GRAND ROUNDS
SCENIC BYWAY

MASTER PLAN FOR THE:
MISSING LINK

MARCH 2009
March 9, 2009

Arne Stefferud
Park Planner
Metropolitan Council
Parks and Open Space Committee
390 Robert Street N.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Arne:

We are pleased to provide you with the Grand Rounds Missing Link Master Plan. This plan recommends a route and adjacent open space amenities to complete the three-mile missing link in the Minneapolis Grand Rounds parkway system. The plan culminates a one-year process involving several public open houses, monthly Community Advisory Committee meetings, and informational tours. We received extensive public input. Staff and the consultants gave significant time and effort to this project.

Completing the Missing Link is a top priority for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The Missing Link is not only part of our Comprehensive Plan, but it has also been incorporated into the City of Minneapolis' Comprehensive Plan. Further, there is support from many agencies, organizations and individuals willing to help advance this project forward.

The 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan adopted June 29, 2005 and amended June 28, 2006 sites in section D: Policy 4 - The Minnesota Statute 473.313 which "requires a master plan to be developed by each regional park implementing agency in consultation with all affected municipalities." Further, the Council has taken an additional step in requiring individual master plans for each regional park, park reserve, trail, and special recreational feature.

Please review the enclosed Grand Rounds Missing Link Master Plan. It contains the necessary information that the Metropolitan Council seeks in their review. We ask that it be placed on the May agenda of the Park and Open Space Committee for their adoption. Once the Master Plan is approved we will seek to secure resources to begin the design, acquisition and construction of the project.

If you have any questions or seek additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thanks, and we look forward to working with you in this regard.

Sincerely,

Jon Gurban
Superintendent

Dori Siggekow
www.minneapolisparks.org

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Nick Eoloff
Project Manager
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**Acknowledgements:**

Adapted from the Missing Link Development Study Report, May 21, 2008 produced by HNTB Corporation, Hoisington Koegler Group Inc. and Hess, Roise and Company
Illustrative rendering of proposed SE Como Park.
Since the late 1880’s, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) has envisioned a park system that would link all sections of the city. The Missing Link of the Grand Rounds is the only segment of the over 50 miles of parkway that exist today, that has not been completed. Approximately three miles of parkway are needed to connect and complete the parkway system. The Park Board is committed to “fulfilling the promise” that was once given by bringing the Missing Link to reality. Once the Missing Link segment is complete, the Grand Rounds will provide a contiguous system of parkway and trails that circumnavigate the City of Minneapolis.

To “fulfill the promise,” the MPRB established a Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC) of 21 members whose charge was to identify and select a route that would best connect St. Anthony Parkway with East River Parkway. The CAC, composed of neighborhood residents, business and University of Minnesota representatives, used several underlying principles that guided and shaped their decisions. Many hours were spent looking at a wide range of route options. Through the public participation process, input was received and surveys were collected. From this input and the criteria set forth by the committee, the least desirable routes were eliminated. Two route options remained attractive to the committee; however, one route, was selected in this plan. Completing the Grand Rounds Parkway System. This route best fulfills the committee’s criteria and charge.

The committee was given an additional charge – to identify areas for park and open space opportunities. The neighborhoods of northeast and southeast Minneapolis have been underserved in the area of parks and recreational facilities. Providing additional recreational amenities will help meet a growing need, and create a ‘destination’ place or regional amenity that will attract people from throughout the city.

Through the Committees’ work, several potential park sites were identified. The CAC selected a large area, approximately 80 acres currently utilized by industrial businesses that would create the desired regional amenity. Four
schematic plans were presented showing a variety of recreational opportunities. The committee adopted the schematic plan of the ‘eco-business’ park, which incorporates business and economic development within a park setting.

To assist the CAC with the selection of the Missing Link route and the future park sites, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed by the MPRB. The TAC was composed of staff members from a variety of agencies including: the City of Minneapolis Departments of Public Works and Community Planning and Economic Development; Hennepin County; the University of Minnesota; and the Metropolitan Council. The TAC provided technical knowledge in analyzing the alternative routes and open space opportunities. The TAC also provided technical support and information requested by the committee, assisting their review and analysis. The CAC’s route selection and open space recommendations have been reviewed by the TAC.

The Citizen’s Advisory Committee has fulfilled its obligations and recommends the preferred Missing Link route along with the park amenities that will establish the final parkway segment and complete the Grand Rounds. While many challenges lie ahead, the opportunities to fulfill the vision that began over one hundred years ago have never been so great. The MPRB is committed to providing additional resources and investments to “keeping the promise.”
Grand Rounds Parkway System and the Missing Link Study Area Location, Minneapolis, Minnesota Department of Transportation
Completing the Grand Rounds Parkway System, Northeast and Southeast Sections of Minneapolis, Minnesota Department of Transportation
History of the Missing Link

The Grand Rounds is the nation’s largest urban scenic byway stretching 50 miles and circling three fourths of Minneapolis. The Grand Rounds contains a park-like road, biking and walking trails, and green open spaces. The Missing Link is between St. Anthony Parkway in Northeast Minneapolis and East River Parkway along the Mississippi River in Southeast Minneapolis.

In 1883, H. W. S. Cleveland went before the newly formed Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners to propose a series of parks and connecting parkways that would surround downtown Minneapolis. William Watts Folwell, the head of a special committee formed in 1891 to study park expansion to the north and east, first dubbed the parkway system the “Grand Rounds.” As Minneapolis Superintendent of Parks, Theodore Wirth took the components of Cleveland’s plan, the suggestions of the special committee, and the work of his predecessor William M. Berry, to further the creation of the Grand Rounds. Wirth envisioned a parkway system encircling Minneapolis that would connect parks, lakes, rivers, creeks, and neighborhoods. Through the vision and hard work of Cleveland, Wirth, and countless others, the Grand Rounds now includes East River Parkway, West River Parkway, Minnehaha Parkway, the Chain of Lakes, Wirth Parkway, Victory Memorial Parkway, and St. Anthony Parkway.

The Missing Link is the one uncompleted section of the Grand Rounds Parkway System. Plans for completing the Missing Link were prepared in 1910, 1918, 1930, and 1939. Early construction of the Grand Rounds followed the key scenic areas of the Mississippi River, Minnehaha Creek, and the Chain of Lakes. The presence of wetlands in the Missing Link area deterred construction. A large and profitable gravel mine located south of what is now Gross Golf Course was also an obstacle to parkway development during the 1930s and 1940s. When gravel mining ceased in the 1950s, the area was developed with industrial uses. Active railroad lines and a major rail yard north of the University of Minnesota were also impediments.
History of the Missing Link, Continued

The MPRB prepared a Comprehensive Plan in 2007. A major initiative of that plan is to complete the Missing Link. Completion of the parkway will fulfill the vision of having a “grand parkway” and green “necklace” encircling the city and will provide Minneapolis and adjoining communities access to parks, trails, paths, and green space.

Study Area Description

The Missing Link Development Study area is the portion of Minneapolis located north and east of the Mississippi River, south of St. Anthony Boulevard and west of St. Paul (Fig. 3. Missing Link Study Area). Interstate 35W bisects the area and Trunk Highway (TH) 280 is located just east of the study area. The East Bank Campus of the University of Minnesota is located in the southern part of the study area. Eighteen neighborhoods of Minneapolis and the southern portion of the City of St. Anthony comprise the study area. Due to the location of the gap between St. Anthony Parkway and East River Parkway, the Missing Link study efforts focused primarily on the east portion of the study area from I-35W to the Minneapolis – St. Paul border. The most viable parkway route alternatives and ultimately the preferred parkway route are in this area.

Neighborhood Character and Land Use

Minneapolis barely extended beyond St. Anthony Falls when Cleveland proposed the first park system. The Minneapolis area has greatly changed and grown. Today the study area is developed with a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, public, and institutional uses. Industrial uses are located south of I-35W and along railroad lines. Commercial and high density residential buildings are near the river and along major roadways, and the University of Minnesota is located in the southern portion of the study area.

The terrain varies from flat urban streetscapes to the scenic Mississippi River gorge. Much of the housing was built from 1900 to the 1940’s. Industrial development occurred later in the 1950-1970’s. Gross Golf Course, the Mississippi River, Ridgeway Park, Deming Park, Columbia Golf Course and Hillside Cemetery are the primary green spaces within the study area. Bridal Veil Creek used to be a prominent feature with the creek moving through many wetlands, ponds and finally over the Bridal Veil Falls into the Mississippi River. Today the creek is almost completely underground in pipes and has pollution and water quality issues.

There are several complementary planning initiatives in this area. The following studies, in particular, had an influence on parkway planning here:
• Southeast Minneapolis Industrial (SEMI)/ Bridal Veil Area Alternative Urban Area-wide Review (AUAR) and Refined Master Plan (2001). A vision and master plan for redevelopment of the areas north and south of the BNSF railroad yard.

• Bridal Veil Creek Watershed History and Planning Study (1996). Documented the natural history, the hydrologic, soil and vegetative conditions, and provides an analysis and recommended improvements for the area.

• Industrial Land Use Study and Employment Policy Plan (2006). Identified the importance of retaining key areas in Minneapolis for industrial use.


• Above the Falls Master Plan (1999). A master plan for development of the Mississippi River corridor above St. Anthony Falls into a linear park.

Challenges and Opportunities

The construction of the Missing Link will fulfill a 120-year civic vision of creating a grand loop of green space and parkway through Minneapolis and the adjoining communities. The Missing Link will connect the East Side of Minneapolis to the Mississippi River, Wirth Park, the Chain of Lakes, Minnehaha Park, and other amenities. It will bring needed recreation, park, and open space to the East Side of Minneapolis, and the adjoining communities. The parkway can also act as a catalyst for new neighborhood and commercial development. Studies show property located near green space has a higher value than similar property that lacks access to green space thus increasing the tax base. The Missing Link will also link the Minneapolis and St. Paul parkway systems, thus creating a multi-city network of parkway roads, trails, and green spaces.

