

## DAKOTA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Dakota County Western Service Center – Room L139

14955 Galaxie Avenue

Apple Valley, MN 55124

Thursday, March 27, 2025

7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

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### Agenda

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

**III. Public Comments:**

Anyone wishing to address the Planning Commission on an item not on the agenda may address the Planning Commission at this time (comments are limited to 5 minutes).

**IV. Approval of the Agenda**

**V. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes of Meeting Held on January 23, 2025**

**VI. Release Draft 2050 Vision for Park, Greenway, and Natural Systems - Action**  
(Lil Leatham – Planning, Niki Geisler - Parks)

**VII. Planning Manager Update and County Board Actions**

- Reviewed the Lebanon Hills Regional Park Sustainable Trails Plan
- Authorized joint powers agreements with multiple cities for greenway construction
- Authorized contract to prepare Mississippi River Greenway Long-Range Plan

**VIII. Upcoming Public Meetings – Community Outreach**

CSAH 26 reconstruction	Tuesday, April 1, 4:30pm-6:30pm
Open House	Veterans Memorial Community Center (Room 1)
	Inver Grove Heights
Draft Mississippi River Greenway Natural Resources Management Plan	TBD – June/July
Open House	(pending release for public review)

**IX. Topics for Next Meeting** (Thursday, April 24, 2025 – 7 p.m., Western Service Center, L139)

- Mississippi River Greenway Natural Resource Management Plan

**X. Planning Commissioner Announcements/Updates**

**XI. Adjourn**



## Meeting Minutes: Dakota County Planning Commission Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes-DRAFT

Date: 1/23/2025

Minutes prepared by Liz Hansen

Location: Western Service Center

### Attendance

#### Members Present

- Jerry Rich
- Amy Hunting
- James Guttman
- Tony Nelson
- Kelly Kausel
- Dennis Peine
- Lori Hansen
- Jill Smith
- Lori Hansen
- Paul Nasvik
- Barry Graham
- Ibrahim Abdinasir
- John Wallace
- Steve Shurts

#### Dakota County staff members attending:

- Kurt Chatfield, Planning Manager
- Liz Hansen, Administrative Coordinator
- Tony Wotzka, Parks Greenway Manager
- Niki Geisler, Parks Director
- Jeannine Briol, Construction Engineer

#### Member(s) Absent:

### Meeting Called to Order

- Time: 7:00 p.m.
- By Planning Manager, Kurt Chatfield
- Commissioner Smith arrived at 7:01 p.m.
- Commissioner Peine arrived at 7:05 p.m.

## **Pledge of Allegiance**

- The Planning Commission opened the meeting by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **Election of 2025 Planning Commission Officers**

### **Election of 2025 Planning Commission Chair**

Kurt Chatfield summarized the Planning Commission's bylaws and procedures before the Planning Commission voted on its 2025 officers. He then informed the Planning Commission that the following Planning Commissioner had expressed an interest in the following position: Commissioner Guttman was interested in the Chair position.

Planning Manager Kurt Chatfield began the election of Planning Commission positions by calling for a nomination for the Planning Commission Chair.

Commissioner Graham nominated Commissioner Guttman for the position of Planning Commission Chair. No additional nominations were made.

Vote: unanimously approved

Commissioner Guttman then assumed the duties of Chair for 2025.

### **Election of 2025 Planning Commission Vice-Chair**

Chair Guttman called for nominations for the position of Planning Commission Vice-Chair.

Commissioner Hunting nominated Commissioner Graham for the position of Vice Chair. No additional nominations were made.

Vote: unanimously approved

Commissioner Graham then assumed the duties of Vice-Chair.

### **Election of 2025 Planning Commission Secretary**

Chair Guttman called for nominations for the position of Planning Commission Secretary.

Commissioner Hunting nominated Commissioner Rich. No additional nominations were given.

Vote: unanimously approved

Commissioner Rich then assumed the duties of Secretary.

## Public Comments

- Comments/Notes: No audience member wished to address an item not on the agenda.

## Approval of Agenda

Chair Guttman asked if there were any changes to the agenda.

The Planning Commission advised no changes, additions, or deletions.

**MOTION: Commissioner Shurts moved, seconded by Commissioner Hansen, approving the agenda. Voice vote: Ayes – 14 – Nays – 0 – Unanimously Approved**

## Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (from December 19, 2024)

Chair Guttman asked if there were any changes to the previous meeting's minutes.

The Planning Commission advised no changes, additions, or deletions.

**MOTION: Commissioner Rich moved, seconded by Commissioner Graham, approving the previous meeting's minutes. Voice vote: Ayes – 14 – Nays – 0 Abstain – 0 – Approved**

## Introduction of New Planning Commissioners (Commissioner Guttman)

Chair Jim Guttman officially introduced two new members to the Planning Commission during the meeting. Paul Nasvik has been appointed to represent District 4. The Chair noted that Nasvik is strongly committed to public service and genuinely desires to deepen his understanding of local government processes and operations. Paul is looking forward to collaborating with fellow Planning Commission members.

