

## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan (received January -February, 2015)

Name	Date	Comment
Aeslip, Jimmy		Phone Comment: I'm shaking due to what will happen in Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Don't pave Lebanon Hills Regional Park it's my favorite place. It changed my life. Please don't ruin it. It is where I go to escape. I am begging the County to vote against it.
Aguilar, Andrea	2/22	I am a college student who resides in Apple Valley, I just want to voice my disapproval of the 2015 Lebanon Hills Revised Development Master Plan. I do NOT support this plan. I urge you to vote NO to this plan. As an SES alum, I can attest to the value Lebanon Hills had (and continues to have) on my educational experience. If these proposed changes were to become a reality, Lebanon would lose its ability to truly give students a sense of what nature and the wilderness feel like. Lebanon is perfect as a learning tool because we don't have to travel far for our field experiences. Aspects of this proposed plan such as the 10-foot wide paved asphalt trail, would cause not only irreversible damage to the area but would greatly diminish the educational value of Lebanon. Please take this into consideration when deciding for me, and the many future students in the future. Thank you
Alberty, Ben	2/18	I was just reading an article in the Star Tribune about a proposed plan to alter Lebanon Hills, including paving miles of its trails. Do not alter the park. I'm a resident of St. Paul. I live right along the river and there are miles of paved trails upon which I can run and bike any time I wish right out my front door. However, I choose to drive down to Eagan to run the trails of Lebanon Hills. I do this because it's a perfect retreat from the day to day grind of city life. My trips to Eagan generally also involve a stop at a restaurant for a post-run refuel. It's worth my time and money to drive to Eagan to enjoy the relative wilderness of Lebanon Hills. That will instantly cease if you decide to pave the park's trails and add a bunch of "amenities." There are countless other parks for people who want to hike paved trails, leave Lebanon Hills the way it is.
Allen	2/8	This e-mail is to provide feedback on the new master plan. I like the changes that have been made. There is good balance between maintaining the park and adding accessibility for more people. As a parent of two small kids, the addition of paved trails around the lake and through the park will be great for them to bike on. The plans to increase picnic space and natural trails are also great. Thank you for taking the time to make sure the plan has input from the public.
Allen, Sarah	2/20	I would like to write in about the revised Lebanon Hills development plan. I have never written to the County Board before, so I apologize if this is not in the correct form.  Growing up in Apple Valley, a busy little suburb, I often retreated to nature for long walks. Countless times throughout summer and fall, you would find me and a handful of teens wandering Lebanon Hills. The secluded area was like plunging straight into nature. Within fifteen minutes you could escape the noise of cars and most other people. It's not often you find a park so large that you can get lost. It is truly an escape.  Hearing about plans to invest in the park is always wonderful, but it is hard to picture this little piece of nature being dug up and filled with paved roads, fishing docks and amenities. You can find those things in countless other parks around the county. There are so few raw, natural park reserves left. Please continue to preserve and leave this park and natural as possible while continuing to be accessible to hikers and bikers.
Allison	2/25	My name is Allison a current resident in Apple Valley, Minnesota. I have recently become aware of the new proposition involving Lebanon Hills to add a Greenway Regional Trail System through the current wilderness area. As a University of Minnesota senior in college majoring in Park, Recreation and Leisure studies I have very strong opinions regarding this new proposal. I have recently learned a lot about wilderness areas and their critical role in our world today. They allow for people of all ages to experience what the land naturally consisted of before urban development which can be meaningful in many different ways. Wilderness areas provide a sense of history, emphasis on the importance of natural land, and learning opportunities about Minnesota's natural plant and animal species. Adding a 200-mile greenway system to in the park

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and a 6-mile connector trail through the park will only damage this beautiful area.

It will eliminate natural species along the trail, limiting growth for existing plants and animal populations ultimately straying away from one of the most important aspects to the park. I understand that this proposal is attempting to make the park more accessible to families and people with disabilities, and I also understand that this will only do harm to the beautiful nature. Ultimately, this plan defeats the purpose of ever preserving this area in the first place. The plan may bring in more visitors but why exactly is that so important when there is no profit being made? High traffic in this park can only harm the environment surrounding it. Little damage occurs to the park with the current number of visitors annually, so why risk harming this natural wilderness with more visitor access when it is in great condition to serve it's original purpose for many more decades? Please consider saying no to this new master plan proposal. As a frequent visitor to Lebanon Hills and a current senior in college in the Parks and Recreation field I am extremely disappointed this is even being considered. Thank you.

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Alt, Joanne  
and Richard  
Starr

2/22

We are writing to offer comments on the Revised Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Park. We live in Eagan and spend quite a bit of time in the park in all seasons – mostly hiking and cross country skiing. It is good to see the increased emphasis on natural resource management in the revised plan. But we still think there needs to be a top priority for buckthorn and other invasive species removal in the park. More money should be spent on natural resource management and stewardship than development.

The “connector trail” alignment has been changed to move it farther north in the eastern section of the park, but this trail is still a very bad idea. Clearing and ground preparation for the 10’ wide trail will disturb a large part of the park. Maintenance of the trail (road) will be noisy, intrusive, and chemical laden. Building the trail is a very bad idea. Clearing it of snow and ice in the winter is an even worse idea. The only way to remove ice is with chemicals – and those will soak into and poison the nearby soil. There are many, many other nearby places for people to ride bicycles. We don’t need to accommodate all possible recreational uses in this one park!

The west end of the park has some of our favorite hiking sections. We really enjoy being able to go up and down the hills. The trail map in the updated plan isn’t very clear but it looks like a section of the hiking trail from the parking lot is missing. Please do not remove any of the hiking trails in this section of the park.

Lebanon Hills is a beautiful large wild area in the middle of the metro area. Preserving its natural beauty for the enjoyment of area residents and visitors should be our highest priority, not building hard surface trails and roads.

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Ambrose, Ed

2/23

I have reviewed the revised development plan for Lebanon Hills park and I'm opposed to the plan which I feel significantly alters this wonderful wilderness. Rather I feel resources should be applied to combatting buck thorn.

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Amington,  
Susan

2/18

I want to express my deep disagreement with the Lebanon Hill Master plan to add a 6-mile multi-use end-to-end Connector Trail through the park. Lebanon Hills is one of the few places left near the Cities where a person can get a sense of wilderness - not just recreational greenness. Lebanon Hills is special in its commitment to minimal-impact trails and activities - offering a chance for us to feel that we are entering into nature's world; not our own manicured one. As true wilderness shrinks around us everywhere, and more and more places are turning to paved bike trails and recreational areas. where will we find the quiet surprises of the truly wild? It is this that has become precious and rare. And once lost, we can never return. Let's not let this gift of the wild slip away - rather let's let other parks that have already moved to the recreational outdoors offer the paved multi-use paths. I request that the Planning Department re-consider its plans, and drop the plans for this Connector Trail to the park.

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Amundsen,  
Leigh

2/10

Have lived here 31 years and have enjoyed Lebanon Hills. There are other parks with paved trails, so don't pave a trail through LHRP. Am OK with a paved loop trail around McDonough Lake.

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Amundson, Monte	2/18	I assume you are getting a lot of feedback on the recent plans for Lebanon Hills. I have lived in Eagan since 1992 so consider myself a long-term resident. I have lived in a couple of different homes, but always within 3 miles of Lebanon Hills. The main point I want to get across is that I am NOT in favor of the wide paved trail proposed in Lebanon Hills. We really enjoy the nice natural trails throughout the park. I understand that they will still be there, and perhaps more, but I just really appreciate the pristine setting and don't have any interest in asphalt paved trails in the park area. I cannot say I have reviewed the plans in detail, but I have tried to keep up with what is being proposed. And I am sure you are doing all you can to accommodate more Eagan residents. And I am sure you are doing what you can to apply your best thinking. All that being said, I feel like there is a lot of support to leave wide asphalt trails out of the park and I want to make sure you all are really hearing what the city of Eagan residents are trying to communicate to you. Please focus on keeping the park in it's natural beauty without paved trails through the parkland.
Andersen, Julie	2/25	Please, for the love of god do not approve the development plan for Lebanon Hills. It will degrade the park's sense of nature and the reputation of the county. I will have no respect left for the county commissioners if this plan goes through. It benefits very few and destroys what little true nature is left in the metro. PLEASE do not approve this.
Anderson, Cathy	2/21	Who wants the paving project to go through? Please provide evidence that tax paying residences of Dakota County are for this insane plan which will ruin this bastion of nature in our midst! You cannot!! Who amongst you is set to profit from this plan? My guess is more than one of you!! Shame on you!
Anderson, Doug		Phone Comment: There is enough park development and picnic areas. Please leave it as-is.
Anderson, Kari	2/23	"I do not support this plan. Vote NO to this plan."
Anderson, Lon	2/21	As an avid "natural" trail runner who runs these unique and peaceful trails at Lebanon Hills, sometimes up to 4 times a week, 8 months a year, you people make me sick to my stomach! This is nothing more than a money grab. I would be interested in knowing who's pockets are getting padded by an asphalt company on this planning committee? This is about greed and special interest, how stupid do you think we are? How about doing the right thing by leaving perfection ALONE. How much has this "planning" committee already cost Dakota County tax payers? It's sad and quite frankly disturbing. It's also very disturbing that you will ignore the public outcry and move ahead with your plans for development.
Anonymous		Phone Comment: I am a equestrian that rides at Lebanon Hills Regional Park. When we recreate we also support the area's economy. It is an asset to the community, please keep it this way.
Anonymous		Phone Comment: I don't approve of the Master Plan and don't spoil Lebanon Hills Regional Park with asphalt.
Anonymous		Phone Comment: Shouldn't wheelchair users be using all terrain scooters on existing nature trails.
Anonymous		Phone Comment: The park should remain the way that it is. No need for paving. There are other places for wheelchairs.