Portions of Southeast Minneapolis lack access to parks. The MPRB’s goal is to provide parks within a 6-10
History of the Missing Link, Continued

Trails are the most desired recreation feature of the proposed Missing Link as they are used by people of all ages and abilities and accommodate walking, biking, running, in-line skating, dog walking, and socializing. There is a shortage of trails in the East Side of Minneapolis and the adjoining communities. Due to the close proximity to the University of Minnesota, this area has a high volume of bike commuters.

The addition of parks, parkways, paths, and open spaces can be difficult in a developed area and requires political vision and will, community commitment and a long-term strategy. Acquiring private property for a public amenity can be controversial, but the community benefits of the Grand Rounds Parkway System are well known and will significantly enhance the area.

Truck access and movement are important elements of industrial areas. Most parkways restrict truck access. Since the Missing Link route will go through an existing industrial area the truck access policy will need to be examined on a site specific basis to decide if and where truck use of the parkway is appropriate.

Vehicular traffic is a way of life in urban areas, but the Missing Link will need to be designed to minimize new traffic in residential neighborhoods. Parkways are purposefully designed with lower speed limits and other measures to offer a slower, more pleasant driving experience. Also, parkways per se do not generate new vehicle trips, other than recreation users driving for pleasure. The use of existing streets, curving road alignments, and narrow road profiles can help assure the parkways do not have a negative traffic effect on surrounding communities.

Existing roads in the area provide an excellent framework for the Missing Link route as there is significant public road right of way along much of the proposed parkway route. For the most part, existing roads can be enhanced to parkway standards by adding landscaping, a trail, sidewalk, and sometimes width to turn them into a parkway. In essence, much of the Missing Link work will involve “greening” existing roads and right-of-way.
The railroads offer constraints and opportunities. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad line and the BNSF railroad yard run through the east central part of the study area. The Missing Link will need to cross them with underpasses and bridges, but the underutilized railroad yard land offers future development, park, and green space opportunities.
Citizen Participation

Citizen participation was the cornerstone of a process that truly was open, transparent and engaging. Neighborhood groups, public agencies, elected officials, property/business owners all participated in several different venues. Citizens of Northeast and Southeast Minneapolis had numerous opportunities to voice their opinions and affect decision-making throughout the process.

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

At the center of the citizens participation process was the Citizens Advisory Committee. In all, the Advisory Committee (CAC) consisting of 21 representatives of elected officials (Each Park Board member, Mayor Rybak, City Council members Hofstede, Ostrow and Gordon, Hennepin County Commissioners McLaughlin and Stenglein and Senator Larry Pogemiller), the Marcy Holmes, SE Como and Prospect Park Neighborhood Organizations, the University of Minnesota and the Northeast Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce.

The CAC met formally as a Committee each month from June, 2007 until April, 2008. Informally, Committee members met in smaller groups over coffee or lunch with Project staff and consultants to discuss particular topics or participate in agenda setting for the monthly meetings. In addition CAC members participated in one large-scale and several smaller group tours during the June, 2007 to April, 2008 period.

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board’s Directive to the Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

To guide and assist staff and consultants in the review and selection of the alternative routes of the Missing Link. The CAC will also review and comment on open space opportunities and recommend site(s) for additional park land. Based upon the analysis and comments, the Committee will recommend a preferred design route for the Missing Link, along with open space recommendations, to the Park Board as part of the Board’s Public Schematic Design approval process.

The Minneapolis Park and
Recreation Board (MPRB) specifically charged the CAC with the responsibility of developing recommendations regarding:

- A proposes route for the Missing Link
- The type and extent of Parkway amenities
- The location of new park and open space opportunities

Political leadership encouraged the CAC to be visionary and to think boldly. A typical CAC meeting included presentations from project consultants and guest speakers, with either the Chair or Vice-Chair presiding over a parliamentary process with voting motions and decision-making. During their roundtable discussions and deliberations, CAC members frequently requested additional information prior to decision-making that would be provided for the next meeting.

Attendance by CAC members was excellent during the monthly meetings--several of the meetings had 100% of the members present. Interaction between CAC members, project staff, and consultants, guest speakers and the members of the public who frequently attended the meetings was always robust and constructive. Project goals and evaluation criteria were developed and approved by the CAC early in the process enabling a systematic and objective review and winnowing down of route alternatives for the Missing link and for the selection of new park and open space opportunities.

Public Meetings/Open Houses

A series of five Public Meetings/Open Houses were held in the project area beginning in September, 2007. They were advertised as being sponsored by both the CAC and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation board. CAC members were encouraged to attend and speak as representative of the Committee regarding the process and their progress in evaluating potential routes for the Missing Link and in the review of potential new parks and open space areas. Each Public Meeting/Open House included informal interaction with the project team and members of the CAC, followed by formal presentations and a lengthy question-answer session. Handout information explaining study areas, project goals and the evaluation criteria was provided each attendee. Each of these engagements was very well attended by neighborhood residents and the greater Minneapolis Community. Survey forms were distributed requesting information and opinions for each of the candidate alignments. Information distributed at the meetings was posted on the MPRB website.

Public Meeting/Open House Schedule

- September 18, 2007, Northeast Recreation center
- October 18, 2007, Windom Recreation Center
- January 16, 2008, Luxton Recreation Center
- January 17, 2008, Van Cleve Recreation Center
- January 30, 2008, Windom Recreation Center
Supporting Principles

The CAC adopted six overarching project goals to guide the evaluation of the Missing Link Parkway and park land alternatives:

1) Provide parkway system continuity;
2) Enhance recreational opportunities;
3) Enhance or protect the environment;
4) Improve mobility;
5) Create economic benefits;
6) Be feasible and compatible.

Each of these “high-level” goals was supported by more specific and appropriate objectives.

Early Route Segments

As a starting point for discussion in July 2007, ten potential north/south segments were identified within the study area. These segments ran between the existing Grand Rounds north terminus along St. Anthony Boulevard to the southern Grand Rounds terminus at East River Parkway, and included segments of Marshall Street, University Avenue, Central Avenue, Johnson Street, Stinson Boulevard, Oak Street, 27th Avenue SE and TH 280.

In late July, many CAC members attended a Saturday morning bus tour of the route segments. Comments were recorded and summarized for later discussion with the entire CAC and TAC. A take-home exercise was used to gather further information about special community features, significant destinations, recreational amenities, land uses and general impressions regarding the bus tour segment routes.

The tour revealed flaws for some segments, and during a post-tour lunch meeting, several segments were dismissed from further...
consideration. Each of the route segments were evaluated against the previously identified evaluation criteria. University Avenue, Central Avenue and Johnson Street were discussed at later CAC meetings, compared to the evaluation criteria, and subsequently dismissed from further study for various reasons. Through discussion and a vetting process, two north/south corridor alignments in the eastern section of the study area emerged as prime candidates:

- Stinson Boulevard to Oak Street (or 15th Avenue SE through the University of Minnesota) to East River Parkway;

- Industrial Boulevard to 27th Avenue SE to East River Parkway (with a half dozen mid-route options through the industrial area and across the BNSF railroad yard).

These two alignments were carried forward for further study and evaluation, and were presented to the public at the first set of Open Houses, one in September and another in October 2007.

Marshall Street was recognized as a valuable parkway linkage opportunity, although the roadway and right-of-way footprint is not sufficient to complete the Missing Link. The CAC voted to unanimously support the City of Minneapolis’ initiative to transform Marshall Street into a “green avenue” and recognize this route an important inner loop.
Parkway Route Segment Options
CAC Actions Following the Public Meeting/Open Houses

Stinson Boulevard, north of I-35W, is an existing Parkway, and as such, contains a wide right-of-way extending beyond the sidewalks and including much of the front lawn of adjacent homes. This impact on Stinson Boulevard, and the impact of taking homes in the SE Como Neighborhood area, was not favorably received by community residents and elected officials attending the Public meetings/Open Houses. After considerable discussion, this route through the Como neighborhood was removed from further consideration by the CAC. At that point, the Industrial Boulevard to 27th Avenue SE alignments then received a very thorough focus to find the Missing Link connection. Later, a “bike loop” was considered by the CAC on Stinson north of I-35W connecting St. Anthony Parkway with Ridgeway Parkway but was dismissed because it was determined beyond their scope of responsibility and because it was strongly opposed by the adjacent homeowners.

Several location alternatives and sub-alternatives were developed in the Industrial Boulevard Corridor and presented at CAC meetings and during Public Meeting/Open Houses. Ultimately four hybrid route segments through the East Como industrial area were mapped after significant public input and Committee discussion. These are examples of where input from the public was heeded resulting in better choices and with the support of the “Community.”

Public Support

There are many public and neighborhood partners willing to participate in parkway, path, park, and community reinvestment. The Grand Rounds Parkway will provide recreation, community building, and transportation benefits to the city, region and state. In addition, the historic designation of the Grand Rounds provides additional stakeholders and funding resources. Taken together, the Grand Rounds/Missing Link will have access to many local, state and federal funding sources for acquisition and construction.

Preferred Missing Link Parkway Route

The recommended Missing Link route and associated parks fulfill the charge given to the CAC to identify a achievable route, provide new local park spaces, and identifies new regional park amenities. North of I-35W, the recommended route begins at the intersection of St. Anthony Parkway and Stinson Parkway. It then follows St. Anthony Parkway east and south passing through a section of St. Anthony Village (on St. Anthony Blvd) where it borders Gross Golf Course and then intersects with Ridgeway Parkway and I-35W. Once passing under I-35W, the preferred route continues south on Industrial Boulevard to East Hennepin Avenue. South of Hennepin Avenue, the route leaves Industrial Boulevard heading southeasterly on new roadway alignment through industrial properties between 29th Avenue SE and the Minneapolis City limits. Most of these industrial properties will need to be acquired for the purpose of fulfilling the Missing Link and for providing needed parkland.
Citizen Participation, Continued

As the route moves south past Como Avenue, it continues through industrial properties, intersects Weeks Avenue and then, via an underpass, travels beneath the BNSF rail line. It then enters the Bridal Veil Pond site, avoids the newly created wetlands and climbs above the proposed Kasota Road alignment, bridging the BNSF rail yard and intersects with future Granary Road. From there, the route follows the Granary Road alignment west to 27th Avenue SE, where it turns south, crosses over I-94 on the existing bridge, then intersects with East River Parkway at the Franklin Avenue Bridge.

