Information Item

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

Topic

Middle Saint Croix Valley to Phalen-Keller Regional Trail Long-Range Plan Process Update, Washington County

District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Minn. Stats. §§ 473.145 and 473.147
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Colin Kelly, Planning Analyst, Community Development (651-602-1361)
Divisions/Departments:	Community Development / Regional Parks and Trails

Proposed Action

Information item; no action is proposed at this time.

Background

Washington County is leading a planning process to determine the future route of the Middle Saint Croix Valley to Phalen-Keller Regional Trail. The future multi-use trail will travel east-west through portions of central Washington County (Figures 1-3). Once fully developed, the trail will connect trail users to regional destinations and resources, including parks, trails, schools, businesses, and more.

The regional trail is intended to connect the Middle Saint Croix Valley Regional Trail – a planned north-south trail in eastern Washington County – with Phalen-Keller Regional Park in Saint Paul and Maplewood, in Ramsey County. The study area for the Washington County-led planning effort is bound by the planned Middle Saint Croix Valley Regional Trail to the east and the Ramsey-Washington County line to the west and includes the communities of Bayport, Baytown Township, West Lakeland Township, Lake Elmo, Oakdale, and Landfall. A future study led by Ramsey County will determine the route for the westernmost portion of this trail and will ultimately connect to Phalen-Keller Regional Park.

Like other Regional Park Implementing Agencies, Washington County develops regional trail long-range plans in collaboration with local communities and agency partners to deliver a comprehensive vision for a future trail. In addition to the route alignment, the plan provides guidance on trail facilities and amenities and natural resource management. The long-range plan sets the stage for future steps including preliminary design, funding and acquisition, and final design.

Washington County uses process values to guide long-range planning efforts and keep the process focused, inclusive, and achievable. Process values include:

- Address requirements for regional trails in 2050 Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan
- Consistent with Washington County policies, goals, and priorities
- Plan accounts for the inventory and management of natural and cultural resources
- Plan is implementable – assessing key barriers to implementation
- Engage broad cross section of the public, especially historically underrepresented populations
- Develop/expand relationships with local communities, affected public agencies and community groups. Project is supported by local partners.

- Process is fun and keeps people positively engaged!

A public open house was held in June 2026, and pop up engagement was conducted at community events across the trail corridor between April and October. Washington County trail planners anticipate preparing a final draft of the plan by Summer 2027.

Council staff and Washington County staff will present an overview of the planning process to date and respond to the Commission's comments and questions.

Figure 1: 2050 Regional Parks and Trails System Plan *(Regional Parks and Trails Policy Plan, Figure 2.8)*