John Wallace has been appointed to represent District 5. The Chair noted that John brings a wealth of experience to the Planning Commission. A long-time resident of Burnsville, John has been actively engaged in various city initiatives and community projects over the years. His deep understanding of local issues and dedication to public service make him an ideal advocate for the district. John is eager to expand his understanding of government.

## Establishment of 2025 Meeting Dates – Action

Kurt Chatfield proposed meeting dates for 2025.

Chair Guttman entertained a motion to approve the 2025 meeting dates as presented. The Planning Commission voted to approve the 2025 meeting dates.

**MOTION: Commissioner Hunting moved, seconded by Commissioner Graham, approving the 2025 Meeting Dates. Voice vote: Ayes – 14 – Nays – 0 Abstain – 0 – Approved**

## **Planning Commission Administrative Forms – Information**

Administrative Coordinator Liz Hansen spoke about two forms that must be filled out and returned. The two forms are: “Consent to Release Private Data” and “Citizen Advisory Committee Member Statement of Representation.” Every year, Planning Commissioners must fill out the two mandatory forms.

## **2025 Planning Commission Work Plan – Information**

Planning Manager Kurt Chatfield outlined the County Board’s adopted 2025 Planning Commission Workplan.

A Commissioner noted that the County Board is seeking recommendations for each item that is on the Planning Commission’s workplan this year as compared to other years when some of the items only requested review and comment.

A Commissioner noted that the 2025 Planning Commission Workplan is heavily weighted in parks issues this year, and does not have transportation or solid waste plans. *Staff responded that the workplan is heavy in parks and that there are no transportation or solid waste plans underway at this time but there likely will be in the near future as the County prepares to update the County comprehensive plan.*

## **2025 Transportation Improvement Projects – Information (Jeannie Briol, Transportation)**

The Planning Commission received an update on the 2025 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) construction projects. Jeannine Briol, Construction Engineer, presented this topic and responded to questions.

Questions and comments by the Commissioners, along with responses from staff (italics):

Are there any upcoming transportation projects planned for County Road 42 in Burnsville? If so, what specific plans or timelines have been established for this work? *Staff responded that there will likely be projects along CSAH 42 in Burnsville, but they are not scheduled until 2026.*

Does Dakota County collaborate with Metro Transit on any transportation project needs? *Staff confirmed that they do collaborate with Metro Transit.*

Will staff provide future capital updates for multi-year projects? Is there a way to capture the magnitude of these projects in time or dollars? *Staff responded that in future updates, they will add an engineer’s estimate to each project to provide a sense of the overall cost of projects that span multiple years in the County’s CIP.*

## 2025 Park Improvement Projects – Information (Tony Wotzka, Parks)

The Planning Commission received an update on the approved 2025-2029 CIP with a focus on the 2025 proposed projects and 2024 Carryover construction projects. Tony Wotzka, Parks Greenway Manager, and Niki Geisler, Parks Director, presented this topic and responded to questions.

Questions and comments by the Commissioners, along with responses from staff (italics):

How does flooding along the Minnesota River Greenway influence the design of projects? *Staff responded that flooding is a reality along many segments of the County's greenway system. Projects are designed to be resilient and flood risks are assessed seasonally and the trails need to be periodically closed.*

Will the River to River Greenway pass through Valley Park in Mendota Heights? *Staff responded that the greenway does pass through Valley Park and that staff have been working with the City on the proposed modifications to the existing trail alignment and improvements.*

A comment was made that the County should update its maps to show that the trail on the south side of Cliff Road has been completed with the highway project and that this segment of trail is part of the adopted Central Greenway Connectivity Study that provides a ring route that will eventually connect greenway trails around Lebanon Hills Regional Park. *Staff responded that the maps should be updated to show this segment of completed trail.*

A Commissioner inquired about the status of the Lebanon Hills Sustainable Trails Study. Will there be an opportunity for the public to review and comment on the recommendations? *Staff responded that there will be an upcoming public engagement process. Staff will hold public engagement events and some of those events will occur concurrent with other park events and activities.*

A question was raised about how County Park's natural resource staff are engaged in projects that are led by consultants. Some concerns were expressed that consultants may not be incorporating the recommendations of natural resource staff into their projects. *Niki Geiser, Parks Director, responded that the project in question is still in the design phase and that natural resource issues and recommendations will be thoroughly vetted and addressed.*

Are staff able to provide the Planning Commission with an update on the Spring Lake Park bison reintroduction project? *Staff responded that they will be able to provide an update at a future meeting that can be informed by the bison specialist staff in Parks.*

There was an inquiry about why gates have been installed on Pine Bend Trail at Spring Lake Park Reserve. *Staff responded that Nininger Township added the gates in response to the increased traffic on Pine Bend Trail associated with increased park use. Staff are still able to access the bison handling facility through the gates, but the public will no longer be able to make a through movement along Pine Bend Trail.*