Interim Connecting Link

While property is being acquired for the preferred route and adjacent parklands, 29th Avenue SE between East Hennepin Avenue and the BNSF line could be modestly improved to serve as an interim connecting link for the Grand Rounds Parkway. In this segment, the public right of way for 29th Avenue SE is just 54 feet in width, so properties to the east may need to be acquired and developed to safely accommodate vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. Since some or all of this property will ultimately be needed for the preferred parkway route and adjacent park, the interim and long-range uses are not inconsistent. Improvements along 29th Avenue SE would likely consist of signage, striping, a trail, and landscaping.

The north portion of the preferred Missing Link route, following today’s St. Anthony and Industrial Boulevards to East Hennepin Avenue, nearly replicates the portion of St. Anthony Boulevard completed in 1924 by Theodore Wirth and used as part of the Minneapolis Parkway System from 1924-1932. It has a historical foundation as well.
Potential Parkway Alignments through East Como Industrial area

1. Ridgeway Overlook Park
2. SE Como Community Park
3. Bridal Veil Green Space
4. Kasota Ponds Green Space
5. SEMI North Corridor Green Space
6. Granary Park
7. Bridal Veil Creek Linear Park
Parcel Boundaries, Acquisition Costs & Phasing

While the majority of the preferred route utilizes existing right-of-way, requiring little or no additional right-of-way, property acquisition is necessary for the segment south of Hennepin Avenue for both parkway and park purposes.

A total of 25 parcels will be affected by the construction of the Grand Rounds Missing Link. Of these parcels, one is already owned by the City of Minneapolis and the remaining 24 parcels will need to acquired at an estimated cost of approximately 36.3 million dollars. The graphics on this page and the next delineate the parcel boundaries, estimated acquisition costs, and suggested acquisition phasing.

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TOTAL COST $36,261,700
PARCEL ACQUISITIONS & SCHEDULE

Grand Rounds Missing Link Proposed Route

- Phase 1 Acquisition
- Phase 2 Acquisition
- Phase 3 Acquisition
- City-Owned Parcel
Parcel Boundaries, Acquisition Costs & Phasing; Continued

Preferred Missing Link Parkway Route with Recommended Park Sites
A. An inventory and analysis of existing land cover for the Missing Link alignment was done using the Minnesota Land Cover Classification system developed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Metro Geographic Information System. The result of the inventory shows, for the most part, that the area is highly developed with industry, commercial and residential uses. This classification is described as buildings and pavement with a 51–100 percent impervious cover. Open or ‘green’ space along the route can be considered at Gross Golf Course and Sunset/Hillside Cemetery. While these areas are open and provide for a high percentage of pervious surfaces, they are not natural or native landscapes; rather they are highly manicured and maintained man-made landscape systems. Along the route, there are no known or identified natural, unique or sensitive land cover types. (see route inventory map on next page)

B. The development and creation of the Missing Link segment will provide for many opportunities to bring ‘green’ space to the area and address the restoration or the ‘re’ creation of natural landscapes. The added open space will provide a much needed element to an area of the city that is highly developed and without any significant adjacent or nearby natural resources. The addition of open space will provide many benefits, such as, reducing water runoff, preventing erosion, providing wildlife habitat, etc.

Throughout the planning and design process, a sustainable development framework is utilized with emphasis of ecologically sound land stewardship practices. The Park Board’s natural resource staff will be directly involved with the planning, design, and monitoring of the project. A concerted effort to avoid or minimize any adverse impacts to the project or surrounding area will be made.

C. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) cares for 13 lakes, three streams and one river. These are valuable resources for residents and visitors alike. The MPRB also monitors stormwater runoff and groundwater wells throughout the Park System. Data collected through the water-quality monitoring program is compiled annually into the MPRB Water Resources Report.

Improving water quality, both surface and ground, is an important goal of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The Missing Link segment will help achieve that goal by providing additional opportunities for stormwater management. Increasing the pervious surface through the removal of impervious surface area will provide water quality benefits. Redesign and redevelopment of the existing roadway will allow for planned stormwater management and treatment areas. The Park Board will work closely with the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO), the local watershed for the Missing Link project, to ensure that standards and best practices for water resource protection are consistent with the Council’s model ordinance for stormwater management.

D. Preserving, managing, and enhancing the city’s natural lands, waters, and urban forests is a core responsibility of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.
For more than a century, the Board has protected and preserved natural areas for future generations; monitored the quality of lakes, streams, ponds, and wetlands; and managed trees throughout parks, natural areas, and boulevards. Vegetation Management of the Missing Link’s existing and proposed landscapes will follow the Park Board’s urban forest and natural resource management practices. The MPRB Forestry Section Division oversees care for trees on all public land within the city. The Park Board’s Natural Resource Section manages native vegetation and water quality.

Vegetation management along the Missing Link corridor will focus on introducing native plants and improving water quality within the watershed.

The strategies used to create a sustainable landscape include:

- Development of a natural area management plan that ensures natural areas are ecologically diverse, sustainable and managed with scientifically-based methods, giving preference to remnant native plant communities
- Provide leadership and coordination with areas partners and regulatory agencies in monitoring, regulating and improving water quality and the ecological integrity of water bodies through the park system.
- Collaborate with local, state, and federal organizations to plan for and fund ongoing ecological management and restoration.
- Plant boulevard trees that complement the park system’s natural areas and are appropriate for the conditions of the boulevard.
- Ensure day-to-day operations and construction does not damage natural resources within parklands, and require replacement when loss or damage occurs.

As part of the area management plan, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reference, “Guidelines for Managing and Restoring Natural Plant Communities along Trails and Waterways” will be incorporated.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is proud of its legacy and commitment to preserving and protecting the city’s natural resources. The park system is nationally known and recognized for its leadership and innovative practices in maintaining high quality, resource-based natural areas.
One goal of the Missing Link Master Plan is to enhance recreational opportunities through the addition of parks and open space. The park needs in this area are two-fold; to create recreation amenities along the future parkway route, and to enhance the underserved East Side neighborhoods.

**Desired Park Character, Features and Identified Locations and Options**

The recreation goals of the Master Plan are to enhance recreational opportunities by:

- Adding recreational value and improve the quality of life in neighborhoods.
- Adding park and open space opportunities inside and outside of the selected byway corridor.
- Identifying a signature park and/or amenity that may be unique to Minneapolis and an addition to the Regional Park System.

With public feedback on various options, the CAC evaluated several areas for the addition of park land and enhancement of existing park space. The CAC felt that park and open space areas should be distributed along the route of the parkway instead of at just one location. The public was supportive of new park space and expressed a desire for walking and biking trails, a mix of natural areas, gardens, passive recreation space, and, to a lesser extent, sports fields and courts.

**Integration of Parks with the Neighborhoods**

Utilizing input from the neighborhoods, the CAC selected park sites that would provide attractions along the new parkway and provide needed park space for the East Side neighborhoods. The specific design of these park spaces would respond to the local needs of the neighborhoods while providing a variety of attractions for visitors. The study prepared concept plans for these seven parks spaces to illustrate ideas for how the park lands could be developed. As implementation moves forward, the MPRB will develop specific designs for the parks and seek additional future community input.

**Development Concept**
As stated earlier, in addition to selecting the location for the 3+ mile Missing Link in the Grand Rounds Parkway System, the CAC designated future park and open space opportunities. As an outcome of their process, the CAC has recommended the addition and/or improvement of seven (7) parks and open spaces to enhance the character of the Missing Link route and provide recreational opportunities for residents, businesses and visitors. Four (4) of these areas would be new parks and three (3) would be additions to existing park and open space properties.

Conceptual plans for the seven (7) parklands were prepared and are included in this master plan. These Plans represent initial ideas and options for development and enhancement. These concepts were shown to the public and then the CAC prioritized the importance of each park. Concept plans for the four (4) parks determined to have priority were refined and are also included in this master plan. Eventually, detailed park designs will be prepared through a separate process involving the neighboring residents and businesses.

The four (4) priority parks were then ranked in the following order:

1) Ridgeway Overlook Park
2) SE Como Community Park
3) Bridal Veil Green Space
4) Granary Park

Ridgeway Overlook Park is an existing MPRB land located on Ridgeway Parkway. Perched high above I-35W, the Park has an exceptional view looking southward toward Downtown Minneapolis. Proposed improvements include a gazebo/picnic shelter, overlook terrace, trails and landscaping.

Proposed Park Improvements and Estimated Costs:

• Formal Entry Gateway $125,000
• Addition of Pedestrian Overlook $50,000
• Turf Trail Through Existing Prairie $40,000
• Landscaping/Plantings $30,000

Total $ 245,000

SE Como Community Park is proposed is a new eighty (80) acre “signature park” for the region and the neighborhoods. The area is located south of East Hennepin Avenue between 29th Avenue SE and the boundary line between Minneapolis and St. Paul. This property is currently being used for industrial/warehouse purposes by private businesses and the University of Minnesota. Park design is intended to identify with and represent the history and culture of Northeast Minneapolis. Its ethnic origin can be found in Eastern Europe, with its rich history in the performing arts and institutional architecture. The expansive railyard delineates the southern boundary.

This park is to include regional and neighborhood attractions. Four (4) park concepts ideas were prepared for this site. While each concept has a design theme, the common elements include trails, ponds, gardens, play equipment, a shelter building, open play fields and parking.

The four (4) concepts were:

Alternative Sports Park - This plan had a focus on non-traditional sports activities...
such as indoor and outdoor skateboarding, and a BMX bike course along with traditional recreation features, such as children’s play equipment, turf play fields, etc.