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Anonymous	2/18	Please do not change Lebanon Hills. Our family has used it on many occasions. We can't afford to travel "Up North" but it gives us the feeling we are there when we walk it's trails. Please protect it for us.
Anonymous	2/20	I believe there should be minimal development to this area, I always considered that it was protected natural land and would be treasured. Removing buckthorn should be the only plan for this area. Let it be a wild and natural area. Once it is paved over it will be to late. Let it be and do not spend money for development.
Anonymous	2/20	I do not support the proposed development plan. thank you.
Anonymous	2/20	Please keep the wilderness in the park plan. Thanks.
Anonymous	2/21	I do not support the plan to make Lebanon Hills a Greenway. Please protect our parks beautiful, priceless and precious wilderness. Please listen to your constituents and the large community outcry. Please vote NO and do not go forward with this plan.
Anonymous	2/22	Nowhere else in the city can you feel the adventure and solitude of the north woods, with dirt paths and wilderness. Lebanon Hills combines the ability to exercise and to not feel you are in a controlled environment. It also gives young people the chance to experience all the different flora, fauna and woodlands that usually vanish when people domesticate them. Civilized community takes over and eliminates the adventure of walking through the woods on dirt paths. Leave one park so that young children can experience nature, without having government interfere with the open, natural environment. Lets not spoil or ruin the only natural walking park without modern conveniences of sidewalks, railings and whatever else that would damage the ability to be in a raw, pristine state.
Anonymous	2/23	I use these trails about 3 times per week. I see no reason to pave a trail through them. If you have that much tax payer money available that you cant find better use for, then lower my taxes. Why are you going to ruin a nature preserve with a paved trail that will require grading and widening and basically ruining that part of the preserve? Last year the majority of the trail maps on the trails were not even possible to read because they were so old. You cant spend the money to upkeep the current trails yet you want to put in a paved trail that will require more upkeep? It makes no sense. Leave the trails as they are, offer lower prices at the rental shop for kayaks/canoes, and provide better upkeep to the current trails. Please don't waste my tax dollars ruining a nature preserve.
Anonymous	2/24	I do not support this plan. I vote NO on the Lebanon Hills Plan
Anonymous	2/24	I fully agree that Dakota County should be proposing a visionary park plan that respects Lebanon Hills' unique and valuable sense of wilderness. A plan focused on a large, healthy natural environment — and innovative ways for city residents of all ages and abilities to enjoy and learn about it. There are really no parks like it in the area, which is why I gladly pay to use the horse trails. Friends of mine travel 50-70 miles to use the trails at Lebanon Hills. Paved trails require costly updates, and are used by the same users that have countless paved trails all over the city. Spending lots of money to make this park just like the rest of the parks in the metro area is just a shame! Please listen to the many concerned voices that want to keep Lebanon Hills Park the unique gem that it is!
Anonymous	2/24	Just want it to be known that "I do not support this plan and to please Vote NO to this plan."
Anonymous	2/25	No, no, no,and no! Don't pave through the park! You'll ruin it! The trails should remain the way they are!
Arnickles, Mary		Phone Comment: I am against the Master Plan at Lebanon Hills Regional Park. There is no need for pavement and raising the number of bike riders and noise. The path is a lovely place used by many and currently serves all.

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Arrigoni, Kevin	2/24	Hello my name is Kevin Arrigoni and I am a dakota county resident, I wish to express my opinion to keep Lebanon hills the wild area it was ment to be. There are plenty of other places to ride on paved trails. Lebanon Hills is a great asset to our children and their future children please vote to keep Lebanon wild!
Arvidson-Enney, Lindsay	2/20	I am writing to put my comment in regarding lebanon hills. I vote against the paving of trails in this park. This is the last of all nature trails around the metro. Just down johnny cake road in eagan there is a paved path, perfect for wheel chairs etc. The hills in lebanon would not make an easy route for strollers or wheelchairs to begin with. I feel it is needed to maintain the natural aspect of this trail. The chance to approach wildlife is big here and makes for a fun adventure. The fact that the terrain is not paved is great for exercise as well as a more challenging bike ride. I hope you reconsider the option to pave one of the last full nature retreat we have around here.
Ashfield, David		Phone Comment: I am opposed to development of Lebanon Hills Regional Park and trails.
Audubon Society, MN River Valley Chapter Burnes, Greg Norrgard, Lois	2/23	<p>Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter is re-submitting our comments to the draft Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park, our suggestions and concerns are much like the last letter we submitted, with a few edits.</p> <p>Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter (MRVAC) includes over 1200 members who live along the Minnesota River; Dakota County is part of our chapter area. Our conservation priorities include protecting bird and other wildlife habitats that include forests, grasslands and marsh/wetlands. Lebanon Hills Regional Park (LHRP) is a prime example of all these habitats. We lead many birding field trips in Lebanon Hills throughout the year and have many avid supporters and users of this park in our membership.</p> <p>Lebanon Hills Regional Park is unique within Dakota County and the metro area, this is a fact that we would like to repeatedly stress. Dakota County hasn't preserved any other spaces remotely like it. Nature needs at least one sanctuary devoted to Nature, and presently Dakota County doesn't have any other choices. Through true foresight park staff and county commissioners in the past have understood the importance of this reality – we hope that the present leadership in the county continues to uphold preservation of the ecosystems of the park as the highest priority.</p> <p>One of Audubon’s members has identified 133 species of birds at LHRP. These sightings include rare species such as the Hooded Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Summer Tanager and Yellow-breasted Chat. Other, now more common species, such as the Eastern Bluebird, once in decline, but now with more robust populations due to habitat protection and conservation measures is easily sighted at Lebanon Hills. Of particular concern are bird species such as the Red-shouldered Hawk and the Veery found at Lebanon Hills, but declining due to loss of habitat.</p> <p>Our organizations support the emphasis of the 2001 Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park (LHRP) – a priority for preservation and protection of the ecological values of the park, showing due restraint in the expansion of the “development footprint”. This was a far-reaching and proactive priority for the 2001 Master Plan and should be the baseline for all future park planning and operations. In addition LHRP has been identified in Dakota County Parks Plan as one of “sustainable development”, fitting the mission: To enrich lives by providing high quality recreation and education opportunities <i>in harmony with natural resource preservation and stewardship</i> (emphasis added). We offer the following comments regarding the proposed improvements at LHRP:</p> <p><u><a href="#">Infrastructure &amp; Trails</a></u></p> <p>We are concerned regarding the construction and unnecessary spending that has been proposed for LHRP with an unbalanced and expensive focus on developed trails and infrastructure. Adding and paving trails, buildings and parking lots increases forest fragmentation. Fragmentation is one of the leading causes of songbird habitat impact and songbird population decline. According to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) Forestry, fragmentation has the following impacts:</p>

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- Disrupts animal travel corridors and creates barriers that isolate populations from potential breeding opportunities.
- Following fragmentation, habitat for forest species that favor forest interiors (such as orioles, tanagers, and wood thrushes) is lost and there is greater vulnerability to predators and nest robbers.
- Species that cannot easily disperse, including reptiles and amphibians, are more likely than other species to be harmed by forest fragmentation.
- Smaller remaining forests are more susceptible to invasive species, often resulting in a loss of species diversity.
- With smaller forests, there is an increase in the frequency of conflicts between people and wildlife.
- Scenic views are lost, making the places we choose to live and visit less beautiful.
- By losing forests, we are losing the ability to clean the air and buffer our environment from pollution.

Creating a system of paved trails around any of the lakes will only degrade the quality of the lake by adding a conduit for runoff and add to the erosion problems. Through observation it has been shown that other lakes in the metro area completely encircled by pavement are declining and have major problems with erosion, algae blooms, and sedimentation. This is not the way to protect our lakes (ex: city of Minneapolis lakes, Normandale Lake in Bloomington etc.). These lakes are unsightly, sometimes smelly, and do not provide healthy habitat for waterfowl, or other birds and wildlife.

