must be greatly reduced as there times when there is a lot of foot and bike use.
- ATV use of the trail destroys the experience for me as a biker. I go to the trail in part to get away from the noise and smells and experience of being buzzed. I value highly the quiet and wildlife. I expect I would stop using this trail if ATVs were nearby.
- Slow motorized vehicles down at the bridge. SLOW then share.
- No ATV's when people are biking it could be dangerous.
- If other uses allowed, good signage would be important. But, the traffic is not that high that the other uses need to be disallowed.

- There are too many people who use the bridge who park and just look at the River. It would be unsafe to allow ATV's and Snowmobiles with all of the pedestrian traffic.
- no motorized traffic should be allowed
- Only if the bridge is widened or separate bridge is constructed.
- THE BRIDGE IS NOT WIDE ENOUGH AND THERE ARE WAY TOO MANY TRAINS TO ALLOW FOR MORE TRAFFIC CONGESTION. SNOWMOBILES AND ATV TRAFFIC SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED ON ANY ROADWAY WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS.
- Physical separation would be preferred
- put a 5 mile per hr. speed limit and everybody should be able to use it
- Speed and cooperation of the ATVs are the key to safety. Who is going to monitor that they act appropriately?
- Please keep those machines off that part of the trail!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Last I was on the trail in winter it was legal for snowmobiles to cross the Mississippi bridge
- when crossing limit the speed to atv/snowmobile
- I thought atvs/snowmobile were allowed to cross the bridge
- To allow ATV access across Blanchard Dam at low speed vs traveling the busy hwys
- To allow ATV to Cross bridge instead of busy highways
- Safety is a major concern. Our experience has been that bicycles and walkers don't mix well with ATVs and Snowmobiles.
- I think it will cost more money from the wear and tear of the ATV and snowmobiles - I would prefer to use the trail as we do now for biking, walking and hiking.
- It is only fair to give atv's access to crossing the Mississippi. We pay taxes and buy stickers to use it unlike bikers who don't have to buy trail stickers.
- 100% for allowing bridge crossing. It's a pain to go to Royalton Bridge to cross and deal with all the road traffic.
- ATV & Snowmobiles should be allowed to utilize the bridge.
- I use multi model trails and they are great! I wish the zoo line would expand to this!
- Snowmobiles would be okay in the winter but the new wide UTV/ATV would be dangerous with walkers and bicyclist on the same bridge.
- In the winter months snowmobile and atv would be fine but with all the bike traffic and pedestrians on the bridge in bike season I don't feel it is a good idea-so many people comment on the beautiful sight looking south down the Mississippi is and that it is one of only a few Mississippi crossings in the USA that is for pedestrians only and they feel safe to move freely on the bridge. I believe it would not work as the bridge deck is now.
- Would be nice to go west on the trail across the Mississippi river. I love Atv'ing but you can only go east at this time on a decent trail. This is at the Soo line trail from Royalton, MN.
- There is no safe way for Atvs to cross the river
- With a slower speed limit, crossing the bridge with ATV's and Snowmobiles will not be a problem. Also as long as everyone respects each other there shouldn't be a problem.
- Do it. Things would be way safer