Cultural Arts Park - This concept had its focus on arts activities with an art center building and sculpture garden, a picnic shelter, restored wetland, play equipment and playfields. A potential land bridge over Como Avenue is shown to extend the scope and visual appearances of the park space.

Eco-Business Park - This concept has illustrated the integration of business development into a park to create an eco-business park. Eco-friendly businesses would take advantage of the view and access to the park. Environmental education and “hands on” learning experiences could occur within this park. Features could include a large pond, loop trails, a band shell, picnic shelter, play areas and play fields.

Formal Gardens - This plan shows a formal park with reflecting ponds, gardens, a band shell, woodland restoration and a large open lawn area. The plan also shows a “cut and cover” land bridge extending over a recessed Como Avenue.

Of these options, the CAC selected the Eco-Business Park plan as their first priority followed by the Formal Gardens plan. The Eco-Business Park approach was seen as an appropriate program since acquiring this property would create a substantial loss of jobs and tax revenue. Enabling businesses to share the property with a public park, as per a comprehensive design plan for the entire site, would serve to mitigate some of the loss of jobs and revenue.

One example of an Eco-Business Park explored by project consultants is the ConAgra Park located in Downtown Omaha, Nebraska. The park consists of 31 acres and is situated between I-680 and the Missouri River. It is adjacent to the Gene Leahy Mall and the Old Market, both very popular shopping areas. The headquarters of ConAgra Food, a fortune 500 company distributing food products to grocery stores and restaurants, also exists on-site. The area has been the site of exploration, expansion and now, recreation. Lewis and Clark reportedly discovered conspicuous earthen mounds when they explored the location in 1804. Historians speculate that the mounds may have been the remains of an Otoe village. Opened in 1990, the park was built on land recovered after the demolition of an Historic District filled with warehouses dating back to the 1870’s that were integral to the growth and development of Omaha.

A man-made lake has been developed with a paved walking trail encircling the area. Three fountains have been provided including a large computerized fountain that projects water 300 feet into the air and features a nighttime light show. Areas for open play and for relaxation are also provided. Here, ConAgra Foods and the City of Omaha each own property. However, through cooperative planning, the property has been jointly developed with a large majority available for public use and enjoyment. Other mechanisms for joint use should be explored.
for the NE Minneapolis site with issues such as ownership, liability, development and maintenance important considerations.

Proposed Improvements and Estimated Costs:

- Demolition, Clearing, Earthwork, Soil Removal/Replacement $4,000,000
- Stormwater Ponding $2,000,000
- Shared Open space - Public/Private partnership $500,000
- Picnic Shelter $100,000
- Play Area $115,000
- Open Play Field $80,000
- Shared Parking $500,000
- Amphitheater and Bridge $1,220,000

Total $8,515,000

Bridal Veil Green Space is a recently landscaped parcel just north of Kasota Avenue where contaminated water and soil had existed for many years. As a remediation measure the State Pollution Control Agency removed tons of polluted soils and then covered the entire parcel with four (4) feet of clean fill. A “filtering” wetland now exits over a small portion of the site where open water previously existed. Ample space is available for the Parkway to cross the eastern portion of this site without disturbing the wetland. In addition, space is available on this City owned property to create a loop walking path around the wetland and to add interpretive information about the history of the Bridal Veil Creek.

Proposed Improvements and Estimated Costs:

- Parkway Alignment next to wetland and Creek $1,000,000
- Additional Wetland Restoration $250,000

Total $1,250,000

Granary Park focuses on the Historic Electric Steel Grain Elevators. The park would primarily be on railroad property located on the south side of the existing railroad yard. The City’s Southeast Minneapolis Industrial (SEMI) Plan called for a park with storm water ponds to be located in the vicinity of the grain elevators. This proposal would expand the park to the north into the rail-yard. One concept plan illustrates a nature oriented wetland park, with trails and use of the grain elevators for an observation area. Another concept shows smaller ponds linked by trails and suggests a re-use of the elevators as a climbing structure and possibly for an elevated restaurant.

Proposed Improvements and Estimated Costs:

- Large Wetland Restoration $250,000
- Trails/Interpretive Boardwalks $200,000
- Picnic Shelter $80,000
- Stormwater Ponding $450,000
- Parking $160,000
- Look-out Tower $450,000
- Bridge w/Look-out Rest stop $400,000

Total $1,990,000

Grand Total for Proposed Park Improvements $12,000,000
The three (3) potential park areas not considered a priority were:

*Kasota Ponds Green Space* - An existing pond located across the boundary-line in St. Paul next to Kasota Avenue and the TH 280 interchange. Community residents value the wildlife, open space and wetlands of this pond area.

*SEMI North Corridor Green Space* would be a new linear park to be located on land along the north edge of the BNSF rail-yard. It would exist from Kasota Ponds near TH 280 to approximately 30th Avenue SE, south of Elm Street. The park could act as a trail connector and landscaped greenway.

*Bridal Veil Creek Linear Park* is proposed along a day-lighted section of Bridal Veil Creek. The Creek currently runs underground in culverts. The proposal would bring the Creek back to the surface in a two-block area, from Granary Road to University Avenue along the proposed Missing link alignment. This may occur at a later time.

The Missing link Parkway segment will include driving lanes and parking bays for motor vehicles and a continuous off-street bicycle and pedestrian trail from St. Anthony Parkway at Stinson Boulevard to East River Parkway. This relatively short segment will complete the 53 mile Grand Rounds Scenic By-way (often referred to as a Parkway) circumnavigating the City of Minneapolis; a vision for the City for more than 120 years. It will facilitate a connection between the East Side of Minneapolis with the parks and attractions along the entire Grand Rounds system. In addition to filling the gap in the Grand Rounds, the Missing Link segment proposes other trail additions connecting the City with other existing and future trail opportunities.

Minneapolis and St. Paul Bicycle Plans are developed to create a comprehensive network of off-street and on-street bike lanes for recreation and non-motorized transportation. The Missing Link trails are designed to create loop trail opportunities of various lengths and to connect the neighborhoods to other existing and planned bikeways.
Missing Link Parkway
Character

The Missing Link will have a character consistent, yet unique, with the rest of the existing Grand Rounds Parkway System. The CAC identified the entire Missing Link as a “Garden Route” making the parkway, itself, a unique amenity. As a Garden Route, the parkway is planted heavily on the entire length with trees, shrubs and perennials, with the involvement of the local communities.

Aside from plantings, there will be a separate bike trail on one side and a sidewalk on the other side. Where appropriate, there will be off-street parking spaces parallel to the roadway. The parkway will have a 25 MPH speed limit consistent with the rest of the Minneapolis parkway system. The parkway will utilize existing roads except for the area between East Hennepin Avenue and future Granary Road. In this area, a new parkway road will be built along with a railroad underpass and a bridge over the railroad yard. A bicycle trail and landscaping will be added to the east side of existing 29th Avenue SE between East Hennepin Avenue and Weeks Avenue. When combined with the Missing Link trail to the east, it creates a pleasant 1.25 mile loop trail opportunity.

Signage and lighting will be consistent with the rest of the Grand Rounds Parkway System. Rest areas, including drinking fountains, seating, bike racks, portable toilets and screens, and information kiosks, will occur along the new parkway route.
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Actions

On May 21, 2008 the MPRB’s Planning Committee was presented the Citizen Advisory Committee report identifying the alignment for the Grand Rounds Missing Link along with park and open space opportunities. The Committee requested that three Public Hearings be scheduled to allow for public comment on the report. The times scheduled were:

- June 18 at the MPRB Headquarters
- June 23 at Van Cleve Park
- July 1 at Windom Park

Each of the Public Hearings were well attended by residents and business owners from the project area. Testimony of support was given as was testimony from some business owners expressing their opposition to having their businesses and property acquired. In addition, letters with recommendations, support and concern were sent to the Park Board offices from residents and business owners. Even though a lot of testimony was given, very little was considered new information since the public participation program leading up to the Public Hearings provided numerous opportunities for input prior to CAC decision-making.

In general, a variety of comments were received regarding the proposed Missing Link alignment and the proposed park and open space locations. Examples of favorable comments include: support for seeing the Grand Rounds system completed, support in providing additional recreational opportunities in the SE and NE sections of the City, support for revitalizing and re-investing in the area through the proposed “Eco-Business Park” and support for improving the environment.

Concerns expressed focused on the over-all cost of the project, possible loss of tax revenues, and the potential for more traffic throughout the project area. The St. Anthony District 12 Council conveyed a concern for possible impacts to the nearby Kasota Ponds and the Prospect Park Neighborhood expressed concern for restricting truck access on 27th Avenue and for impacts on future traffic movements in the area. A frequent concern raised by Stinson Parkway residents focused on a late consideration of the CAC which was to construct a new bicycle loop using the Parkway to connect with St. Anthony Parkway on the north with Ridgeway Parkway to the south near I-35W. A decision had not been made as to whether the bicycle loop would be placed in the center median or outside of either curb but within the existing public right-of-way. Resident opposition focused mainly on safety at intersections and the possible removal of trees in the existing median. And the potential usage of public right-of-way that today is used as front lawn by many of the residents was another reason for their opposition. As noted later, the CAC did remove the provision of an “off-street” bikeway in this corridor, however, since the Minneapolis Public Works Department is responsible for constructing bikeways in the street right-of-ways, their withdrawal of this concept was not intended to influence a future decision by Public Works to consider a bicycle loop connection on Stinson Parkway.
Concept Development, Continued
Typical Parkway Cross Sections

A 80' R.O.W.

B 100' R.O.W.

C 120' R.O.W.