We urge the Dakota County Parks and Board of Commissioners to carefully evaluate whether paving trails around any of the lakes is prudent. Any work to buffer a lake for water quality health will be undermined extensively with paved trails running the circumference. This just does not work. Take some time to talk with other park boards and city managers, assess the costs and maintenance measures these other local governmental units have had to undertake to try to address problems of erosion and runoff, and review LHRP goals of lake health and water quality before embarking on any hard surface trail around the beautiful and still mostly healthy lake.

Our organization opposes the emphasis on paved trail development, most of which would negatively impact the natural resources throughout this park, we oppose additional and paved trails, parking and buildings for LHRP; these are unnecessary, increase erosion & fragmentation, diminish water quality and are intrusive to the natural resource qualities of this park. Wild places are best kept at the lowest level of development to protect natural resources and habitats.

### Invest in conservation & restoration

We urge the Dakota County Parks Department and Dakota County Board of Commissioners to choose a smaller footprint and smaller/smarter investment that will:

- Preserve and enrich the parks natural environment...improve water quality and restore native habitats. Continue to hold as priority emphasis the ecological values of the park, showing due restraint in any development footprint. This is truly the outstanding feature of LHRP and the reason so many people cherish and support it.
  - Remove invasive species. We urge a greater focus on buckthorn removal, in many places throughout the draft plan the impacts of buckthorn establishment to the quality habitats within the park is well laid out. "Invasive species degrade ecosystems and prevent regeneration of native red oaks, the park's dominant native tree. As oaks decline, buckthorn and other species will dominate. Buckthorn is well-established and is the major threat." (Draft plan page vii). Addressing this and other invasive species problems should be a top priority. Also of note, it is human caused disturbance and fragmentation that creates the conduits for invasive species encroachment – more trails will lead to more problems.
  - Actively engage in habitat restoration. Restore cropland, remnant oak savanna, prairie, wetland and forest. Manage savannas and
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prairies that have already been restored.

- Repair existing shelters, benches and bridges where appropriate and will not contribute to more fragmentation or disturbance, while connecting to the Dakota County Park System Plan: *Great Places, Connected Places, Protected Places* through a selective greenway connection to, not through, the park while emphasizing the “*Protected Places*” within this particular regional park as a top priorities.
- Promote a park which offers a genuine sense of wilderness and tranquility and passive modes of recreation for enjoyment...right here in the heart of suburban sprawl. This will offer a much more varied and experiential experience to visitors, while also providing much needed habitat to wildlife – a feature found few other places within the metro area.

### Park management and oversight

Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter supports the creation of a citizen-based oversight body to steward the future vision and operations for the development, use and maintenance of the park. All around us green spaces, our birds and other wildlife habitats, are being encroached upon by our growing populations and subsequent development. There are fewer and fewer places we can go to escape the noise and disturbance, unnatural hard packed surfaces, and sights and sounds of the city – Lebanon Hills is one of the few gems where this solace can still be found for our residents. Lebanon Hills should remain a unique destination park with minimal development and a wealth of natural resources for all to enjoy! We encourage Dakota County to consider this model for other and future parks. Please keep Lebanon Hills Regional Park “forever wild”.

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Austin, Sue

Phone Comment: Pavement on 3 sides of parks is extreme and I don't support the plan

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Bahn, Judy 2/23

I do not support the plan for the Connector Trail. Keep Lebanon Hills Forever Wild! That is a wonderful concept; you should be proud of it. There are many places we can go to experience playgrounds. Not many places give people the opportunity to really "get away from it all." The paved trail through the park as proposed is not necessary. The bike commuter link should be built in the future, when Cliff Road is rebuilt. It is a safety issue to have people biking mingling with those pushing strollers and young children who sometimes dart about aimlessly. I suggest just a small paved trail around Holland Lake. That land is fairly level, suited for those with disabilities. Perhaps, at Holland Lake, there could be "no biking" and "no dogs" restrictions as at Wood Lake Nature Center in Richfield.

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Bainbridge, Matt 2/21

Can you imagine a proposal to bulldoze and pave a trail through the Boundary Waters Canoe Area? I'm sure there are those who would love it so they could race though that pristine wilderness. Fortunately, those entrusted with its preservation understand that Wild is Wild only if you keep it Wild. It is carefully managed to limit human disturbance. I've never had the opportunity to visit but I take great satisfaction in knowing it exists.

We have a gorgeous wild area right here in Dakota County. It was entrusted to us to preserve for future generations. The quintessentially American temptation is to develop and pave every space we have. More is always better: more pavement, more paths, more people, more use. However, for a wild, undeveloped space such as Lebanon Hills Regional Park, its very essence is *less*. There are miles and miles of roads, sidewalks, paths and streets all around this park. Just because some people want another road through the park doesn't mean it should be built. Its very nature will irrevocably be changed. Is that really what you want? What are the compelling reasons that demands these changes? First and foremost should be preservation of this wild treasure. Anything that threatens that primary purpose should be rejected. I ask that you reject any bulldozing and trail pavement in the Lebanon Hills Regional Park.

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Baker, Charles and Janice 2/22

I would like to inform you that my husband and I are strongly opposed to the plan to change Lebanon Hills. We are most strongly opposed to the paved path that is being planned. Our family of four are avid users of the park throughout the year, by hiking with our dog, fishing, swimming at Schulz Beach, and cross country skiing. We believe that Lebanon Hills is a unique treasure in the midst of paved suburbia. There are so few areas

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left in the metro that are untouched, beautiful, and tranquil. You can truly escape the sounds, pressures, and stress of everyday life by coming to Lebanon Hills. The wonderful thing is that the park is within our community so we don't have to drive several hours in a car to get to this beautiful park.

We believe that adding the paved path will forever alter Lebanon Hills in a negative way. We urge you to vote no and to continue to investigate other options to the path. Our dollars would be better spent in upkeep of the current facilities in the park and for preservation of resources. Thank you for your time.

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I'm writing to provide my opinion on the revised Lebanon Hills Regional Park plan. The view that Lebanon Hills Regional Park must be subdued and tamed so as to fit in with other greenway spaces completely ignores the uniqueness of our only suburban wilderness experience. The fact that it is wild and does not match the paved-path concept of other parks and spaces is exactly why a vast majority of citizens have spoken out against this ill-conceived plan.

"Something for everyone" is a solid goal when applied to a region's park system in totality. It fails when the politically correct try to apply it to any single park. Something for everyone means that those who seek a bit of wilderness close to home should have it also. This only exists in our special park though. If you ruin it, then the wilderness experience simply will no longer be available here close to our homes.

Baker, Steve 2/5

There are ample paved trails, picnic areas, and play areas within Dakota County parks, city-managed parks, and the adjacent parks of the Three Rivers Park District. What we don't have enough of are pristine wooded natural areas that give the feel of wilderness while being located in the suburbs.

I'm a senior citizen and also ride a bicycle so in some respects I am the mentioned when proposing a 10 foot wide paved freeway through the wilderness. There is nothing wrong with vast connectors of greenway and paved trails as envisioned throughout the county. In general, I love that plan. I don't support your recommendation as it pertains to Lebanon Hills Regional Park though. Leave it alone. I can bike your beautiful greenway right up to the edge of the park... get off my bike.... And this geezer can then take a hike through Dakota County's beautiful Boundary Waters... right here in my backyard.

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Balke, Doug 2/20

I would like the park to remain as it has been for centuries. Do we really need to pave over everything in Eagan? Vote to leave the park as it currently sits.

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Ballard,  
Susanne and  
Pat 2/23

We do not support the revised plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. We have lived near this park for 30 years and are concerned that these proposed changes will forever change this wonderful unique park.

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Barker, Sarah 2/18

I'm a regular user of the Lebanon Hills trails specifically because it's one of the few places I can run a long way on non-paved trails. Please keep it that way.

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Barker, Sarah 2/19

I'm a frequent user of the Lebanon Hills trails specifically because they are unpaved. When I'm there, I feel like I'm out in nature, the wilderness, even though I'm a short 15 minutes from my house. This is very valuable to me, and others I think. Please keep it that way.