A comment was made that this year's version of the CIP does a better job at showing the County's scheduled natural resource projects and expenditures for 2025. *Staff was appreciative of the comment and stated that an effort was made to make the CIP more clear. Staff also provided a brief update on the new additions of a plant propagation specialist for the greenhouse and other temporary staff in the natural resources program area.*

A question was raised about how successful the County has been at securing external grants and funds. *Staff responded with recent examples of grants and appropriations from the state and at the federal level. Staff noted that the grants are competitive and that Dakota County has done very well in recent years.*

Planning Commission members asked about how they are able to follow some of the projects that they learned about in the staff update. *Staff reported that the 2025 CIP projects usually have a public facing web page and that the web page is the most effective way to receive updates. Staff will also try to provide updates of public meetings and public engagement opportunities at future Planning Commission meetings.*

A comment was made about the purchase of land in the townships as County Park Conservation Areas, and a general discussion was held. *Staff responded that state law currently prevents Dakota County from purchasing land exclusively for conservation but that it allows the purchase of land for conservation if it also includes passive park use. In this case, the land in question is proposed to be along a future County greenway. On other properties, Dakota County may request a legislative change to allow the purchase of land solely for conservation.*

## Planning Manager Update and County Board Actions

Comments/Notes: Kurt Chatfield, Planning Manager, provided the Planning Commission with an update on the following County Board Actions:

- Authorized acquisition of Wicklund Trust property in Waterford Township
- Provided direction on 2050 Park Vision Draft Goals and Potential New Units

## Upcoming Public Meetings – Community Outreach

Crisis and Recover Center Ribbon Cutting	February 3, 2025, 9:00am Dakota County Northern Service Center
Miesville Ravine Park Reserve Improvements Open House	February 6, 2025, 4:30pm-6:30pm Cannon River Lutheran Church, 10960 280 <sup>th</sup> St
CSAH 26 Open House	February 27, 2025 4:30-6:00 pm (west section – 70 <sup>th</sup> Street Reconstruction) 6:00-7:30 pm (east section – 70 <sup>th</sup> Street Improvements) Veterans Memorial Community Center, Room 1

## Topics for next meeting (Thursday, February 27, 2025)

Kurt Chatfield, Planning Manager, provided an overview of next month's meeting topics:

- Draft 2050 Park Vision

## **Planning Commissioner Announcements/Updates:**

A commissioner has announced an opening on the Met Council due to a recent resignation.

## **Adjournment**

Chair Guttman asked for a motion to adjourn.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Shurts moved, seconded by Commissioner Nasvik, to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. **Voice Vote:** Ayes – 14 – Nays – 0 – Unanimously Approved.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., Dakota County Western Service Center, Apple Valley**

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Hansen, Administrative Coordinator



# DAKOTA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

**DATE: 03/27/2025**

**AGENDA ITEM:** 2050 Vision Plan for Dakota County Park, Greenway, and Natural Systems – Recommendation to release plan document for public review (action)

**PREPARED BY:** LIL LEATHAM

## **PURPOSE**

Provide Planning Commission:

1. An opportunity to review and comment on the Draft 2050 Vision Plan for Dakota County Park, Greenway, and Natural Systems

## **BACKGROUND**

Over the past year, the Dakota County Parks Department has been updating the 2030 Parks System Plan with the 2050 Vision Plan. This plan frames work and investment in Dakota County's park, greenway, and natural systems for the next 25 years. The updated vision is *Nature Protected, Community Reflected, All Are Connected*. The vision is supported by goals and strategies. Goals prioritize establishing and managing functioning ecological corridors, providing residents with access to and a sense of belonging in nature-based settings, and a strong organization with appropriate funding to achieve the vision. The vision, goals, and strategies are aspirational. Detailed tactics, along with metrics and targets needed to operationalize the vision, will be identified in updates to the Natural Resource Management System Plan, the Visitor Services Plan, and the Greenway Guidebook, scheduled to begin this year.

The Planning Commission has reviewed and provided feedback on much of the Vision Plan document content over the last year. In May 2024, initial analysis was presented; in September, Phase I Community Engagement as well as the revised vision statement were reviewed; and in December, draft goals as well as strategies for improving access to nature-based recreation were discussed. New content in the Vision Plan document includes strategies supporting the goals, a chapter providing system-wide tools for the park, greenway, and natural systems, and the implementation chapter. Please focus your review on the new content.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Draft 2050 Vision Plan for Dakota County Park, Greenway, and Natural Systems

<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/parks/About/VisionPlan/Documents/2050VisionPlan.pdf>

- B. Appendices

<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/parks/About/VisionPlan/Documents/2050VisionPlanAppendices.pdf>

## **QUESTIONS**

The following questions are intended to help assist in review of the packet materials.

1. *Is the Vision Plan complete and ready for public review?*
2. *What refinements, if any, are needed prior to releasing the plan for public review?*