D 150' R.O.W.
Concept Development, Continued

1. Performance Arts Shelter
2. Eco-Business Partnership with Green Roofs
3. Stormwater Ponds
4. Missing Link Parkway
5. Shared Parking Facility
6. Playground with Picnic Shelters
7. Open Play Fields
8. Public/Private Land Partnership Opportunity

Illustration – Southeast Como Community Park and Missing Link Parkway System.
1. Stormwater Ponding
2. Redevelopment of light industry
3. Redevelopment of Corporate Office Space/ Buffer from Adjacent Uses - Green Roofs
4. Shared Open Space and Corporate Campus
5. Picnic Shelter
6. Play Area
7. Open Play Field
8. Shared Parking
9. Amphitheater and Bridge

1. Parkway Alignment along side of Wetlands and Bridal Veil Creek
2. Wetland Restoration
3. Tunnel under Railroad Tracks
4. Bridge Over Railroad Tracks
Granary Park Refined Concept Example

1. Large Wetland Restoration
2. Trails and Interpretive Boardwalks
3. Picnic Shelter
4. Stormwater Ponding
5. Parking
7. Bridge with Lookout Rest Stop for Recommended Route

Ridgway Overlook Park Refined Concept Example

1. Formal Entry Gateway
2. Addition of Pedestrian Overlook
3. Turf Trail Through Existing Prairie Restoration
4. Existing Trail

Refined Park Concept Examples
Trail Connections

The Missing Link will include a continuous off-street trail along with an off-street sidewalk from St. Anthony Parkway at Stinson Boulevard to East River Parkway. This trail segment will complete the 53 mile loop trail around Minneapolis that has been the vision of the City for over 120 years. This will connect the East Side of Minneapolis with the parks and attractions along the existing Grand Rounds. In addition to the parkway trail, the Missing Link study proposes other future trail additions to connect the city and add loop trail opportunities. The Missing Link Area Trail and Bikeways Plan is based largely on existing Minneapolis and St. Paul trail plans, with select additions reviewed by the CAC. The trail plan is designed to create a comprehensive network of off-street trails and on-street bike lanes for recreation and non-motorized transportation. In particular, the Missing Link trails are designed to create loop trail opportunities of various lengths and to connect the neighborhoods to other existing and planned trails and bikeways. Highlighted proposed Missing Link area trail additions are:

**Missing Link Trail** - A five mile off-street trail that will parallel the parkway road from Stinson Boulevard to East River Parkway. This trail will connect to the NE Diagonal Trail, Como Avenue bike lanes, future Granary Road trail, the U of M Transitway bike trail, the future Central Corridor Light Rail Transit line, and the existing East River Parkway trail.

**Stinson Boulevard, St. Anthony Boulevard and Ridgeway Parkway loop** - This proposed off-street 3.25 mile trail loop is bisected by the existing NE Diagonal trail which creates numerous trail loop options. Specific locations for the trails on Stinson, St. Anthony, and Ridgeway would be determined with community input through a future planning and design process. The loop provides an additional amenity for the neighborhood, increases greening, completes the only missing section of parkway without a bike trail, and provides a connection between the local neighborhoods and Ridgeway Park.

**SE Como Community Park loop trail** – A 1.25 mile off-street loop trail surrounding future SE Como Community Park and following portions of the Missing Link and 29th Avenue SE.

**Bridal Veil Wetland interpretive trail** - A loop walking trail around restored Bridal Veil wetland. The trail could include a history of the Bridal Veil watershed, and information about restoration, pollution mitigation and area history.

**27th Avenue SE Bikeways** – The portion of the Missing Link on 27th Avenue SE will also include off-street bike lanes. These will connect East River Parkway to the University of Minnesota Transitway and form part of the University bikeways loop.

**Granary Road/ Main/ Marshall** – The proposed Missing Link would utilize part of future Granary Road near the U of M for a parkway route and trail. Ultimately, Granary Road is planned to connect to Main Street and Marshall Street, as well as east to St. Paul. Bikeways and trails have been contemplated for Main/ Marshall and a trail would be part of Granary Road. The Main/ Marshall route combined with St. Anthony Parkway and the Missing Link will create a 12 mile bike loop through the East Side of Minneapolis.
Granary Road/Main Street to East River Parkway – A 0.3 mile long trail segment is proposed to connect future Granary Road near Main Street to the north end of East River Parkway within the East Bank Campus of the University of Minnesota. This trail segment would also provide a connection to the existing bikeway bridge across the Mississippi River.

St. Paul connections – The plan includes trail and bikeway connections to the St. Paul Grand Rounds Parkway system on Como Avenue and future Granary Road. The two routes will help connect the two city’s parkway systems into a larger integrated Grand Rounds parkway and trail network.
Implementation of the Missing Link will require a number of strategies and steps. Also, several partnerships and an adoption in public policy at other levels of government for the Missing Link will be needed.

The proposed St. Anthony Parkway section passes through the Village of St. Anthony, an independent municipality. The roadway from Stinson Parkway to Ridgeway Parkway is St. Anthony’s jurisdiction. Planning, design and funding for this section will require participation and cooperation with the citizens and elected officials of St. Anthony. In addition, as one of the funding partners, and a jurisdiction with capital investments in the area, a request for action should be submitted to the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners to accept the route and open space commitments in the plan.

It is expected that most or all of the Missing Link will become part of the Regional Open Space System; therefore approval of the Master Plan by the Metropolitan Open Space Commission is being sought. This approval will make it possible for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to seek funds from and through that source. Support from other agencies, such as the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, the State Legislature bonding initiatives and through its Legislative Citizens Commission on Minnesota’s Resources, and the Federal Highway Administration through its Scenic Byway office. Other possibilities should also be reviewed.

**Estimated Costs**

In order to estimate costs for constructing the Missing Link Parkway and future parks and open spaces, a section-by-section evaluation utilizing parcel data obtained from the Hennepin County Assessor was completed. Tax assessment values for 2008 were used to estimate acquisition costs. Relocation costs were not estimated. Standard practices for estimating engineering projects were used to generate estimates for public construction projects.

The analysis shows an estimated total cost for the selected route and park improvements of $112 million. Of the total cost, $23.5 million is estimated for the acquisition of right of way for the route itself. An additional $12.5 million is estimated for the acquisition of park and open space land for a total acquisition cost of $36 million. Parkway construction and park development is estimated at $76 million.

**Right of Way Acquisitions**

The B+B2 Alternative may involve the acquisition of as many as 25 parcels as total or partial takings. During the Detailed Design phase, right-of-way requirements will be clearly delineated giving the MPRB the final number of parcels to be acquired or otherwise affected by the project. Three parcels are owned by the University of Minnesota, one parcel is owned by the City of Minneapolis, and the remaining are privately held. Four parcels are currently vacant; the predominant use of the 21 parcels with structures has been described as Industrial-Warehouse-Factory or as Commercial Workshop.

As noted, Hennepin County has placed a market value of $36 million on all 25 parcels in the year 2008. The eventual cost...
of acquisition for the project will depend on the number of parcels taken in total, or in part, and the year purchased. In each instance, appraisals will be secured by the MPRB providing an indication of Market Value for each parcel. Other costs such as relocation expenses, supplemental payments, storage, title transfer, etc. will also contribute to the final cost of each parcel acquired.

Based upon an approved Funding and Implementation Plan the MPRB will need to decide how it will proceed to acquire parcels determined necessary for the project. The speed by which parcels will be acquired will be dependent on the availability of funding and the willingness of owners to sell. While the MPRB has the authority to acquire property by using the laws of eminent domain and condemnation proceedings, they may rather elect to purchase the needed property over time as they become available from willing sellers. The decision on when a particular parcel is needed will be influenced by the timing of the construction program and the amount of acquisition funding available at the time.

During their many deliberations, the CAC discussed the high cost and difficulty in acquiring the 25 parcels mentioned above. They also spent considerable time learning the consequences of an acquisition program of that size given the loss of jobs and property tax base. Information obtained from Hennepin County regarding the amount of property tax paid, per parcel, in 2008 and employment numbers were provided, in many instances, by the property or business owner.

The possible loss of jobs and tax revenue became a major issue for the CAC as they struggled to find an appropriate link for the Grand Rounds Parkway and sufficient property for the needed “Community Park.” Many ideas were generated and alternate possibilities proposed in an attempt to minimize impacts. Suggestions were made right up until the last minute during their April 9, 2008 meeting when they made their final decision. The City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development members of the TAC and some area property owners expressed concern about job loss and property tax loss as a result of conversion of industrial properties located between East Hennepin Avenue and Weeks Avenue to parkway and park land.

The Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan policy is to retain this area of SE Minneapolis for industrial land use. The challenge is balancing the need and desire for public park and parkway amenities and the desire for a vibrant employment and property tax base. Acquisition of some property is necessary in order to create new park and parkway space. Many alternatives were considered before selecting the preferred parkway alignment. It was recommended that acquisition not extend beyond what is determined essential. The preferred parkway route uses existing public road right of way to the extent possible.

The creation of a parkway and park space is viewed as an amenity and stimulus for development, redevelopment and revitalization of property. While some uses may be displaced, the net effect can be a stronger more vital commercial-industrial area. The parkway and park space can act as a catalyst for implementation of
Implementation Strategy, Continued

the Mayors’ initiative on green manufacturing - Making it Green in Minneapolis Saint Paul. To that end a recommended park concept envisioned the proposed SE Como Community Park as an eco-business park combining green business and open space. This alternative could easily result in more jobs and higher property tax value than the current land use pattern.

In addition, City of Minneapolis Department of Public Works staff had suggested staying on existing streets, providing a straight and direct connection between St. Anthony Parkway and East River Parkway, rather than the more typical parkway with horizontal and vertical curvatures. In the end, the CAC chose the B B2 alternatives because they most accurately reflected the project goals and selection criteria established early in the process – they were determined to provide the best linkage for the Grand Rounds System and the best possibility for establishing a Community Park.

Also discussed during the April 9, 2008 CAC meeting was the possibility of acquiring property in three phases starting with the University of Minnesota parcels and perhaps three that are currently privately held. The remaining parcels would be acquired in phases two and three of the acquisition program. An acquisition plan or schedule was not adopted by the CAC; they concluded that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board should adopt a funding plan and its own schedule for acquiring property from willing sellers or through the use of eminent domain.

In conclusion, the CAC voted to recommend a plan that, if implemented, would require the taking of a significant number of parcels at a high cost but the net value to the Citizens of Minneapolis and the Grand Rounds system for years to come was well worth the investment.