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Barry	2/25	<p>I would like to say that I do not support having more development in the park. Specifically I do not support the plan of a new blacktop bikeway going through the park. Resources should be put towards clearing buckthorn and maintaining the natural ecology, particularly the oak trees, in the park. Dakota County has pretty much ignored that since the 2001 master plan. We should maintain Lebanon Hills as a semi-wilderness in the middle of the county that continues to get more built up.</p> <p>The county has been ignoring the opinions of people in the county and beyond, that have been overwhelming against the blacktop bikeway from the start. Also from my knowledge of the citizen panel it was a sham because it was a hand picked panel to get the result that you wanted. You talk about diversity increasing in the county and then put together a panel that was almost all middle aged white men. Some of the people were involved in parks and park planning elsewhere and at least two I believe had a conflict of interest.</p> <p>And I do know the park is not a neighborhood park and it is not in my immediate neighborhood. I'm about 5 miles away. I get very upset when park planners and others suggest it is just people that live right next to the park that don't want the black top. I've met many people in the park from further away that enjoy its natural quality. Unfortunately when I ask them if they know about Dakota County plans for the park they normally don't.</p> <p>If you want more people to come to the park you can advertise it more and do more outreach. I'm a member of Minnesota Rovers that has over 400 members and I'm sure we can arrange for you to come and talk to one of our weekly meetings about the benefits of the park. Our club has been in existence for over 60 years and to my knowledge Dakota County Parks folks haven't ever come to speak to the club.</p>
Bartell, Monica	2/22	<p>I don't normally do this kind of thing, but I'm begging you to reconsider the changes being proposed Lebanon Hills Regional Park. It is one of my favorite places to hike in the Twin Cities area, and I feel the proposed changes will destroy the unique natural beauty and sense of wilderness. While I understand the concept of "inclusiveness" for any and all, it stands to reason that not every green space in the country can be made accessible. There are plenty of other parks that are already accessible, and to do this to Lebanon Hills would be a disservice to all the generations to come. Please reconsider and don't follow through with this ill-conceived and obviously unpopular plan.</p>
Bass, Jason	2/22	<p>I do not support paved trails in park</p>
Bass, Sarah	2/2	<p>I am disappointed at the lack of compromise the planning dept. has shown in the revised 2013 Development Master Plan. It just proves they are not listening nor care about what Dakota County residents and users of Lebanon Hills want for a park in their community. I <u>do not support</u> the plan the planning dept. has presented.</p>
Bauman, Zandra	2/24	<p>DO NOT APPROVE to choose to build through Lebanon Hills and offer the same types of amenities and trails that the park system already has in abundance across the metro area. Please preserve Lebanon Hills Regional Park, in Eagan and Apple Valley, is one of the rare exceptions where visitors can still find a sense of "wilderness" in the metro area. This natural oasis is a valued and beloved complement to the many built-up and built-through regional parks. It is a place where one can still find some sense of nature as being larger than oneself. It caters to minimal-impact forms of recreation such as birding, hiking, trail running, and cross-country skiing that are safely separated from its destination mountain-bike trail system. It is one of the reasons "forever wild" became the Dakota County parks' slogan.</p>
Baumgartner Terry	2/14	<p>Your motto at Lebanon Hills is "Forever Wild" and is stenciled on the paved area just before the trails begin. How can you have a motto like this and then add paved trails in our park? What is "Forever Wild" about pavement? And you stenciled "Forever Wild" on pavement....on pavement. What about Forever Wild on a wooden sign. All us concerned citizens want is one park that is maintained in it's natural state. Just one.</p> <p>You mentioned adding paved trails so people that are handicapped can use them. The trails do not need to be paved, only firm and stable. That's</p>

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		<p>what the American Disabilities Act states and that is what I was told by one of the organization representatives.</p> <p>The cost to maintain the new system has to be expensive. Why introduce another bill to the taxpayers when you are not maintaining this park the way it is now? One of the main bridges looks like a earthquake hit it.If you would listen to what the majority of the citizens of Dakota County are saying, this proposal would be dropped. Listen to the people and leave this one park alone.</p>
Beal, Brent	2/17	I DO NOT support the controversial master plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. This does not make any sense on so many levels. Please use common sense and vote NO!
Belz, Lori	2/19	I enjoy your beautiful park frequently. I am saddened and hope you you reconsider the development plan 2014. Having nature, and undeveloped land is the draw of Lebonon. The DNR ( the MN/DOT's of nature- paving and developing nature) have plenty of handicap accessible areas. A dirt trail is more appealing to the general walking, hiking exploring population- and lower, cheaper maintenance. The DNR is stating that they can't afford to maintain their properties- WELL stop developing them to high maintenance areas. Cn't this money go to something all the people want - a parking lot at the mt bike entrance.
Beneke, Lynn	2/22	<p>Several years ago, my companion and I drove 30 miles to hike the park, knowing little about it. We were blown away by the wilderness experience, with crisscrossing dirt paths, shining lakes and an adventurous natural environment. We appreciate this park so much we continue to drive that 30 miles. We are Boundary Waters enthusiasts, and cherish the solitary moments in our lives. That is what we found at Lebanon Hills.</p> <p>Each Minnesota park is unique in terrain, environment and vibe. Lebanon Hills' cachet is unparalleled for its simplicity. Even though I have a significantly disabled son, I believe there are enough paved trails in our counties for him to satisfy his desire to soak up nature. More paved paths with bikers and runners at Lebanon will diminish the enjoyment for us vagabonds. In the Beatles' words: "Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be. Whisper words of wisdom. Let it be."</p> <p>Note: Jan. 30, 2015, Star Tribune headline: Aging Minnesota trails lead to big maintenance bills. For state trails alone, maintenance is expected to cost \$320 million over the next decade — and legislative funding is routinely falling short of what is needed, according to trail advocates. Counties that rode the building boom starting in the late 1980s are now facing trails that are showing their age. Anoka County plans to spend about \$650,000 to rebuild and resurface trails over the next five years — \$250,000 more than what it spent the previous five years.</p>
Bengtson, Mark	2/5	I love the current state of Lebanon Hills and the fact that it is not paved and feels like a little bit of secluded wilderness in a very populous suburban area. I'm extremely opposed to any further development. I think it is an unnecessary use of tax funds. The area is very pristine and beautiful and there are an abundance of paved trails throughout Dakota County for others to use if they would like to. Please leave this area as is.
Berg, Mary E	2/18	I have lived in Dakota County for the past 30 years. I have skied, hiked, canoed and held picnics at Lebanon Hills Park. It is a natural treasure and should be kept as such. There is plenty of pavement in the Metro area, but we aren't making more undisturbed natural settings. Please vote to keep Lebanon Hills Regional Park a place of beauty.
Bergman, Peter	2/21	I strongly disagree with the idea of building paved paths in Lebanon Hills.
Bergman, Peter	2/21	I vote no for the development of Lebanon Hills.

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Bergquist, John	2/8	<p>I urge you to vote “No” on the Draft Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. The editorial by guest columnist Christie Soderling in the February 6, 2015 <i>Sun Thisweek</i> &lt;<a href="http://sunthisweek.com/2015/02/05/to-be-or-not-to-be-forever-wild/">http://sunthisweek.com/2015/02/05/to-be-or-not-to-be-forever-wild/</a>&gt; effectively makes the key points for rejecting the plan.</p> <p>Lebanon Hills is a very special place – a bit of near-wilderness in our metropolitan area. There, unlike any other place in our immediate vicinity, one can capture the feeling of communing with nature that nourishes the soul. This special place should not be treated as just another urban park – only bigger – with a need for extensive man-made amenities. Intrusive paved trails have no place there. The only things that need to be done are to maintain existing soft-surface trails, e.g. clear fallen trees and fill in washouts after storms, keep footbridges, boardwalks and orientation signs in good repair, and clear the park of invasive plant species that threaten native vegetation. These tasks can be accomplished with a small budget – only a fraction of what would be needed to implement the proposed plan – and much of the work, particularly clearing invasive plants, could be done by volunteer groups who care about the future of the park.</p> <p>If a bicycle trail <i>must</i> be built to link to other trails in the Greenway system, the trail could be routed alongside perimeter roads so as to not disturb the tranquility of the park’s interior.</p>
Bernardy- Broman, Sarah	2/24	<p>My husband and I lived in Eagan for 11 years, having moved there just before our oldest daughter was born. We enjoy fitness and the beauty of getting away from the city by using the Lebanon Hills park reserve to not only embrace our fitness, but our children’s ability to explore in an untouched natural habitat. This is a magical place within the city. Having grown up on a farm in SW MN I never thought the Twin Cities would offer such a beautiful environment for us to enjoy and escape the city life. I thought this only existed in Rural or Northern MN.</p> <p>Please do not touch this natural habitat by putting any sort of paved trail through this park. You would destroy the peace and serenity that we have so grown to love, use, and recommend to other nature and fitness enthusiasts. I know several people who use this park and share the same opinion as I do. Eagan, Apple Valley, and every other city that surrounds us have enough paved trails for use by people of all ages and abilities, so leave it outside this beautifully preserved land. I truly hope you listen to the people. Thank you.</p>
Berry, Adam	2/17	<p>I am writing to express concerns about the proposed future visioning of the Lebanon Hills trail system. I have been a frequent user of the trail systems for the past 20+ years and have enjoyed every minute of time at these parks. Over the years, there have been great improvements and appropriate expansion of the trail systems. However, the current proposals deviate too much from the previous expansion vision and I don't feel is supportive of what Dakota County needs.</p> <p>Please preserve one of the true landmarks in suburban nature in the Twin Cities. I am not in favor of this expansion and will also communicate with the County Board members.</p>
Beyer, Chris	2/18	<p>Don't do it. If you want to improve the park, spend money on invasive species removal, like the forest-killer Buckthorn.</p> <p>Please don't ruin the little wilderness that is left in Lebanon Hills.</p> <p>Don't change the park's master plan; honor it!</p>
Beyer, David and Jackie	2/9	<p>My wife &amp; I (Jackie &amp; David Beyer) live just west of Lebanon Hills a couple of miles - just off Cliff Road in Eagan. Since we moved to Eagan 8 years ago we have fallen in love with the 'wilderness in the city' that is Lebanon Hills. We make frequent trips just to do an hour-long walk to get away from work and the stresses of living in a large metropolitan area. We both grew up on farms - so highly appreciate our natural resources and how peaceful they can be - when you're all alone - in a woods with just trees &amp; birds and small animals around you. Unfortunately, we continue to hear about the 'connector trail' that seems to be approved as a foregone conclusion that appears to be targeted at cutting right through the middle of the park.</p> <p>We would both like to go on record as being strongly opposed to this trail. We've seen sketches of what it would appear to be and are so</p>

