



May 1, 2012

Intercity Regional Trail public comment summary

The public comment period for the Intercity Regional Trail was open from April 2, 2012, through May 1, 2012. The public comment period was publicized through news releases to media in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, to the cities along the trail route, and on www.ThreeRiversParks.org. People were invited to make comments by mail to: Three Rivers Park District, Attn: Intercity Regional Trail, 3000 Xenium Lane N., Plymouth, MN 55441; by fax to 763-557-5248, or by email to ICRT@ThreeRiversParkDistrict.org.

Prior to comment period

Prior to the opening of the public comment period, the Park District received 11 email messages regarding the Intercity Regional Trail Master Plan. Of those messages, six expressed support for the regional trail master plan and one opposed it. Three people asked for more information, and one person who emailed proposed alternative routing for the trail.

Public comment period

During the public comment period from April 2-May 1, Three Rivers received 19 email messages about the Master Plan. Eleven of the 19 messages expressed support for the Intercity Regional Trail as proposed in the Master Plan. Two emails expressed opposition to the trail, four messages suggested alternative routes for the trail, and three messages offered suggestions or made critical comments about the Master Plan. Note: The total messages contained in the categories are greater than 19 because one message offered critical comments about the trail route and expressed support for it.

Old Cedar Avenue Bridge

Immediately prior to and during the Intercity Regional Trail public comment period, the Park District saw evidence of an effort by several citizens to advocate for a trail crossing of the Minnesota River at Long Meadow Lake. The residents who emailed comments expressed their viewpoints that the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge could be refurbished to allow a regional trail crossing of the river. Prior to the Intercity Regional Trail public comment period and availability of the Master Plan for public review, the Park District received 25 comments in the ICRT@ThreeRiversParkDistrict.org mailbox regarding the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge. Of those 25 comments, 23 requested that Three Rivers Park District assume ownership/management of the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge. The remaining two comments also advocated for refurbishment of the bridge to serve as a regional trail connection, but did not specifically request Park District involvement.

During the public comment period, the Park District received six comments about the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge. Of those comments, five sought Park District ownership/management of the bridge, and one comment advocated for refurbishment of the bridge but did not request Park District involvement.



Intercity Regional Trail Master Plan Public Feedback

Any spelling or grammatical errors found within the public feedback text are those of the originating author and not of the Three Rivers Park District (Park District). Names and addresses have been omitted to protect public contributor privacy.

Public Feedback Prior to Comment Period

June 9, 2011

Thinks the whole trail idea is stupid. Does not want the trail to be constructed anywhere near 82nd Street. Definitely does not want the bridge across the river to be rebuilt. Along Old Cedar, worried about trash left behind by bikers and added delay to vehicles at the intersection of 82nd and Old Cedar.

**Responded by Park District staff*

June 13, 2011

Good Afternoon

We are in receipt of a letter dated June 6, 2010 wherein you propose a regional trail to be built within 500 feet of our home.

The map you have included is insufficient for us to tell exactly where this proposed trail is to be built.

Please provide more information as far as exactly where this trail is as compared to our address

**Responded by Park District staff*

June 27, 2011

I'm unable to attend the informational meetings, and I'm curious of the exact route. Specifically, 494 south until it turns parallel to Cedar Ave. The letter says my property is within 500 ft of the proposed trail, but isn't more specific and the streets on the map are not labeled.

I support the trail, but am curious how it affects me directly.

**Responded by Park District staff*

June 30, 2011

I am an Air Force Reserve civilian and I have asked in the past about the possibility of Bicycle paths to access the Richfield and Bloomington areas to these vast federal and state properties I would be willing to bet there are a lot of Federal employees who live in these areas who would well-served by this. Our command is very concerned about employee's physical fitness.

You can imagine how comments like these have hit a brick wall with the colonel in charge of security

Possible benefit to your program Federal funding the use of Airport property . Societies benefits less greenhouse gases more physically fit employees.

Currently to ride a bicycled to work I would have to ride into Minneapolis to get across Cedar (TH 77) this would add 10 miles onto a 5 mile as the crow flies trip.

There was plan at one time to put an underpass under TH 77 near the mall 66th Street would be better suited for bicycles. Both would be helpful

**Responded by Park District staff*

February 15, 2012

This is SO EXCITING!!!!

**Responded by Park District staff*

The Star & Tribune had a brief article this week about an open house for the intercity regional trail on Tuesday. Is that Tuesday, Feb 21st? I could not find info about it on your web site.