Construction Phasing

The completion of the Missing Link and the addition of new parks and open space are likely to occur in phases over a period of years depending upon funding, construction sequence, coordination with other public projects, and availability of land. Potential Phasing Options shows the potential ability to sequence construction by parkway segments (A through E) and park projects (1 through 7). The phasing options are listed in three groups (north, central and south). The construction sequence of the groups is flexible and the phases/segments as shown could be combined or separated as needed.

North Group - The north parkway work extends the Grand Rounds Parkway from St. Anthony Parkway/Stinson Boulevard to East Hennepin Avenue by greening existing streets and adding walkways, a bike trail, parkway features and landscaping. Since construction of Segments A and B consists primarily of work within existing public road rights-of-way and involve little to no private property acquisition, they may be appropriate initial phases.

Parkway Segments

A. St. Anthony Parkway to I-35W and Industrial Boulevard from I-35W to East Hennepin Ave.
Park Project

1. Ridgeway Overlook Park improvement

Central Group - The central Missing Link area will connect from East Hennepin Avenue across the railroad line and railroad yard to future Granary Road. The Missing Link south of Hennepin to Granary Road will be on a new parkway corridor to be acquired across private property along with use of a segment of Bridal Veil wetland property.

This section includes a new underpass at the BNSF railroad line and a new bridge over the BNSF railroad yard to connect to future Granary Road. Granary Road is planned to eventually connect west to Main Street and east to the St. Paul Grand Rounds at Raymond Avenue. The Missing Link can also connect to the St. Paul Grand Rounds via Como Avenue. Two parkway segments and four park projects are shown for the central section. The construction of SE Como Community Park, Bridal Veil green space, Kasota Ponds green space, and SEMI North Corridor green space is largely dependent upon the timing of land acquisition.

Parkway Segments

B. New parkway corridor from Hennepin to the BNSF railroad line.

C. Railroad underpass at the BNSF railroad line and bridge over the BNSF railroad yard to future Granary Road.

South Group - The south part of the Missing Link utilizes a portion of Granary Road and connects from future Granary Road to existing East River Parkway using existing and expanded 27th Avenue SE. The south section includes two parkway segments and two park projects.

Park Projects

6. Granary Park

7. Bridal Veil Creek Linear Park

Construction phasing will always be predicated on the availability of both funding and right-of-way availability.

Regarding the recommended B-B2 route designated by the CAC on April 9, 2008; we suggest a development program moving from north to south. Segment A on the attached drawing begins at Stinson Parkway and then travels through a portion of the City of St. Anthony southward passing under I-35W to East Hennepin Avenue. Agreements have yet
to be reached with St. Anthony but this should be obtainable in the future, especially given the history of this segment of the parkway. From a construction stand-point, this segment should be the easiest to implement given that the right-of-way width, while variable, is sufficient to support Parkway development. A narrow strip of right-of-way may need to be acquired south of I-35W, along Industrial Boulevard to East Hennepin Avenue. Building structures should not be affected.

Segment B begins at East Hennepin Avenue and ends at the BNSF rail line south of Weeks Avenue. This segment requires the acquisition of approximately 25 properties for the Parkway and the Southeast Como Community Park. Using the 29th Street Corridor for the development of the Parkway would avoid acquiring much of the Industrial property but would not result in a very satisfactory “parkway experience.” Given the cost of acquiring the property needed for the B2 alignment, it may be several years before the Parkway can be located there. As a result, it may be necessary that the Parkway is constructed in an interim location using a potential combination of 29th Street and the new right-of-way, or entirely on the new right-of-way, until it can be relocated to its permanent location on the B2 alignment.

Segment C extends from the BNSF rail line south, over the wider rail-yard, to the proposed location for new Granary Road. Here, some Industrial property would be required but this can be minimized during the detailed design. The route would pass over a portion of the Bridal Veil Ponds site that has recently been significantly altered by the state Pollution Control Agency as a mitigation measure for contamination resulting from Industrial waste disposal over decades some time ago. Bridging the rail yard would require a substantial bridge structure intersecting with an elevated Granary Road on the new location.

Segment D is an east-west portion of the proposed “Missing Link” traveling exclusively on new Granary Road. It should be built at the same time that the city’s Department of Public Works relocates and re-constructs Granary Road regardless of its timing with other segments, since cost-savings can be realized by installing the Parkway amenities at the same time that the road is built. It would be preferable to have the Parkway elements included in the design plans and construction contracts prepared by the City as a part of their project. Unfortunately, the City has not yet acquired funding for Granary Road and so it is not currently scheduled.

The final Segment (E) extends down 27th Avenue SE from new Granary Road to East River Parkway. Some right-of-way will be needed but, again, final design work may avoid a significant taking. The segment basically follows 27th Avenue SE although its width might present problems in providing a separate bike/pedestrian path.
Implementation Strategy, Continued

Stormwater Management / Bridal Veil Creek

The 2001 Southeast Minneapolis Industrial (SEMI) Refined Master Plan, adopted by the City of Minneapolis to guide redevelopment and renewal of that area, included a proposed stormwater management system that included an “amenity link” along 27th Avenue SE. This study proposed an alignment of a new boulevard to follow the alignment of the existing and proposed storm sewers connecting Bridal Veil Creek to Bridal Veil Falls. This new boulevard would connect University Avenue with Granary Park, and would contain a constructed wetland amenity located in between the north- and south-bound lanes of traffic. These urban linear wetlands, the study noted, would give key expression to Bridal Veil Creek main stem, marking on the surface the flow of the creek in the pipes beneath the street. They would also provide a recreational, visual, and wildlife amenity to the area, as well as improve the quality of the water which eventually makes its way to the Mississippi River.

From 2005 to 2008, Hennepin County has been examining potential opportunities to daylight (take stormwater out of its pipe/culvert and “daylight” it, i.e. permit it to flow along the surface) Bridal Veil Creek (as well as Bassett Creek and Shingle Creek). The primary purpose of opening these creeks is to generate positive environmental and economic impacts on the areas surrounding them. A February 15, 2006 consultant report to the County ranked daylighting Bridal Veil Creek at this 27th Avenue SE location as a high priority, noting its proximity to the development of light rail transit in the University Avenue “Central Corridor.”

The selected route for completion of the Grand Rounds “Missing Link” includes the 27th Avenue SE corridor and could provide the opportunity to implement a daylighting project as part of the Grand Rounds development program. Detailed feasibility studies would be required, not only to ensure sufficient right-of-way width but also to explore and resolve the complexities of an overall stormwater management program for the area.

Traffic Engineering

The Grand Rounds serves as a circumferential corridor around the Minneapolis urbanized area, serving both motorized and non-motorized travel. The Missing Link will complete the Grand Rounds, allowing uninterrupted travel throughout the urban area. In order to meet the intent of the Grand Rounds, the Missing Link must adequately serve both the recreational user traveling the Grand Rounds as a touring facility along with the daily traveler going from point to point in the Minneapolis area. Traffic information was contributed by the TAC in this section.

The Grand Rounds currently consists of roadways that terminate at either end of the study area. At the southern end of the study area, both the East River Parkway and West River Parkway are part of the Grand Rounds Parkway System. St. Anthony Parkway on the northern end of the study area is the opposing terminus of the Grand Rounds. The Missing Link will join these two existing termini to complete the Grand Rounds system.
The general study area of the Missing Link lies to the north of the Mississippi River. The transportation system is dominated by Interstate 35W to the north and west and Interstate 94 to the south. These interstates intersect just across the Mississippi River on the west bank. TH 280 connects the two interstate facilities and forms the eastern boundary of the study area. These three facilities provide high-speed, limited access facilities for regional traffic movements and collectively carry the vast majority of the auto and truck traffic in the study area. East-west corridor connections through the study area are provided by University Avenue, Como Avenue, East Hennepin Avenue and Broadway Street.

There are five roadway crossings of the Mississippi River including I-35W, I-94, 10th Avenue SE, Washington Avenue and Franklin Avenue. The Washington Avenue Bridge is proposed to be converted to serve Light Rail Transit to serve the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis campus.

The study area is also divided by two major rail facilities. The BNSF line bisects the study area. The rail line is primarily elevated, with grade separated crossings at I-35W and Johnson Street, the East Hennepin Avenue and Stinson Boulevard intersection, the 22nd Avenue SE and Como Avenue intersection, and TH 280. The BNSF line and associated switch yard just north of the University of Minnesota-Minneapolis campus is a major barrier, restricting north-south access. For pedestrians and bicyclists the barrier is a formidable 3 mile span between Raymond Ave. in St. Paul and 15th Avenue SE in Minneapolis. The 15th Avenue SE crossing is on a heavy traffic street via a narrow underpass, often with standing water after a heavy rain. Although the Raymond Ave. bridge is modern (with striped bike lanes), the street itself is busy and narrow to the north and south of the bridge.

Phase One Analysis — Evaluation of Potential Alignments

The first phase of analysis considered many potential corridors. Many of these corridors have flaws that have eliminated them from further analysis prior to a traffic screening process. The three general corridors that have been analyzed for traffic impacts are shown in the graphic titled “Potential Missing Link Parkway Alignments.”

The western-most proposed corridor is in the Marshall Street alignment. The use of this corridor would enhance the existing Marshall Street cross-section to be most consistent with the Grand Rounds, but would not change the traffic patterns for daily travelers in the area. Any increase in vehicular touring travel resulting from the Grand Rounds designation would be anticipated to occur during non-peak times with lower total traffic volumes than during the peak times. As previously stated, the CAC supports the future study and development of Marshall Street as a parkway-like inner loop, but this route does not fulfill the Missing Link goals and objectives.

The central corridor is the Stinson Boulevard – 18th Avenue SE with southern termini along either the 15th Street SE or
Oak Street corridors. Similar to the Marshall Street corridor, the Stinson corridor would not significantly change daily vehicular travel patterns, as the roadway exists today. The addition of a grade separated crossing of the BNSF rail line along the Oak Street corridor would provide a more direct route into the University of Minnesota-Minneapolis campus, and likely divert a portion of the daily travel demand from the existing two-lane underpass at 15th Street SE. As previously discussed, the CAC rejected this route from consideration due to numerous issues and concerns.