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saddened by how intrusive and counter to the basic philosophy of what is Lebanon Hills. The only way we would even come close to supporting this trail is if it were constructed at the very edge of the park - absolutely not through 'the middle' of it. We do not need the 'hustle & bustle' of a 20-30-even 40' flattened bikeway trail - the park needs to keep its natural solitude, its up & down hills, its non-improved trail system that actually causes a person to work just a little bit.

Many other writers have stated this better than I can - the most recent being the excellent Guest Columnist (Christie Soderling) in the Feb. 6 Burnsville-Eagan Sun ThisWeek newspaper. We agree with her sentiments 100%. Please listen to the people who use the park - who are residents of Dakota County - and who appreciate this urban gem of a park - please don't destroy it by making it 'better' against all our wishes

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Billingsley,  
Gail

2/18

Don't pave it! Don't "improve" it! Leave it wild!

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Bleichner,  
Chrystal

2/19

As a citizen of Eagan and a neighbor to Lebanon Hills park I would not like to see the park changed as is currently being proposed. As a graduate of the School of Environmental Studies, I appreciate the fact that I can just go with my family and wander the park. It's important to have places unimpacted by our ever changing technological advancing world. I love that I can trailer my horse to the park with my paid pass and listen to the birds and relax in a way that is impossible almost anywhere else in the twin cities metro area. If you change this park where else will true nature lovers go for silent reverence of its beauty? Please keep Lebanon Hills protected from paving and tree cutting, preserve it the way it is and the way my family loves it.

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Boccia, Sarah

2/23

As a former Girl Scout and someone who recently discovered the joy of trail running, I am in favor of keeping the dirt paths. We have so much pavement already and new developments wiping out nature. We need to protect Lebanon Hills from becoming just an extension of the suburbs. Having rollerbladed through the Hyland trail system in Bloomington (paved) and hiking through Lebanon Hills (dirt), there is a huge difference in the way it feels. Lebanon Hills is a great place to feel "one with nature." Hyland felt very separated from nature and suburban. I really hope we leave this one alone.

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Bock, Adam

2/5

I'd like to express my strong support for a paved trail in the park. It's a large park and there is more than enough room for both paved and dirt trails. The park gets muddy during much of the season which reduces my interest in visiting. A paved trail would allow for better access during these periods. If I understand the current proposal, it's is for 0.5 miles of paved trail excluding the connector trail. This would make for a very quick walk and I'd prefer 2 miles or so of paved trail.

Finally I'd like to voice vigorous support for lighted cross country ski trails. The more, the better. And snow making would be fantastic - especially for winters like this one. Additionally, it would nice if there were skating as well as classic skiing on the lighted sections.

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Bock, Rachel

2/23

I am quite honestly surprised that the development of Lebanon Hills is still a topic of debate in the Dakota County community. Last year, this plan was opposed by an overwhelming majority of citizens who chose to comment. The fact that it is again proposed with very minor changes completely shocks and downright appalls me. Lebanon Hills is perfect the way that it is. It is beautiful, fun, and "forever wild". Paved paths and bike trails should play no roll in this park; there are other parks in Dakota County that provide these features. If this plan is to be passed I can promise that I will have no reason to visit Lebanon Hills. Please, for the second time, reconsider passing this plan. Do not try to fix something that isn't broken.

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Boike, Tim	2/19	<p>It is with great interest that I write this email and express to you my disappointment with your insistence to spend millions of dollars commercializing a beautiful, natural park reserve. Many have weighed in to you in the past expressing our desire to keep the Lebanon Hills Regional Park Reserve natural without increased development. Why does the county planning commission keep disregarding the people's wishes? The people have spoken up in the past now listen to them. The majority have voted you into your positions now listen to the majority's wishes.</p> <p>The vast majority seek to keep the park in its current and pristine state. I am a strong advocate of leaving the park as is. If it is your interest to make the park accessible to the elderly and / or handicapped, there are alternative ways to accomplish this goal in a far more economical manner. For example, investing in all terrain type of wheel chairs that may be rented would be far cheaper than spending nearly \$14 million. DO NOT DEVELOP LEBANON HILLS REGIONAL PARK!!</p>
Bolin, Kathy	2/24	<p>Retaining the 'wilderness' aspect of Lebanon Hills Regional Park is one of the most foresighted decisions that could be made. It takes courage to go against the grain of development. More and more studies are proving that open space, natural areas, places where one can find solitude away from development have only a positive impact on individual and community mental, physical and spiritual health. There are hundreds of miles of trails for people to use. It takes immense courage and wisdom to say, we need places like Lebanon Hill, large tracts of natural space for wildlife and for the health of society.</p>
Bora, Susan	2/23	<p>I just want to extend my opinion about the plan to pave more of Lebanon Hills. Please Do Not! There are so many parks that are paved for folks to choose from, but so few with the beauty of Lebanon Hills in its natural state.</p>
Boreland, Sue	2/19	<p>Please leave Lebanon Regional Park the way it is. I have enjoyed all that the park has to offer for many years. I have skied, hiked, swam and picnicked. One of my favorite pastimes is to hike the unpaved trails and enjoy nature the way it is, undisturbed by man. This is one of the few places in the cities where we can do that. If you build more paved trails and shelters, you will be taking away from what Lebanon is.</p> <p>I understand the need to make everything accessible to everyone. However there are enough paved trails already. I know this because I had a serious back surgery last summer and could only walk on paved surfaces for several months. I found many areas where I could walk at Lebanon and still enjoy nature.</p> <p>Also, I have had two children attend the school of environmental studies. Lebanon is in their backyard. It is their classroom. The students are learning to nurture and live with the environment. Please let Lebanon continue to be a place where many generations will have that opportunity. I strongly oppose the building in paved trails and any new shelters or buildings. Please leave Lebanon the way it is.</p>
Bork, Randy	2/23	<p>I am writing to express disapproval of the plans to "improve" the park. I live in Lakeville and take many hikes at Lebanon Hills. I drive past many parks to get to the one that retains this unimproved quality. We really don't need to ruin all of the parks with these changes, do we? I say we can retain at least one park for those of us who prefer this type of park.</p>
Boughner, Mary Jo	2/19	<p>Please do not disturb the natural beauty offered by this park. I vote "no" to the new development plan. Thank you.</p>
Bourgoin, Ben	2/24	<p>As a long-time resident of Inver Grove Heights, I have many memories of time spent at Lebanon Hills: hanging out at the beach, graduations parties, kayaking, and hiking. It is because of my personal connection that I am writing to you today.</p> <p>I have no problem with accommodating hiking trails for horse riders as well, but installing and maintaining paved trails is an absolutely atrocious idea! The whole natural, out of the way, wild spirit of the park would be lost. From my understanding the proposal does not clearly specify how</p>

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the project would be sustainably funded; nor does it address how the paved paths project would rank as a priority against, say, the conservation of the park, recreational activities, or other events.

I realize there is a need or desire to make the park more accessible for disabled people, and I respect that. Maybe there are other options to be explored. I would simply like to speak for the trees, the animals, and the people who would rather not see an asphalt path invade the beauty of the forest.

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Bowden,  
Michael 2/19

Although I live in Hennepin County I would like to express my comments and wishes about the proposed restructuring of Lebanon Hills Park. I feel LH is one of the finest parks available to ski and hike in the entire twin city and surrounding area. What makes it so is the size and the fact that it is UNDEVELOPED.

I live next to the Grand Rounds and M'haha Falls in south Mpls. I do like the paved trails for bicycling, but, the entire experience is far from rural or isolated. On weekends there are so many people on the paved paths it borders on dangerous. There is enough paved areas available without adding more. The purpose I see for parks is to enhance a wilderness feeling and experience. Keeping the trails rustic enhances this experience.