**Responded by Park District staff*

February 16, 2012

This is an awesome proposal. I would love to see the bike trail go all the way to meet across the river and meet up with Dakota co. Trail system.

**Responded by Park District staff*

How exciting. These are already wonderful; biking towns and about to get even better. Thank you so very much. I will use this trail often.

**Responded by Park District staff*

I am a resident of Minneapolis and am out of town for the open house on the possible new trail from Lake Nokomis South. I wanted to share my opinion. I feel that the most encompassing, direct, cost efficient route for this trail would be as follows. Take Cedar Ave South from Lake Nokomis along the frontage road to the

bridge over highway 62. This bridge is Bloomington Ave. Take Bloomington Ave. South and at some point go west to 12th Ave. 12th Ave is a wide thru and relatively quiet street that runs south through Richfield and across I-494 into Bloomington. Once across I-494 there are several options but the most practical would be to turn left on to American Blvd. which goes to MOA or turn right on to Old Cedar Ave which goes South until it ends at the closed Cedar Avenue Bridge. One could also take 12th Ave South to 90th and go east on 90th until you intersected Old Cedar Ave.

Some perspective. I live near Lake Harriet and rode my bike to work at my animal hospital in Eagan for many years. My route included crossing the Minnesota River using the old Cedar Ave Bridge until it was closed. Many bikers, walkers, and bird watchers used that bridge to enjoy the Minnesota River Wildlife refuge and to get across the river. The trails adjacent to I-494 and the Mendota Bridge are useful but somewhat unpleasant due to the proximity of so much traffic. Additionally there is currently no pedestrian/bike river crossing for a huge distance West of 494.

Therefore I would love to see some of the money for this path devoted to rebuilding the Old Cedar Ave. Bridge.

My route to the bridge through Richfield was down 12th Ave which also was enjoyable because it is wide, thru street and encompasses a large residential neighborhood as well as a school. I am hoping you will learn from the poorly conceived river to lakes trail on 40th street which almost nobody uses. That trail should be moved to 42nd St which, like 12th Ave is a wide thru relatively quiet street. Please try to avoid doing what you did on Bryant Ave. South of Lake Street with the Green bikeway which is both confusing and inconsiderate of cars. Riding my bike on that street leaves me completely clueless about where I am supposed to ride.

Good luck in the trail. I would love to assist in any way. Thanks for considering my feedback.

**Responded by Park District staff*

February 28, 2012

When do you plan to have the presentation materials from the Minneapolis open house posted on your website?

**Responded by Park District staff*

April 1, 2012

This trail would be fantastic! I would use it all the time and so would huge numbers of folks south of the river and elsewhere. It needs to connect across the Long Meadow Lake/Minnesota River area to Eagan/Burnsville, it's a travesty and complete failure of government at multiple levels that the connection has been gone for over 10yrs on the old cedar bridge.

**Responded by Park District staff*

Public Feedback During Comment Period

April 3, 2012

I saw a short article in the Sunday Star Tribune that sparked my interest. It described a possible Intercity Regional Trail connecting Nokomis to the Minnesota River.

I agree that there are few, if any, options for traveling south of the Grand Rounds through the 62 Crosstown, and across 494. I live in Minneapolis and work at HealthPartners corporate by the Mall of America.

While the overall plan provides solutions to some of these barriers for pedestrians, bicycles and other recreational uses, it also seems to be somewhat limited in providing a solution for commuters that work and would like to do business in addition to pure recreational value.

The trail parallels a busy highway. Hardly something that recreational enthusiasts would see. While the detail of the trail is difficult to zoom into, I wonder why there is such an effort to parallel highway 77 and make a significant 'jog' to the west to cross 494 (at Portland?).

The proposal touts "Multi-modal Transportation" but the drawings don't seem to provide a means to travel east of 77, which is where the major connection to the bus and LRT is located at the Mall of America. American Blvd is absolutely not a bicycle friendly street. The wide sidewalks were certainly a welcome addition for pedestrians, but unless bicycle lanes are provided, bicycle traffic on the pavement has proven to be very dangerous as the lanes are narrow and vehicles do not seem to share the road well.

It hints on some sort of connection to lots of places like Southdale, Best Buy, Mall of America, the Airport and American Blvd. I can't see the point since the proposed trail does nothing to connect any of these locations (again note that unless American Blvd is changed, it is not viable for bicycle traffic).

When I have attempted to travel the concrete wasteland south of Minnehaha creek and the Grand Rounds to get to work at HealthPartners, I have found a path that goes across Bloomington Ave at 66th so that definitely is a good crossing.. Also remember a feeder from those coming from the West!