#### 14. What other additional comments or issues related to the Soo Line Trail would you like to share?



#### 14. What other additional comments or issues related to the Soo Line Trail would you like to share?

- When we have a low snow or now snow winter allow ATV's to use the Soo line. It will help replace the revenue the business loose when snowmobiles can't ride.
- Adding Horseback riding to the trails as well to bring in more people. And since you need a trail pass for riding the money for the trail pass could also help maintain the trails.
- A lot of people use Hillton to get to LF from the trail. It would be great if there were biking/walking paths from the Soo Line to the city along Hillton Road. We would be more apt to bike to the trail if there were designated bike lanes. Right now, we would have to put bikes in the back of vehicles to get to the trail.
- keep the trail open in November a great time of the year to bike and the gates ONLY keep some off but many wonder WHY it is closed
- Would like to see a connection of the trail to Camp Ripley area and north to Paul Bunyan Trail
- The Soo Line Trail west of HWY 10 is Morrison County's only non-motorized recreational trail. Accommodations have been made to allow ATVs to cross at the HWY 10 bridge and that's Ok. Please keep everything about this trail quiet and peaceful.
- Get it connected to the State Veterans Trail and to the Paul Bunyan Trail
- Bathroom at great river road
- The Soo Line Trail is fantastic. Maybe better signage leading up to the trail from 170th Ave. N/ 83rd St. from Royalton.
- We have a very nice trail, don't let a few ruin it by not being responsible. Vigorous enforcement by DNR and the Sheriff's Dept. would go a long ways toward ensuring everyone will enjoy the trail and remain safe while doing so.
- A better effort put into grading the ATV section of the Soo Line. After some grading attempts the trail has been left with some dangerous obstructions protruding for riders to hit.
- Pavement is in need of repair
- Please keep the bicycle trail a bicycling trail.
- Soo line is a great trail where it is paved, I would use it more and spend more money if it were paved. It should not be opened to summertime motorized traffic of any kind.

- Extend further east with a good surface
- Some of us who ride gravel bikes or fat bikes would like to ride the eastern portion of the Soo Line, but have been advised that it is dangerous to do so given the speed of ATV's and snowmobiles. I would like to see the eastern portion opened to bicycle traffic, with safety issues addressed.
- Please continue to promote this as the wonderful, family friendly nature hiking/biking trail that it is. It is truly a gem on Central Minnesota!
- A connection to Little Falls.
- The Soo Line trail west of the Mississippi is a gem for biking. I personally would find it a tragedy to lose it to ATVs. I also wonder how that fits into larger county issues and plans such as promoting health. Does the county see itself as wanting to promote physical activity? If so, then I don't see how it makes sense to degrade one of the best resources the county has for doing that.
- include horse riding signage
- It is a great resource!
- It would be terrific if it would be able to connect the Soo Line Trail to other trails by the Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail!
- THIS TRAIL IS ANOTHER OF THOSE PROJECTS THAT IS TRYING TO DRUM UP PUBLIC MONEY FOR USE BY A SELECT GROUP OF PEOPLE. THIS IS IMPROPER USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS AND IS SOMETHING THAT CAN'T BE SHARED BY ALL. THIS PROJECT SHOULD BE FUNDED BY THOSE WHO WILL USE IT.
- Connection to Little Falls / state park is desired
- the very first plan for the Soo line trail shows atv use from county line to county line
- Getting the Veterans Trail in place offers an opportunity for the surrounding communities. Biking as recreation is growing. And people are looking for more opportunities to ride without car traffic. Make this happen!!!
- Connect to proposed Veterans Memorial Trail
- Very well kept up! Good job! Thank you
- Soo line should be paved East up to Mille Lacs county line for bikers and walkers to enjoy and not just ATV and snowmobile traffic. Closer monitoring of trails due to vehicle traffic on the trails. It is safer to bike on a trail than a road and a person should not have to travel to Brainerd or Mille Lacs to use their trails
- The gravel gets very loose in some portions of the trail so it can be difficult for walking and biking. It would be nice to have it partially paved throughout the Morrison County portion similar to portions in Millacs County for better bike trails.
- I would like to see an atv trail come north towards little falls on the east side of the river.
- To allow ATV access across Blanchard Dam at low speed vs traveling the busy hwys
- To allow ATV to Cross bridge instead of busy highways
- Eagerly anticipating the hook-up of the Camp Ripley Veterans Trail to the Soo Line Trail.
- A bike trail connecting the Soo line to the Paul Bunyan bike trail would be a great improvement.
- We are very fortunate to have such a nice trail with access points on highway 10 and also by the dam. We love walking there and with our dog.
- I believe atv's should have access to all trails not just gravel. As I stated above we have to buy stickers and we bring in far more business to businesses than bikers do. I also believe anyone using the trail should have to buy stickers why only atv's and snowmobiles??
- If tracks were allowed on the ATV's in the winter months the trail would generate more revenue for the establishments if snowmobiles can't when there is a shortage of snow.
- I like the blend of usage with UTA/ATV usage to the East of Hwy 10 and walkers and Bicycles West of Hwy 10.