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Brace,  
Lynnette 2/24

I do not support even the revised plan to create a wide paved trail through the middle of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Our local wilderness is so precious and once paved, cannot return to a natural wild state. I encourage you to look elsewhere if a wide paved trail is needed within the city of Eagan park system. Thanks for doing what you can to keep Lebanon Hills wild.

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Britten, Ryan 2/23

I grew up within walking distance to the east end of the park and still enjoy this park a few times a year. The true beauty of this urban wilderness is that it doesn't feel like an over developed city park. I remember walking and cross country skiing on the trails and often stopping to watch deer and other animals. That park was my private sanctuary as a child and a place to get away from things. If a high speed bike path comes cutting through the park....needless to say it will ruin the best thing that sets this park apart from the others

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Brooker, Alan 2/19

I am a 25 year resident of Eagan and enjoy using Lebanon Hills Regional Park, especially for cross-country skiing. The park is great in its present undeveloped manner. Please do not further develop the park or put in new paved roads or trails.

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Lebanon Hills project

Brooks, Russ 2/21

- LIKE - More emphasis on natural resource stewardship, increased efforts to remove buckthorn.
  - NO NEW PAVED TRAILS - A shorter paved connector trail moved more toward the edge of the park, designed to be accessible, safe and recreational.
  - LIKE - The proposed Holland Lake paved loop is removed, leaving a single paved loop around McDonough Lake.
  - LIKE - New picnicking at Jensen Lake is scaled back, with a new shelter by the existing shelter and simple tables near the lake.
  - LIKE - The plan implementation cost is reduced by nearly \$3 million.
  - LIKE - Removal of buckthorn
- 

Brown, Hal 2/23

I DO NOT SUPPORT THE CURRENT PLAN FOR LEBANON HILLS REGIONAL PARK FROM THE DAKOTA COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT AND THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS. ARE YOU LISTENING YET?!!!

I do not apologize for the implied tone in the previous paragraph because you need to start listening to the public for once. I am writing to

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express my disappointment in learning that the plan to modify Lebanon Hills Regional Park is still being discussed. It has been over a year since the public informed the planning department and the board of commissioners of our thoughts and feelings regarding their plan. I am disappointed although not surprised that they failed to listen the first time. In my opinion, they have wasted a year of our tax dollars fighting what the public obviously wants- LEAVE LEBANON HILLS ALONE!

It was very obvious to me at one of the first public meetings that the board of commissioners did not care about what concerns the public had about the plan. In addition to that, it was obvious to me that none of the board members had the slightest idea of what made Lebanon Hills so special. At least I found out why that was the case; it was because none of them ever spent any time utilizing what the park has to offer. The only time they had ever been to the park was a mandatory meeting in which they stood in the parking lot and overlooked one of the trailheads. How do I know this? Well, I asked each one and their response was a resounding "no". Hey, I'll give them credit. At least they were honest with me for once. Like the saying goes, "I lie for a living but at least I'm honest about it".

Why is it that we have people deciding what to do with our parks don't have the slightest interest in visiting them for their own enjoyment and recreation? Lebanon Hills is a fantastic gem of a park that is similar to many of the out-state parks when it comes to the natural wilderness and beauty which conveniently happens to be minutes away from residents in Dakota County.

I disagree 100% that paved bicycle roads/hub should be built within the park. By doing so it would disrupt the current system of equine, hiking, and cross-country ski trails. In addition, it is a well-known observational fact that the majority of bicyclists are incredibly disrespectful to others who do not share their passion for biking. I personally have had issues with them on our public roads, sidewalks, and as well as other parks and trails throughout the state.

In addition, I believe that adding bicycle trails that are within audible or visible distance let alone if they intersect with equine trails will be a very dangerous endeavor. Not only will there be concerns about the safety of the footing (pavement and horses don't really work that well together) but you must understand that most horses are not familiar with a bicycle. When a horse comes up to the intersection and a bicyclist comes flying by the horse will do one of 3 things:1) stand there calmly as if nothing is going on (most likely this won't happen) 2) rear up and bolt backwards/sideways into the woods or the other trail risking major injury to itself and its rider as well as other riders/horses nearby. Horses are herd animals, once a horse "spooks" it is common that others will act the same way. 3) The horse may bolt onto the paved trail causing a collision between the horse and bicyclist. I guarantee you that the bicyclist will not fare too well with that impact as the laws of physics are not in his/her favor.

If the above wasn't enough reason to prevent the bicycle path plan for Lebanon Hills, I am appalled that the county is willing to spend upwards of \$15 MILLION of the citizens (yes, the CITIZENS NOT THE GOVERNMENTS) tax dollars on a project. I'm so sickened by how much money is wasted by our government from the Federal level all the way down to the city and school district levels. Why can't our government be expected to run efficiently and within budget like we are in our personal situations?

There are many concerns that have been brought up regarding the proposed plan for Lebanon Hills: safety, maintenance, cost, and environmental to name a few. Don't get me wrong, I would love to have more people enjoy the beauty and tranquility of Lebanon Hills- especially those who are disabled and can only easily get around by wheel chairs however the current plan is not the right one. The only solution that I would be comfortable discussing the details of would be the following:

Choose one of the lakes with nice trailhead facilities (ideally furthest away from the equine trails) and that has the least topographical changes required and incorporate "STAGE 1" of the project around that lake/section ONLY. It would be only a fraction of the cost and it would be a fair "test" to see how it is working and being utilized by the public.

I believe it is foolish to try and change the whole look and feel of the entire park with risking negative environmental changes and taking on such

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an enormous financial burden to the tax payers. Please consider my suggestion & honestly use some common sense when it comes to projects such as this. If you don't have common sense, at least have the common sense and decency to ask somebody that does.

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Brown, Jim  
and Cindy

2/21

I have been a Dakota County and Apple Valley, MN resident since 1978. One of the major draws to move to and live "south of the river" in Dakota County was (and still is) the quality of life that is provided by the pristine county park system. As is, the Lebanon Hills Regional Park is a valuable resource for our county residents and should be kept in the current "natural state". Our house is near the intersection of two major county roads and we hear traffic noise day and night from rumbling trucks, emergency vehicle sirens, excessively loud motorcycles, thumping sub-woofer stereo systems in vehicles that rattle our windows and house, vehicle horns and the list goes on. The ability to visit and use a park system that is natural, quiet and serene is priceless in this age of constant noise pollution. Please take a lesson from the State of MN, which has billions of dollars in transportation infrastructure funding shortfalls. The Governor is proposing a multitude of new taxes just to raise enough money to repair the existing system, plus proposing additional taxes to expand the existing transportation infrastructure. The Lebanon Hills Regional Park proposal may be much smaller in scale, but the parallels in taxing similarities are unmistakable. My wife and I prefer our Lebanon Hills Regional Park as is. We do not want to pay higher taxes that are required for this unneeded investment, nor the additional taxes that will be required for ongoing maintenance and repairs - now and in the future. Please scrap this \$13.7 Million dollar park investment plan.

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Brownlow,  
Colin

2/9

I'm a 20+ year Apple Valley resident and frequent user of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I think the revised master plan is a substantial improvement over the 2013 plan. While I'd love to see all trails in the park remain in semi-natural state, I do recognize that for many residents, a paved connector trail will be a significant improvement for park access and utilization. I'm glad to see the proposed relocation of the paved connector trail to the edge of the park. This should minimize conflict with other park uses and preserve much of the natural "feel" of the park. To the extent the connector trail encourages visitors to stick to the paved trail, it may help with the erosion problem on interior "soft" trails.

Over the last several years, I've noticed a significant deterioration in the visual appeal and diversity of the bio-scape within the park, due largely to buckthorn infestation, and to a lesser extent erosion. I strongly support the recommendation in the plan that buckthorn control be a major emphasis for on-going park management. I very much fear that without massive and aggressive buckthorn removal and then on-going control, the character of the park will soon be irreparably degraded. I would urge the park plan to include volunteer efforts to attach this problem as well as "paid" resources.

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Brumm,  
Catherine

2/24

Lebanon Hills Regional Park is a great place to visit. I have lived in Apple Valley for 35 years and the park has given me and my family so much joy every time we hiked, swam, skied or biked, often multiple times per week choosing our activity according to the season. I am glad the paved path around Holland Lake has been removed from the Master plan. Keeping Holland Lake's water quality high should remain a priority.

A park with something for everyone is true but the goal might not be right to provide everything for everyone. Along with Schulz Beach swimming is available at the Apple Valley and Eagan pools. Local attractions should be considered. Would the proposed swimming sites require too much alteration in order to provide access and imagined ideal swimming? The lakes appear to be mud bottomed, perfect for these natural lakes but not similar to what has been created at Schulz Beach. How would the shoreline change with the addition of sand? Would water quality be affected?