An alternative to having the trail on the West side of 77 south of 66th may be to go across 77 to the East side and parallel Longfellow Ave S. crossing 494 at 24th Avenue South (or nicer would be a pedestrian/bicycle overpass near Thunderbird Road. While it certainly continues the 'concrete flatlands', I'm thinking it might be easier to work with than going down the old Cedar Avenue and would cross and open up near Ikea and the Mall of America.

I'm not clear the path south of Old Shakopee road. I'm assuming it goes down old cedar and across the old cedar bridge. Crossing east of 77 would require a crossing back to the West side, but that path would open up access to the Mall of America (Ikea), businesses, the LRT, and buses without having to take a 'detour' to get there.

Thanks for your consideration. I look forward to hearing more about this trail and how it will improve the transportation options.

**Responded by Park District staff*

April 4, 2012

This Intercity Trail, like the 9 mile creek trail proposal before it , is a solution for a non- existent problem.

As a recreational bike commuter and HBC bike club ride leader for 4 years, I have ridden these roads for years VERY safely.

The costs projection once again off loads the upkeep of the old Cedar avenue bridge (77) over the MN river to the city of Bloomington.

This rickety (unused for 10 years now) Old Cedar bridge should be demolished, as it duplicates adjacent bike path bridges (New Cedar, Mendota , etc.) nearby .

How long are we going to keep spending everyone else money on frivolous unfunded routes?

Minneapolis has painted bike lane lines that are more cost effective and flexible. Try those first.

Talk to Shaun Murphy, bike coordinator in Minneapolis!

Again, I must say even ardent Bicyclists oppose this path.

**Responded by Park District staff*

these comments are intended to provide public feedback on the proposed Intercity regional trail.

I have studied the proposed map and description and I offer these observations:

1. being able to cross at the site of the old Cedar bridge would be a significant addition to the non-motorized opportunities.
2. The plan overstates the possibility of bicycle travel east to MOA. The roads near MOA are completely unfriendly to bicycle travel.
While this area should have more pedestrians and bikes, it's not reasonable to state that the ICRT will result in travel to the MOA.
3. The major downside to this proposal is the close proximity to the air pollution from road traffic on Hwy 77.
Most other Three River bike trails are closer to green space, so the ICRT will be very different to the other branded trails.
4. However, the positive aspect of following 77 is the creation of a more direct route.
5. If I was trying to link to the Grand Rounds, I would find a way to link Fort Snelling state park to Bloomington

Many thanks to the planning committee for the effort on this trail.

**Responded by Park District staff*

April 5, 2012

I strongly support the Master Plan as a critical addition to our trail system.

**Responded by Park District staff*

The proposed route seems to be longer and less direct than using existing streets, which don't seem to have a lot of traffic.

**Responded by Park District staff*

I received the intercity regional trail plan you sent in the mail to area recreation providers. Thank you for including us to be in the loop about this great project. I looked over the plan and it looks very comprehensive and like a useful trail.

At this time, I do not have any specific comments or feedback, except to say that the Northern Star Council Base Camp would be able to take advantage of this trail for our biking programs once it is completed.

Please let us know if you need any further comments or feedback.

**Responded by Park District staff*

Looks like a great trail and route makes a lot of sense. I approve.

**Responded by Park District staff*

I love it!

I am a bike commuter - looking forward to the upcoming southwest LRT route. I know that it will retain the bike trails I use most days.

I ride along excelsior boulevard through Hopkins.

thanks! let's get it done!

**Responded by Park District staff*

Just a quick note to say that I am very excited about the Intercity Regional trail. It will be so nice to have a dedicated way to get to Lake Nokomis as well as go south from Minneapolis. Thank you for all your work.

**Responded by Park District staff*

April 6, 2012

I support the new proposed bike path from Lake Nokomis to the Mall....and further into Dakota County.

Thank you for your commitment to better our cities.