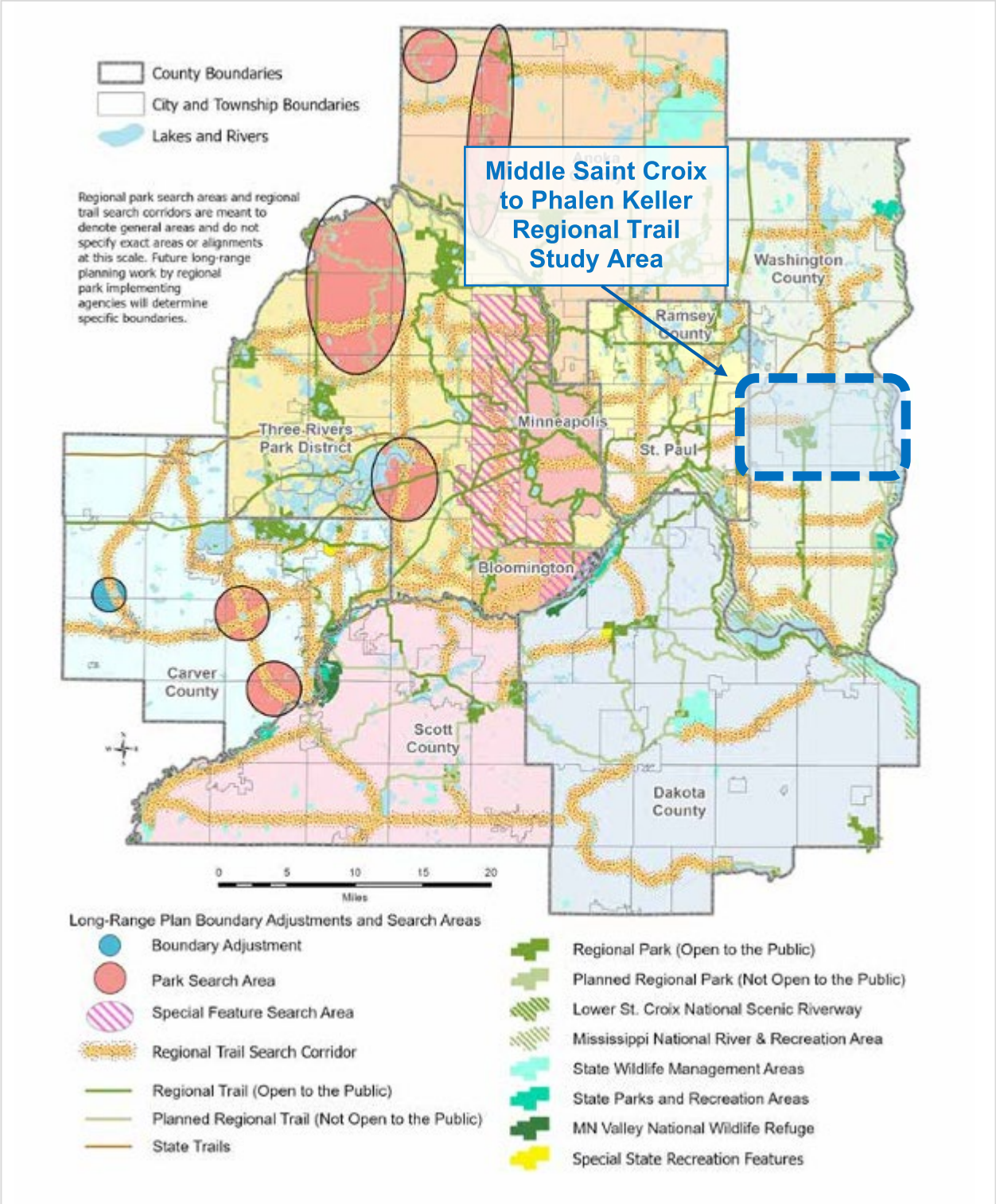

Figure 2: Regional Parks and Trails System, Washington County *(Metropolitan Council, Local Planning Handbook, Community Pages)*

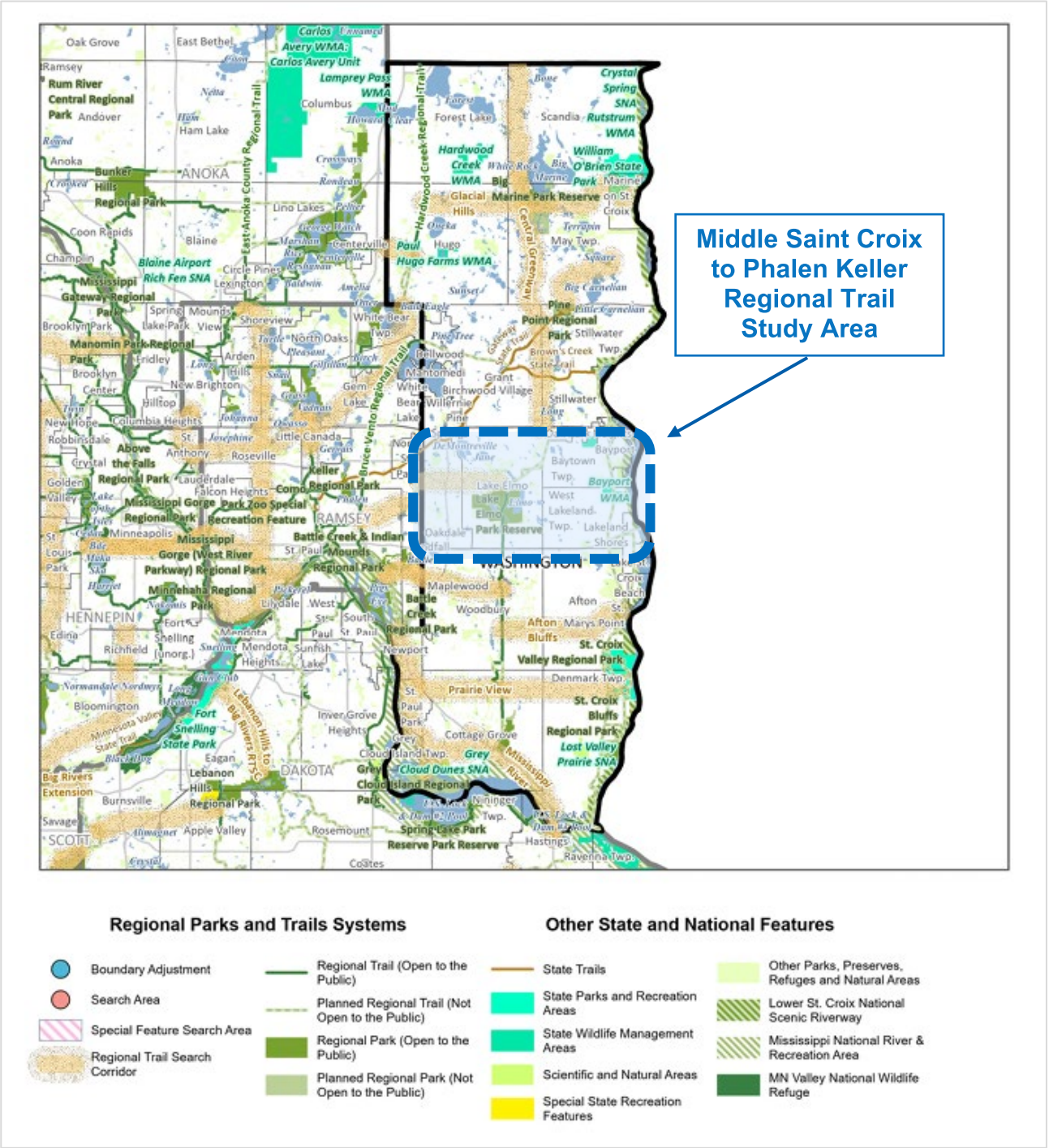

Figure 3: Search Area for Middle Saint Croix Valley to Phalen-Keller Regional Trail