I vary my access points using the Visitor Center, Jensen Lake, Holland Lake and West parking lots when I drive. I live on Galaxie Avenue and when walking I enter the West Park at the Galaxie Avenue entry point. I wish the hiking trails would have a higher priority in the Master Plan in the West Park. The trail erosion on the hills over the past 35 years has created dangerous hiking situations due to the gullies and loose rocks. At times bike tracks can be seen causing additional erosion. The hiking trails are my greatest concern in the West Park. I do not think additional trails need to be created for biking before the hiking trails are improved or there may not be adequate space to do so.

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In March of 2013 I saw an ermine in the West Park. Showy Orchis wild flowers bloom along the trail in one area, jewels that must be protected. I no longer see Yellow Lady Slippers.

I do like that the nordic skate ski trail remains in the Master Plan. I feel a skate ski trail is important for the park, it is a great trail.

Not a concern of the master plan but I do not think the West parking lot should be closed every time the bike trails are closed. Many people park and use the hiking trails, they should not have their access blocked.

A walking/biking trail along the road leading to Lebanon Park Visitor Center and Schulz Beach would eliminate dangerous situations I have encountered driving. At times walkers and bikers are in danger when two cars are coming in opposite directions, the beautiful sweeping curves and hills prevent good visual lines.

With current available money don't create amenities that will be expensive to maintain in the future. Keep the park great. Thank you,

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Bruzek, Pat 2/18 My husband and I have lived in Eagan for 31 years and for each of those 31 years we have used Lebanon Hills on a regular basis for long walks in the woods. It's almost primitive setting is a respite from the rush of the growing metro around us. Please don't turn it into a paved and "modernized" urban space. We need the green space and the feel of a wilderness close to home.

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Bruzek, Ron 2/13 I have lived in Eagan and near Lebanon Hills Regional Park for over 30 years and remember when the park was "Wild". It is my opinion that the state of the park now and the pending plans will banish any meaning to the parks theme of "Forever Wild". Looking at an aerial map of the park it brings to mind the Joni Mitchell lyrics "They paved paradise to put up a parking lot". There are too many trails for a "wild" park and the thought of "paved" trails is counterintuitive to "Forever Wild". By definition (Merriam-Webster) wild (of land:) not changed by people: not settled or developed. To many special interest groups are trying to dictate this unique park. I am not naive enough to know that development will happen. Special interest groups and money always conquer. I think Steve Yaeger's comments should be addressed "Where will this funding come from?" or "Will maintenance for this take money away from programming or other discretionary budget items?". Also will maintenance and more importantly future updating/replacement be set aside or just "kicked the can down the road". No new improvements should be built unless adequate funds are set aside for future maintenance and replacement. The Master Plan keeps mentioning improvements for all ages, abilities and ADA-accessible. I am an aging Dakota County citizen and have had to change my recreational life. Things like hunting and climbing Mount McKinley are out of the picture (unless they are made ADA-accessible). This park cannot be everything to everyone. I think it is obvious that the mentioning of the accessibility is more a "check the box" for funding's requirements. If the current plans are implemented, the County will have to change the name to MOA (Mall of America) Regional Park. Let's not "pave paradise".

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Bulson, Cyndy 2/24 I have been a park visitor for over 30 years. As an avid hiker and skier I would like to see the park remain as it is. I enjoy the solitude and wilderness that it brings to Dakota County, leave the natural areas alone, we have so few left.

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Burger, Scott 2/16 I am totally against any plan to pave trails in what is a suburban wilderness area. Firstly, Dakota County has plenty of paved trails, so to say more is needed is ridiculous. Secondly, the expense not only to implement but to maintain the asphalt is folly given the money needed to be put to other priorities, i.e. road maintenance. Finally, Lebanon Hills, in its present state, allows mountain bikes to take full advantage of the trail system. If one really wants to ride the trails on a bicycle, they can buy their own mountain bike and enjoy. It is not the business of Dakota County, i.e. the taxpayers, to spend millions of dollars on the whims of a small minority that wish to ride the wildlife filled trails on a cruiser, hybrid or road bicycle.

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Burke, Kraig, Sherry, Beca and Heather	2/19	Please comment that you are not in favor to the proposed Lebanon Hills Development Plan. Let's maintain the wilderness feeling in this unique park. My family and I are strongly against the proposed park changes, we feel it will destroy the natural wilderness the park is know and enjoyed for. You will no longer have a wonderful retreat in the midst of the Twin Cities, it will become just another park. We do not understand placing such importance on the connecting bike trail. The cost of this endeavor seems so outlandish it is just amazing that there has been so much support for it. Where will the park be when you loose the support of the park patrons the park is now, because when you implement this change you will no longer offer what is ow loved about the park by the patrons. It will be very sad to loose this wonderful park to so called upgrades that will destroy it.
Butala, Mark	2/8	I'd prefer leaving the park "as is". Additional "wild spaces" are not being created. Let's let those that we have remain as they are. New and improved is not always best.
Byrd, Brian	2/23	Hello my name is Brian, I am a resident of Dakota county of 32 years. I grew up walking through Lebanon hills parks and currently walk through often with my dog. We enjoy not having paved trails with bikers yelling on your left like in most urban settings. Lebanon hills is special partly due to what it lacks as much as what it has; not paved with playgrounds everywhere like so many parks. Its actual suburban willderness sets it apart. Leave it how it is please - I would be disappointed to see my tax dollars contribute to denigrating the area I look forward to taking my newborn daughter to soon. Thank you for listening
Caan, David		Phone Comment: Please leave Lebanon Hills Regional Park as it is now which is best. No new development.
Cahow, Scott	2/24	<p>I wanted to take this opportunity to offer my comments to you in regards to the proposed paved trail thru Lebanon Hills. I offer you this opinion as a lifelong cyclist, both on the road and as a mountain biker as well. Although it may seem counter-intuitive my advice to you is simply this: Don't do it.</p> <p>Sometimes as a society we do things with the best of intentions that are wrong, that have permanent and awful consequences. Sometimes agencies, like a County Board, acting on idea that providing convenience and inclusion are what their mission is, do in fact destroy and degrade what they set out to enhance. I am sure you have heard all the arguments against this misguided plan from people who are far more articulate than myself. What I have to offer is this:</p> <p>You will only have a one chance to do the wrong thing, one chance to pave and degrade the essence of the park. One chance to take one of the most unique wild areas left in the region and run a road thru it. One chance to loose forever something unique and precious to us all. Because once you make the wrong choice, cut the trees, bulldoze the hills, fill the valleys, and pave the mess you've created... there will be no turning back. As a cyclist I would hate to see that happen. As a user and lover of the park, I would hate it even more.</p> <p>Sometimes doing the right thing means having the courage and conviction to recognize your first choice was not the right choice. Please demonstrate to the citizens of Dakota County that you are willing to listen to their overwhelming feedback in opposition to the plan, and do the right thing by canceling the planned paved trail. Thank You</p>
Campbell, Laura	2/19	<p>Hello, I will be an Eagan resident for just a few more weeks yet I have come upon the Star Tribune article about development in the Lebanon Parks and greatly resonate with it. I strongly disagree that it would be a good idea to develop any further in the parks. Lebanon is one of the best natural areas left in the area simply because it has been so untouched throughout the years.</p> <p>I am now in my twenties and have so many deep and fond memories of exploring the wilderness of Lebanon Parks absorbing its natural beauty and escaping the city. It is a truly meaningful place to I and so many others in this area. The main reason why it is so adored is because of how natural it has been kept, letting us interact with nature on a deep level. It is a place that brings peace and relaxation to so many people and a</p>

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home for countless animals.

Why do we need anything more? Why can't we respect nature as it is? Why must we feel the need to constantly develop over beautiful things? Does it bring safety? ..Prophet? I'm writing you because I want my voice to be heard for everyone who wants their hikes, runs, and explorations to be kept natural and let us feel that we are amongst nature instead of not concrete, buildings, and even more amenities. Many people are thinking of the impact it would be to have more fun activities or flat ground to walk on..which I only see as only a disturbance to nature. Please consider the impact it could have by leaving things as is. The impact that gives us the amazing feeling we have when we walk into the untouched woods. There's a magic in that feeling..please don't develop over it. Vote NO for this new amenities plan. Keep our parks natural.

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Capra 2/24

I hope that you will sincerely consider not paving a trail through Lebanon Hills. I visit the park 4-5 times a week to walk and run the trails. There is no better place around to feel like your a part of the wilderness.

I understand the park should be available to all people, but those who would use it to bike through could certainly bike to the park and then walk through the park. Over the past few years I have, on several occasions, encountered bikers on the hiking trails. I think once a paved trail is finished you will have a lot of bikers leaving the paved trail and exploring the rest of the park on the hiking trails. Will there be park rangers around to keep the bikers on the paved trails ? I also think that rollerbladers, bikers, walkers and wheelchairs on the same path is a recipe for disaster.

With the cost of having to keep up the paved trail for all seasons and the irreversible damage to the "forever wild " park, I hope the board reverses their decision to pave a trail through the park.