**Responded by Park District staff*

The plan concept looks good - exciting. I suggest these considerations:

1. curb cuts be the full width of the bike trail to avoid swerving
2. toilet facilities be identified on any trail maps
3. accommodation be made for secure bicycle parking and bike rental near the Mall of America LRT station
4. encourage multipurpose trail construction along the Minnesota River from Fort Snelling to connect with the proposed trail to provide a very nice loop trail route
5. encourage Metro Transit to prepare to accommodate more bikes on the light rail as hotel guests in Bloomington may wish to bike to Minnehaha Falls or other light rail stations and take the train back to the Mall of America hotel district; and city residents may similarly bike to Mall of America and wish to take the light rail back home.
6. develop a smart phone ap for navigating the trail system and describing features and opportunities along the way.
7. prohibit smoking on any metro area trails or parkland

**Responded by Park District staff*

April 7, 2012

I'm all for expanding bicycle trails as long as remnant prairie and wetland areas are not damaged, a tall bill I recognize. I hope in future to hear more details on the project.

**Responded by Park District staff*

I am very excited and support this plan for the intercity regional trail.

**Responded by Park District staff*

April 19, 2012

I am very much in favor of building this trail, especially since \$5.5 million is already available through a federal grant. This trail will be an important link connecting Minneapolis with the Minn. River Valley Trail when it is eventually built. It will make it possible for non-motorized travelers to connect with the river valley and points south of the river. Please go ahead and build it ASAP.

**Responded by Park District staff*

April 21, 2012

I commute by bike from my home on Bloomington/86 to Roseville each day.

Each way to work is approximately 17 miles. In total, the commute is 35 miles. I commute every day, regardless of the weather.

Over the years, I have explore different routes to minimize distance/time and maximize safety. Of secondary importance is scenery.

When the goal is to maximize safety I have these two rules of thumb.

- 1) Get to the 12 street overpass on 494 before rush hour.
- 2) Avoid the south intersection at Lake Nokomis and Cedar Ave (the intersection with the restaurant on the south west corner).

The 12 street bridge is dangerous to everyone. It is undersize for the volume of traffic. There is a gas station on one corner, a number of commercial entities on the north east side, a frontage road that feeds into it and it is married to an exit ramp for 494.

Nearly, everyday when I cross the 12 street bridge I note the evidence of new pieces of broken glass and pieces of car trim. Once or twice I have seen a smashed bike.

The timing of the lights at 12 streets makes everyone desperate to cross and cheat and often I have seen cars run red lights in every direction. The pedestrian walkway is too narrow to accommodate both a commuter and pedestrian.

In my opinion, the solution isn't just a bigger bridge but an overpass that frees commuters from worries from the traffic, and the lights.

The other intersection that scares me I listed as item #2. It is an intersection with two parts. The first part is straight forward, it is the second part that is concerning for it is uncontrolled and comes hard after the lights. It is a weird Y, and the north east branch is not properly control. Drivers going south on Cedar and drivers coming from the said leg often have to rapidly accelerate to complete their entry and exit during rush hour. In general, when the lights change to stop Cedar traffic from moving north/south create a 10 second window which is about the time it takes a bicyclist pedaling from the north to reach. I was once hit by car by a car trying to enter Cedar because he was focused on the lights than on the possibility of a bike rider coming from the south. As such, that part of my commute is dangerous whether I am coming from the south or north. There is a pedestrian walkway shortly before the intersection but it has stairs. In winter, if the streets are not plowed I will portage my bike over the bridge.

**Responded by Park District staff*

April 26, 2012

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the planned Intercity Regional Trail.

A trail protected from vehicle traffic in the eastern part of Richfield and Bloomington that links up the Minneapolis trail system with the Minnesota River trail system is long overdue. The trails along the Minnesota River are under-utilized. Thank you for planning a project that will greatly increase access to the scenic beauty of the Minnesota River.

The presently proposed trail route through Bloomington doesn't make sense. I recommend that instead of trying to create new routes through Bloomington, that the project take advantage of currently available routes.

I propose that the route through Bloomington be changed as follows:

The currently proposed path in Bloomington is described as:

"At American Boulevard the trail head east back to Old Cedar Avenue. From American boulevard the trail is proposed to parallel Old Cedar Avenue to the Minnesota River. The trail is proposed to cross the Minnesota River; however the exact location and crossing solution is not yet determined."

The currently proposed path along Old Cedar is not scenic. It is bordered by a freeway (I77) on the east and businesses on the west. Instead of following a path to the river along Old Cedar, I propose that the path turn east onto the recently completed bike path at 86th street and Old Cedar. The path would follow the existing bike path on 86th street which directly connects to the bike path on the Minnesota river, including the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge. I propose that a new bridge across the Minnesota River be built at the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge crossing per the currently proposed plan.