The eastern-most corridor is the Industrial Boulevard to 27th Avenue SE alignment. This alignment utilizes the existing Industrial Boulevard alignment north of East Hennepin Avenue. Unlike the other two corridors, approximately half of the Industrial Boulevard corridor is on new roadway alignment. A new grade-separated crossing of the BNSF railroad yard along the eastern portion of the study area would provide an enhanced connection for daily travelers. This new connection would provide improved north-south mobility, and would likely serve some local vehicle trips currently using TH 280. With the northern end of this alignment linking with St. Anthony Parkway, but not I-35W, this new facility would not be a significant regional corridor requiring more than the anticipated four-lane cross section.

**Phase Two Analysis — Preferred Missing Link Route**

The proposed completion of Grand Rounds Missing Link (as outlined above in this study) will have various impacts to the vehicular traffic within the area. Major north-south movements through the study area are already adequately served by I-35W, TH 280. However, the new grade-separated crossings of the railroad switchyard and railroad mainline will provide a more convenient route for local traffic. This will reduce traffic using the 15th Avenue SE underpass and TH 280.

The proposed alignment will utilize the 27th Avenue SE corridor to connect to the existing Grand Rounds to the south. Intersections of 27th Avenue SE will likely experience traffic growth. The intersection of 27th Avenue SE and University Avenue will likely have the highest impact, due to the large volume of traffic currently using University Avenue. The 27th Avenue SE and proposed Granary Road intersection will also require future traffic analysis, due to both the Missing Link project and the Granary Road connection. The intersection of the proposed Granary Road and Grand Rounds at the southern bridge terminus will require traffic analysis to verify intersection geometry such as a left turn bay for the eastbound to northbound movement. The intersection of 27th Avenue SE and East River Parkway will need a traffic analysis to explore alternative geometry to accommodate the parkway and intersecting truck routes at this complex 5-legged intersection.

The proposed alignment of the Grand Rounds is likely to include a connection to Kasota Avenue/Energy Park Drive via Bridal Veil Circle. Intersection spacing should be carefully considered to avoid vehicle queuing from one intersection.
into the other. Traffic volumes at both intersections may not warrant signalized control, but appropriately designed roundabouts may be a viable option depending upon available right-of-way.

The recent closure of the TH 280 and Broadway intersection near the north end of the study area resulted in a change in travel patterns in the area. Industrial Boulevard carried higher volumes of traffic between East Hennepin and Broadway. The current intersection operations of the Industrial Boulevard and East Hennepin Avenue intersection should be analyzed, as the proposed alignment of the Missing Link may facilitate movement of some vehicles through this intersection to continue in a north-south direction rather than utilizing TH 280 to cross the rail facilities to the south. This new routing option may increase the total demand within the intersection, but may actually improve operations by reducing the southbound to eastbound left turn movement and the corresponding westbound to northbound right turn movement at the Hennepin Avenue and Industrial Boulevard intersection.

A traffic analysis should be conducted on the following intersections to identify any traffic operations issues prior to final design of the Missing Link parkway:

- 27th Avenue SE and University Avenue
- 27th Avenue SE (Grand Rounds) and Granary Road
- 27th Avenue SE and East River Parkway
- Grand Rounds (south bridge terminal) and Granary Road
- Grand Rounds and Bridal Veil Circle
- Kasota Avenue and Bridal Veil Circle
- Grand Rounds/Industrial Boulevard and East Hennepin Avenue
- Industrial Boulevard and Broadway Avenue
Successful completion of the Missing Link will not only require a steadfast commitment by the MPRB and its citizenry, but also a strategy that can be applied in future years. Over the next 10 years the MPRB will need to maintain a very aggressive approach to acquiring and developing the route. The strategy can be divided in sections listed below.

**Funding** – funding for projects of this size and scope traditionally need financial support from all levels of government, particularly federal and state. The significance of the Grand Rounds Missing Link and its prominence as a National Scenic Byway should warrant significant funding consideration from the federal government. The Park Board should solicit federal support and seek funding through every available opportunity – namely, competitive grants and special appropriations requests. Because the Missing Link will be a regional amenity, support from state grants and appropriations should be sought.

**Partnerships** – building partnerships will also be critical to success of the Missing Link. Partnerships with the Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, and other surrounding communities will increase opportunities for joint efforts and projects. For example, the Metropolitan Council’s Regional Open Space Systems Plan will need to identify the Grand Rounds Missing Link initiative as a high priority for completion. Additionally, Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis and the MPRB will need to adjust their planning programs to reflect the policy and funding requirements of completing the Grand Rounds System. Funding from each will be necessary to supplement federal and state funding and provide the required local match. Capital Improvement and Comprehensive Plans should be coordinated to provide for greater development impact.

**Private Funding** – private funds may be utilized for the project and are advantageous for two reasons:

1) They contribute to the overall funding requirement of the project;

2) They leverage the availability of funding from governmental sources.

The MPRB’s Foundation may be one source of private capital but other sources could be identified through partnerships with environmental organizations and the anticipated user groups (e.g. biking and hiking organizations).

The overall cost of the project has been estimated at approximately $112 million. In developing a Funding and Implementation Plan, a schedule has been prepared as a guide for capital expenditure planning and for submitting funding requests.
### Preliminary Cost Estimate

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### Funding Plan

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Conflicts

Final agreement has not yet been reached with the Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) and Public Works (PW) regarding the acquisition of Industrial Properties located between Hennepin Avenue and the Rail Yard and the necessary street width required for a Parkway to accommodate multiple modes of transportation and parking for automobiles. CPED’s concern mainly pertains to the acquisition of Industrial properties and it is PW’s recommendation that the Parkway be limited to existing streets and within their current right-of-way.

Discussions have occurred with CPED resulting in a general understanding that the University of Minnesota property and several small developed and undeveloped parcels should be obtained first. From there as willing sellers begin offering their properties for sale the MPRB would purchase each over a period of years. Three acquisition phases have been identified and mapped for the purposes working toward the acquisition of all parcels needed for the Parkway and the new parks. The immediate concern is for the loss of jobs and property tax revenue from the larger Industrial properties. Phasing the acquisition program to avoid the taking of these parcels until their owners become willing sellers has been discussed as a potential option with the City. Discussion has been on-going involving City representatives as we work toward finding common ground.

Several of the City streets in Northeast and Southeast Minneapolis have a right-of-way width of only 54 feet. Accommodating the width of two traffic lanes plus parking and sidewalks leaves no space for bicycle lanes, pedestrian paths or landscaping improvements. This has been discussed with PW personal who understand the objectives of a Parkway are substantially different from those who design, build and maintain the City’s street system.

City of St Anthony

The segment of the preferred route between Stinson Boulevard and I-35W is physically located in St. Anthony. Elected officials in St. Anthony are currently not wanting to perform major construction in this segment due to a concern for more traffic and impact to adjacent homeowners. Because this segment has a wide right-of-way, including traffic lanes and sidewalks, the need to provide major upgrades in this segment may not be necessary for several years.
Public Services

The Missing Link segment of the Grand Rounds Parkway System will require existing and additional non-recreational public services. Where the new Parkway segment will be provided within the existing street right-of-way, existing traffic signals may need to be adjusted at intersections and new signage and stripping may be necessary at cross-walks and throughout the new Parkway and in the new Parks. In addition, water and sewer services will be needed within the Parkway and in the proposed SE Como Park. Lighting throughout the Parkway, and in each of the proposed new parks, will require an extensive amount of electrical service. Adding a new segment to the Parkway and providing additional Parks will add to the amount of area needing surveillance by the MPRB Police Department. It is unknown at this time if additional officers will be required. Snow removal service will be required by the City on the Parkway and within Parking Lots. Other maintenance will be provided by the MPRB.
Public Awareness

Public awareness and promotion are important components for all of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board’s regional parks and trails. The Grand Rounds Missing Link has had an enormous amount of visibility and public awareness as stated above. The proposed Missing Link is also identified in the Park Board’s and City of Minneapolis’ Comprehensive Plans.

Upon completion of the Missing Link parkway section, it is the task of the Park Board to promote and encourage its’ use. The MPRB will utilize all existing media sources, maps, brochures, web pages and other electronic and print media to communicate its location, amenities and trail connections. The MPRB can effectively disseminate information to all of its 49 recreation centers, 5 golf courses, City Hall and local libraries. In addition, the MPRB partners with the Minneapolis Convention and Visitors Association (MEET Minneapolis) and other local tourism promoters and can utilize existing networks to promote the new regional trail. Efforts will also be made through Metropolitan Council literature, news updates and region wide awareness program.

Since a portion of the Missing Link is located in the Mississippi National River Recreation Area (MNRRA), the Park Board will also utilize National Park Service network and staff to assist in the promotion of the Missing Link.

Additionally, the MPRB will apply to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for inclusion of the Missing Link into the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway program. Once the Missing Link segment is incorporated within the scenic byway program, additional promotion and awareness efforts, along with funding sources at the national level can be realized.
Special Needs

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board strives to provide equal access and opportunities for all participants in its programs, facilities and recreational amenities. To ensure that residents have the greatest opportunities to participate, the Park Board has identified select strategies that guide our planning, development and program efforts. These strategies are listed below.