- As a business owner on the Trail closing it to bikers in the month of November is like taking away a month of business for us .If the weather is nice there are a lot of bikers still enjoying the fall weather and scenery .This year with the weather so nice in November we still had people who did use it anyway, right or wrong. But many people came to ride on it and find it closed which is not in any bike map publication. Many of them drove many miles to find it closed I'm not aware of any other trail in the state that closes for hunting season. Bike season is short in Minnesota and it is what keeps our little café open and taking away a month that can be good for biking and business is something that we would like to see done away with. Thank-you Jordie's Trail Side café
- Please pave up to Pierz!
- Love the trail. Would love to see the pavement expanded to the east.
- I think the trail is excellent in Morrison County. Need some work from Morrison County line to Onamia.
- If trail area is big enough, occasional benches would be nice.
- Open trail to atv's west of Mississippi



MORRISON COUNTY

**BELLE PRAIRIE PARK  
AND THE SOO LINE TRAIL**

**Master Plans** for Belle Prairie Park and the Soo Line Trail have been developed utilizing on-line survey results with oversight by the County Board appointed Task Force. Anyone wishing to review the plans may go to [www.co.morrison.mn.us](http://www.co.morrison.mn.us).

**Any additional comments** may be directed to your County Commissioner or to the Public Works Department at 320-632-0121. The plans will be presented for approval at the September 5th County Board of Commissioners Meeting.

724229vw8/20/17



RESOLUTION #2017-005

Soo Line Recreational Trail Master Plan

WHEREAS, the Morrison County Board of Commissioners supports the input, recommendations and efforts of the Park and Trail Master Plan Task Force members and the General Public (through survey responses and open house) to identify potential improvements for codification within the SOO Line Recreational Trail Master Plan, and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the SOO Line Recreational Trail Master Plan is to evaluate issues and needs within the existing Soo Line Trail facilities, as well as to identify future site improvements that will reflect the needs and values of all potential users, and

WHEREAS, the SOO Line Recreational Trail Master Plan is the document is intended to act as a guide to Morrison County (MC) in the planning and implementation of trail improvements to the SOO Line Recreational Trail (SLRT) as part of the Morrison County trail system,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Morrison County Board of Commissioners accepts and supports the recommendations and proposed improvements as presented within the SOO Line Recreational Trail Master Plan.

I CERTIFY THAT the above resolution was adopted by the County Board of Morrison County on September 5, 2017.

SIGNED:

WITNESSED:

[Signature]
Chairman, MC Board of Commissioners
September 5, 2017

[Signature]
County Administrator, Morrison County
September 5, 2017

Adopted this 5th day of September, 2017.

STATE OF MINNESOTA }
COUNTY OF MORRISON }

I, Deb Gruber, County Administrator, Morrison County, Minnesota hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of the resolution of the County Board of said County with the original record thereof on file in the Administration Office of Morrison County in Little Falls, Minnesota as stated in the minutes of the proceedings of said board at a meeting duly held on this 5th day of September, 2017, and that the same is a true and correct copy of said original record and of the whole thereof, and that said resolution was duly passed by said board at said meeting.
Witness by hand and seal this 5th day of September, 2017.

[Signature]
Deb Gruber
County Administrator

Table with 6 columns: Commissioner, Yes, No, Abs, Mot, 2nd. Rows include Wilson, Jelinski, Johnson, LeMieur, Winscher with various checkmarks.