My proposed path would reduce the cost of the new trail by utilizing existing trails. My proposed path would increase the enjoyment of natural beauty of the trail user by increasing the forest/river/pond views and decreasing the commercial/industrial views. My proposed path is safer for trail users because trail users would be exposed to less automobile traffic, reducing accidents and improving air quality for the trail users. The currently proposed path would likely reduce vehicle access to Old Cedar unnecessarily. The intersection at Old Cedar and Old Shakopee roads has much higher automobile traffic than at 86th street and Old Shakopee. Putting the trail crossing at 86th street and Old Shakopee/24th Avenue is in the best interests of the safety of the trail users compared to the current plan. For trail users desiring a rest stop, they would be able to see the gas stations and businesses along Old Cedar from 86th street. Those desiring a rest stop could continue on along the current trail access along Old Cedar albeit with a less scenic experience. The primary purpose of the bike path is recreational, not commercial. Using limited government funds to maximize the quality of the trail and experience of the bicyclist should be foremost in the decision as to the route of the bike path. Connecting the Intercity Regional Trail to the Minnesota River trail at 86th street best meets the needs of everyone involved.

My proposed changes are common sense because they save costs, while improving safety, and increasing enjoyment of the trail users. I hope you will consider my proposed changes seriously. Thank you.

**Responded by Park District staff*

April 27, 2012

First of all I would like to congratulate you for beginning this effort, as it is long overdue! Very exciting.

However, I do hope that you do Not utilize part of the sidewalk in front of Fat Lorenzos (and several other neighborhood businesses and a church), as it would put

much parking/community access strain on these neighborhood gems. Edgewater Blvd. is already extremely dangerous for bikers and pedestrians. This would make it more so. It seems to me that a much easier, safer route for the trail would be on the East side of Cedar.

**Responded by Park District staff*

April 28, 2012

I am writing in support of the proposed Regional Trail corridor between Lake Nokomis and The Minnesota River. The trail will improve quality of life for residents and businesses along this corridor by providing beautiful public green space and efficient transportation to local businesses and employers.

I am one of the scores of cyclists that traverse the Cedar Ave/Edgewater intersection every day to and from work in southwest Blooming (I'm a south Minneapolis resident). This intersection was not designed for the level or type of traffic that exists today and I know from firsthand experience that both cyclists and motorists dread this part of their daily commute. Having a dedicated bicycle lane will make it clear for everyone where the cyclists should be riding.

In response to the concerns by Scott Siegel, owner of Fat Lorenzo's, he may actually see an *increase* in patronage when this intersection becomes more bike friendly. If he installs bike racks outside his restaurant, I can almost guarantee that hungry, carbohydrate-deprived cyclists will be stopping at his place daily for a giant plate of spaghetti and meatballs.

**Responded by Park District staff*

May 1, 2012

Our interests and connections with the Nokomis Park/Cedar Avenue area and trail project are as follows 1) My wife and I live in the surrounding neighborhood, 2) we frequently use Nokomis Park and the associated bike and walking trails for recreation and exercise, 3) we use the Edgewater/Cedar intersection for automobile travel daily (multiple times most days) for commuting and connecting with the freeway system, 4) we are members of Hope Lutheran Church, 5) many years ago our children attended Hope Preschool, 6) we dine at Fat Lorenzo's and the 5/8 Club, and 7) we are avid bikers who regularly use Mpls and regional bike trails for recreation and exercise.

We are seriously concerned about the proposed Edgewater/Cedar Avenue intersection. That intersection and immediate area is very problematic as we think has been shown by traffic and use studies. Our experience as walkers, bikers and auto drivers through that intersection leads us to conclude that the bike trail should not traverse the Edgewater/Cedar intersection unless that intersection is completely redone. The addition of a trail crossing at that intersection will increase and complicate traffic and congestion (foot, bike and auto) so as to make what is already a poor situation, unsafe and intolerable for pedestrians, bikers, autos, and restaurant patrons.

In addition, the proposed trail just south of Edgewater will eliminate half of the street parking (there is no off-street parking) for Hope Preschool. Further and more important, it will completely eliminate safe loading and unloading of preschool children by requiring preschool children to cross a bike trail to get from vehicles to school.

Instead of the proposed route, the trail should be routed south from Nokomis Park across Edgewater at 16th, south on 16th to 58th, east on 58th to the east end of Solomon Park, and south through the park along its eastern end to 60th street. There are various practical routes from existing Nokomis trails to 16th Ave, including a short, direct route from the Nokomis trail across West Nokomis Parkway via crosswalk through the park to 16th Ave, or on park land along the west side of Cedar and the North Side of Edgewater.

**Responded by Park District staff*