- Identify and reduce physical and financial barriers to participation in programming
- Balance the distribution of park and recreation features across the city
- Ensure park access for all residents by providing parks within an easy walk from their homes and achieving a ratio of .01 acres of parkland per household
- Work with the City of Minneapolis and other entities to identify and support multi-mode transportation corridors between parks

- Create a community outreach and research plan that focuses on identifying the park and recreation needs of the city’s dynamic populations
- Evaluate current facility and program delivery based on key indicators and park visitation
- Ensure staff are prepared to engage a diverse public by through training
- Address the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) through programs and infrastructure (re)development

Adding to these guidelines, the reorganization of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has better positioned staff to address the needs and desires of individual communities. The new geographically based structure brings decision-making closer to the community. The research conducted for the comprehensive plan reinforces the importance of basing program and facility decision on specific community needs and demographics, since recreation needs vary across the city. Emphasis is placed on researching community need and demographics of the area. Equity, therefore, will be measured by how well a community’s needs are addressed.
The Minneapolis park system is essential to the quality of life and identity of the City. Founders of the system understood the role parks play in a healthy, livable, and balanced city, and they made preserving land for future generations a priority. Still today, the Park Board is committed to maintaining that vision and will continue to improve people’s lives by providing quality recreational facilities and services while protecting and restoring the city’s natural and cultural resources.

The Board’s Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2007, provides a sense of commitment for stewardship through the following passage: ‘Land, trees, and water – the foundation of the park system – require long-term investment and care. Parks are protected to benefit the entire city; therefore, all residents have a stake in the future of these resources and bear responsibility for their stewardship. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is committed to providing leadership in natural resource management, connecting people to their natural environment, and fostering a sense of stewardship.’

The plan articulates goals and strategies that call for management of the park system’s natural resources, protection of boulevard trees, and development of partnerships that will further the goals of protecting natural resources and connecting people to them. It calls for balancing the distribution of park amenities throughout the city, giving particular focus to north and northeast Minneapolis.

With that commitment, the organization has identified a number of stewardship strategies that will guide our decision making as we move forward. • Communicate the importance of preserving and properly managing natural resources for health, water, and air quality, and general environmental benefit.

• Be a resource for residents and visitors seeking information about the park system’s natural resource and the urban forest.

• Engage volunteers in the restoration, maintenance and preservation of the park system’s natural and cultural resources.
Stewardship Plan, Continued

While much of the Missing Link will traverse through a very urban environment, there are opportunities to expand and restore some of the natural amenities. Along the north end of the corridor, the parkway will follow along St. Anthony Boulevard with Gross Golf Course on its’ eastern side and Sunset/Hillside Cemetery on its’ western side. This section provides for a open and beautiful landscape, with gently rolling hills with mature shade trees. As one of the widest sections of the parkway, having a 120 foot Right-of-Way (ROW) and one of the most visually expansive sections, maintaining the current landscape character is of importance.

As the parkway heads under and south of 35W the adjacent area land use changes significantly. It is comprised of commercial and light industrial properties. The existing Right-of-Way (ROW) is narrowed somewhat to a 100 foot ROW, however, the corridor feels much more expansive because all of the commercial buildings along the boulevard are set back from the property line. Most of the buildings are set back a minimum 50 feet from the street ROW, thus giving the street an expansive and open character.

Further south (section B) as the parkway intersects with E. Hennepin Avenue, the character and physical structure of the land area changes again very significantly. Large industrial complexes, businesses with many shipping and storage yards are present. This area in the plan is identified as where the parkway would expand, creating the signature park with large open spaces and recreational amenities. Approximately 80 acres, from E Hennepin to Weeks Avenue, would be part of the signature park. This expansion

• Lead efforts to establish public and private partnerships that enhance the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board’s management of natural areas, waters, and urban forest; and sponsor programs and events that promote exploring, protecting, and enhancing these resources.

• Strengthen existing and create new opportunities for research, cooperative exchange of information, and teaching with universities, state and federal agencies, research institutes, and recognized experts.
not only allows opportunities to provide recreational facilities, it also allows opportunities to provide environmentally-friendly stormwater management practices. With such a large area, there is a wide range of ‘best management practices’ that could be accomplished that would enhance the neighborhood's current water quality.

As the route moves south past Week Avenue, it travels, via an underpass, beneath the BNSF rail line. It then enters the Bridal Veil Pond site, avoiding the newly created wetlands and climbs above the proposed Kasota Road alignment, bridging the BNSF rail yard and intersecting with the future Granary Road on the south side of the rail yard. At this location, additional opportunities for park and open space exist, providing for both recreational facilities and water quality management practices.

From there, the route follows the Granary Road alignment west to 27th Avenue SE, where it turns south towards University Avenue. Here, the plan proposes to daylight Bridal Veil Creek, providing a unique water element to an area devoid of any natural amenities.

The alignment continues south along 27th Avenue SE until it reaches its final destination at East River Parkway. This section is the narrowest part of the corridor with approximately 56 feet of ROW. The Park Board will utilize its standard practice of boulevard tree planting.

As part of the planning process, a framework of adaptive management principles will guide the stewardship plan throughout the Missing Link corridor. An assessment will be made as to the scope of degradation of each particular section or site, and an analysis of the potential solutions for restoration will be made. In addition, a restoration plan and monitoring program will be established with evaluations and assessments of the outcomes.
Demand Forecast

Demands on recreation today are just as great as they have been in the past and are expected to increase in popularity in the near future. Park and trail usage is expected to grow as the population grows. In reviewing the Metropolitan Council Regional Population Forecast, the population in the metropolitan area is expected to increase substantially in the next 10 – 20 years. Further, the city of Minneapolis is expected to grow 11% by the year 2020 to 423,000, up from the 2000 census of 382,618. This is evidenced by the redevelopment of residential housing within the urban core.

With an increasing population comes an increase in the number of park visits. When looking into regional park visitor trends, the numbers are more telling as to the demands that will be placed on the park resources. According to the Metropolitan Council, use of regional parks and trails will increase 9% by the year 2020. This increase is in addition to the almost 10% increase in regional park use from 1995 to 2005 and a 12% increase in regional trail use within this same time period. A survey completed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR) found that nearly 82% of the respondents indicated that outdoor recreation is ‘very important’ or ‘moderately important’ in their lives. Popular trail related activities are walking, biking, jogging or inline skating, and as such, the continuation of the Grand Rounds system will play an important role in this increased demand.

Other regional trends noted by the Metropolitan Council include:

• Current lower than expected use of the regional park system by teens and young adults. Leisure research has shown that recreation habits are formed as children and teenagers. Thus, teens and young adults who do not currently use the regional park system are not expected to utilize the park system as adults.

• Baby boomers will continue to have a large presence in the regional park system, but their needs will change. Currently, the baby boomer generation uses the regional park system at rates higher than their actual percentage of the metropolitan area population. This is expected to continue and as the visitation by people over the age of 60 increases, then the type of recreation needs will change to more of a ‘low impact’ type of use.

• Facilities in regional parks need to meet the needs of the growing ethnically-diverse segments of the population.

• A majority of trail users live within three miles of the trail which suggests that a majority of trail use will be from the surrounding area.
At a more local level the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has gathered a variety of demographic information and research when developing its’ Comprehensive Plan in 2007. From this work, a number of specific trends and needs have been identified.

- The number of households with individuals living alone has increased from 28% in 1960 to 40% in 2000. During this same time period, the number of households with children has declined from 35% to 25%. The city has also become more diverse and home to an increasing number of foreign-born residents.

- Adults, especially baby boomers are staying active longer. Young adults raised on youth athletics are seeking to maintain active lifestyles. In addition, interest in non-traditional and self-directed recreation is rising.

- Trails and environmental programming rank as being very important to residents. Residents commonly request more trails of all types and emphasize the importance of keeping them well-maintained.

As the demand for park and trail use increases, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board understands its role in meeting both local and regional demands. Developing the Grand Rounds Missing Link will add to the regional park and trail system, will link with many of the local trails and will create additional park and open space facilities that are needed within the northeast and southeast communities of Minneapolis.
Operations

7. Rules, regulations or ordinances affecting the site, including estimated operations and maintenance costs, and sources of revenue to operate and maintain recreation facilities and to manage natural resources in the park/trail unit. The operations plan should also indicate how energy to operate and maintain the park unit is being managed and conserved.

The plan should also state how solid waste from park users is recycled and disposed of consistent with applicable laws.

Regional parks and parkways fall under the jurisdiction and ownership of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, an independent board established by the legislature and city charter. The MPRB owns and operates over 6,400 acres of park land and over 50 miles of parkways and trails. All rules, regulations or ordinances adopted by the Park Board will be enforced within the Grand Rounds Missing Link.

The MPRB will be responsible in providing daily routine and long term maintenance and operations of the Missing Link and its associated open spaces. This will include such maintenance as mowing, horticultural/arboreal practices, debris removal, lighting, restroom maintenance and cleaning, etc. Solid waste, such as litter, garbage or trash, will be collected from waste containers on a scheduled basis along the trail and at key locations within the new parkway segment.

With regard to parkway roadway maintenance, the Park Board and the City of Minneapolis entered into a joint services agreement in 1999, whereby city Public Works forces will maintain and improve the parkway roadways and parkway lighting. All other functions of the regional park and parkway operations fall under the maintenance responsibility of the MPRB. At such time that this joint services
agreement is no longer valid, the Park Board will maintain and improve the parkway roadway system, as it does with any regional entity.

The Park Board will inspect the bicycle and pedestrian trails and will provide any long-term maintenance required, such as bituminous overlays, crack-sealing, etc. Trail signage, sweeping or other required maintenance will be provided by the Park Board.

Maintenance costs for the parkway and open space amenities are determined on an annual cost basis. Maintenance of the trails, both pedestrian and bicycle, are anticipated to be $20,000/year which includes mowing, trash removal, sweeping, plowing and routine operations. Maintenance of the parkway roadway is estimated to be approximately $30,000/year. This cost includes plowing, sweeping, striping, sign replacement, pothole patching and annual inspection. Seal-coating of the roadway surface is anticipated to occur every 5 – 10 years at an assumed cost of $50,000.

Bituminous surface is anticipated to have a life cycle of 20 – 25 years. This schedule life cycle includes both the roadway and trail surfaces. At the end of the surface life cycle, the Park Board will rehabilitate the trail and roadway surface.

Expenditures for the operation and maintenance of the Missing Link will come out of the Park Board’s annual operations and maintenance budget with supplementary funding form the Regional Park Operations and Maintenance Grant Program. Revenue generated from parking fees, special events or programs are normally placed in the organization’s general revenue budget.
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