

**Mississippi River Regional Trail - Spring Lake Park Reserve**  
**Public Open House No. 1 – March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013**  
**Spoken & Written**  
**Comments Summary**

The open house was well attended by the community and in-holding property owners with approximately 65 people in attendance. Information displayed included the Dakota County greenway vision and performance goals, study map, history and background, evaluation criteria, and feasible alignments inside the Dakota County Spring Lake Park Reserve boundary. Most of the comments focused on individual property owner concerns and use of the trail. The following comments are a synopsis of the comments received:

- Private Property Concerns
  - Some participants expressed concern regarding building a trail that bisects two properties in segments 1A and 1B. The preference would be to utilize the small strip of Dakota County park land between the private properties and Pine Bend Trail.
  - Some participants expressed concern with many of the alignment alternatives and what the potential impact would be to farms, forested land, a horse boarding business, and private property.
  - Some participants expressed concern with the County exploring alignment alternatives that could potentially impact private properties without first completing settlements with property owners on the Schaar's Bluff to Hastings Trail segment.
  - Some participants expressed concern with the trail proximity and visibility from the existing private homes in the Spring Lake Park Reserve. Some participants suggested adding a buffer between the trail alignments and the existing properties with the Spring Lake Park Reserve.
  - Some participants expressed concern about the perceived reduction in property values with the alignment of a trail along Hilary Path.
- User Concerns
  - Some participants expressed concern that Dakota County does not allow equestrian riding inside the Spring Lake Park Reserve.
  - Some participants are concerned about the impact a paved trail along the bluff edges would have on those people who enjoy hiking in the natural areas.
  - Some participants feel that if the County wants a bike trail through the park reserve, they should also make accommodations for those who have snowmobiles and four wheelers.
- Environmental Concerns
  - Some participants feel that the upland alignments in segments 1 and 2 have the least environmental impact to the park reserve.
  - Some participants expressed concern for the tree loss and slope impacts due to the construction of a trail through the Spring Lake Park Reserve.
  - Some participants feel that the bike trail should go around the edge of the Park Reserve, not through it, or it will aesthetically and effectively lose its "Reserve" status. These participants feel that a route along Highway 55, and along CR 42 to Schaar's Bluff would be a great mix of country and agricultural scenery that would benefit bike riders.
  - Some participants feel that the existing nature trails at Schaar's Bluff, south of the Gathering Center, are absolutely beautiful as they are now and that it would be extremely disappointing and truly shameful if these natural paths through pine tree stands and bluff lines are paved.
- Master Plan Compatibility Concerns
  - Some participants are concerned with how the concept alignments differ from the alignments that are shown in the Spring Lake Park Master Plan. The options that slice through the center of the preserve

and encroach upon the existing and future nature trails in the park ignore the preservation concepts and design criteria outlined in the Master Plan.

- Support for Trails Comments
  - Some participants love the idea of having a trail from Hastings to St. Paul and they are amazed at how busy the existing trails are along other portions of the Mississippi River Regional Trail.
  - Some participants feel happy to see the expansion of the Mississippi River Regional Trail.
  - Some participants believe that the trail is an amenity and has no issues of theft, vandalism, noise or garbage. No negative effects have been associated with the construction of the trail in Hastings and Nininger Township.
  
- Public Use of Money
  - Some participants stated that public money should address other needs such as schools and poverty versus construction of trails.
  - Some participants feel that only a small number of people use trails. Therefore, it does not justify the expense and negative impacts to private properties.
  
- Miscellaneous Comments
  - Some participants feel that a no trail option should be utilized.
  - Some participants feel that there should have been more opportunities to provide input earlier in the planning process to become more informed about the Mississippi River Regional Trail through Spring Lake Park Reserve.
  - Some participants want more information on costs, environmental impacts, effects on private property to allow for more informed polling. They feel that the polling information should not be utilized for the County Board's consideration.
  - Some participants feel that this meeting was just a formality so that the County could say that they held a public meeting.
  - Some participants feel that a trail option that utilizes the existing road right of way should be considered.
  - Some participants shared with County staff varying alignment possibilities inside the Spring Lake Park Reserve.
  - Some participants expressed that an additional meeting should be scheduled to address some of the details regarding each trail alignment.
  
- Safety Concerns
  - Some participants expressed safety concerns along the trail due to the remoteness of the alignment locations.