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Carberry, Carol 2/23

I am a 78 year old widow who has lived in Burnsville for 50 years. I have spent many enjoyable hours hiking in Lebanon Hills. Now, unfortunately, my knees, hips and back no longer allow me that pleasure. I do still take advantage of the paved trail at Schulze Lake, the beach and other facilities that are available for me.

I am extremely concerned that people now and in the future will miss the wilderness experience in the park if it is bisected with a huge paved trail. I had my chance to enrich my life in Lebanon Hills. Present and future hikers deserve the same opportunity. To paraphrase Joni Mitchell's song from my generation : Don't it always seem to go That you don't know what you've got Till it's gone They took all the trees Put 'em in a tree museum They paved paradise And put up a parking lot

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Carlson, Dave 2/7

I started working at the nearby Minnesota Zoo in 1979 and quickly discovered what was then Holland-Jensen Park. We used to go over there regularly after work to cross country ski and enjoy the beauty and remoteness of the area. I actually perfected my XC skiing downhill skills on the big twisting downhill run in the north central part of the park. While I now live in Hennepin County, I still try to meet up with friends fairly regularly to cross country ski in the winter and occasionally mountain bike in the west part of the park in the summer.

I did skim through parts of the very comprehensive draft master plan and commend you for it's thorough examination of issues and planning. Here are my comments:

- Maintain its wild character as much as possible, especially in the interior parts of the park where the views and vistas and the shorelines of the lakes should be kept as pristine as possible... Concentrate a lot of the activities and visitor buildings on the perimeter of the park (which mostly you have done) --Keep the integrity of the cross country ski trails, maintaining a nice flow, minimizing crossings of roads and other trails, and kept away from buildings or areas of conflict. Develop plans or ways to keep hikers off the ski trails in the winter. Do pursue some lighted trails and be sure adequate resources are identified for regular trail grooming.
- Also keep the integrity of the mountain bike trails and continue to work with MORC to maintain this wonderful trail system. It looks like the proposed new parking lot and building in the west park will infringe on some of the trails... Is this upgraded parking lot and building

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necessary?

- I am in favor of the paved Connector Trail as long as it does not infringe on the ski trails. It makes sense to connect the park destinations and amenities with a paved trail and encourage biking within the park. However, since it is a 2-way multi-use trail, it should most definitely be 12 feet wide, not 10 feet. The wider trail width better accommodates side-by-side recreational bike riders and allows easier and safer passing or oncoming encounters with inline skaters, folks pushing strollers, wheelchairs, etc. And consider separated pedestrian and bike trails in congested areas.
- In your assessment of bicycle access from outside the park (which should most definitely be encouraged), you should also include on-road bike lanes as well as the off-road bike trails.
- Acquire private property within the park boundaries... don't get caught facing a sudden property sale that would result in development or use detrimental to the park. Similarly, consider adding adjacent parkland (or conservation easements) to act as a buffer.

I know it is very difficult to provide something for everyone but I hope, as your surveys seem to indicate, that keeping the wilderness characteristic of the park and the existing ski and mountain bike trails are very important to many users. Thank you for the opportunity for input and good luck with the planning and management of this wonderful park.

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Carlson,  
Michael

2/18

I am writing not as a citizen of Eagan or Apple Valley who uses Lebanon Hills, but as a resident of Minneapolis who has lots of developed park space not far from my doorstep ready for use year round. With all of this great outdoor space, you might think that I have no need to go anywhere else but I beg to differ. While the parks here may be busy based on the greater density that surrounds them and the services offered in them, that doesn't make them better than what is offered at Lebanon Hills, or rather what is not offered. What is not offered is a hectic pace, triple-wide strollers that refuse to yield to fellow pedestrians, sights and smells that make sure you know you are in a city park. And that is a good thing.

I make a point to visit Lebanon Hills once or twice a month as long as there isn't snow on the ground because I value the escape and do not have the time to leave the metropolitan area as often or for as long as I would like. Your park offers a reprieve for a city dweller, and it is because of this I must say I would be sad if it were to change. I know I am one voice among many, but I urge you to save the pavement and pools for other parks and leave Lebanon Hills the way it is.

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Carlson,  
Pamela

2/16

I would like to voice my opposition to the proposed changes to Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I have been visiting the park and many others in the area all of my life. There are many reasons Lebanon Hills has been called a "gem" of a park. One of the reasons, I believe comes directly from the original mission statement for the park to be "Forever Wild". The report on the park states Lebanon Hills is one of most visited parks in our region. A huge attraction to the park is because of its naturalness and beauty.

I am a cross country skier, hiker, and bicyclist. If you asked me if I would like to bike through the woods or ski at night my initial response would be to say yes. If you would explain to me what that would entail, for example, bulldozing hills and cutting down trees to make wide paths for safe biking, I would weep. When I ski through Lebanon in December in waning light, I hurry to get done before dark. I can watch the natural light in the ski and try to glimpse the owls I hear on nearly every late afternoon ski. A wide, lit trail would not allow this.

The current plan notes the "gaps" with no paved trails for year round walking/biking. (I hiked yesterday for an hour yesterday in 10 degree weather and was not alone.) There are limited areas to "wade". No connectivity to regional greenways. You want to make the park more accessible and appealing to all visitors. Again, I would cite the fact that Lebanon is already one of the most visited parks. "Forever Wild" intended this park to be "cherished as an urban wilderness". The Dakota County Park mission statement says the park is "to enrich lives...in harmony with natural resources, preservation and stewardship". But now you say the vision has changed because people want "more things to

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do". We do not have a "moral obligation" to supply paved trails, bulldoze the topography of the land, or cut down trees to give us "more to do". Once this is done, you cannot go back and put the land back to the way it was. In 10 or 20 years, if people lament having quiet spaces you cannot put the hills back or replace trees. NOT EVERY PARK CAN BE ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE. "Forever Wild" does not mean we have an obligation to offer a place for inline skaters, bikers or strollers. (The BWCA does not consider being everything for everyone. It is cherished for what it is.)

I am pleading with you to consider the wisdom in the original vision and plan for Lebanon Hills:

- 1) Protect undeveloped open space and natural resources.
- 2) Provide opportunities for nature based recreation.
- 3) Maintain the Natural.

One final thought. We have a calling to be stewards of creation. We do this not only for human activity but for all of creation. For trees, plants, animals, and water. If no one visited Lebanon Hills but we had this beautiful ecosystem in our midst, would that be a failure of a park? I don't think so.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. My hope is you will take the resources given to you to make wise choices for the future of all creation.

Carpenter, Alan 2/20	I live in the city of Minneapolis and have been going to Lebanon Hills Park for many years for cross-country skiing and hiking. It is the closest bit of wild land I can reach in a reasonable amount of time. I enjoy getting into the middle of it where I can hear the wind in the trees without a lot of man-made noise. The little pothole lakes and wet spots are peaceful places.  I would prefer not to see more paved trails or other encroaching development at the park. The metro area has many paved trails and many developed parks. It doesn't have many wild places like Lebanon Hills as close in. It would be a shame to lose that. I fear that one paved trail will lead to additional development and soon, bit by bit, Lebanon Hills will be no longer wild. Thanks for your consideration.
Carroll, Doris	Phone Comment: I oppose the Master Plan. There are invasive species destroying the park now. Please dismiss this plan.
Carroll, Mike and Doris 2/24	We do not support the park plan. It will degrade the park even further. The natural resources are already in peril due to the invasive buckthorn and garlic mustard. No one has addressed this issue but will continue to upset the ecosystem with new multi million plans.
Carter, Bertha 2/18	NO! I agree with the editorial in the Trib this a.m. There needs to be as near to wilderness areas as possible as we can let be. Keep your paving, landscaping, beautification hands off & encourage the natural, animal friendly land be there for people to experience. Once it's paved it can't be reclaimed without much expense & you KNOW how the Reps feel about that!
Casey, Mary 2/19	I have lived in Dakota County since 1975 and have loved the park system we have. But the proposed changes on which you will vote in March are very concerning. What happened to the slogan "Forever Wild". There are plenty of places to go to find paved trails and accessible family areas. Please leave the natural beauty of Lebanon Hills Park so we have a place to experience our natural resources rather than developed trails.
Chanslor, Joe 2/21	500,000 visitors last year like it just fine the way it is.....a dozen people on boards that know whats best for us want to change it ?? Tom Egan was quoted as saying there is a disconnect between the public and the board. Ya think ??? it would help us understand why you want to change what isn't broke if you could / would quote the number of complaints / letters / calls you have had asking for a change. If it was 100,000, i'd tend to agree with you.....if it was every one of the 38,000 +- disabled persons estimated to live in Dakota county, i'd consider it.....if it was 7, well.....? Leave it alone.

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Chapdelaine, Brad	2/20	<p>Hello my name is Brad Chapdelaine. I recently heard there were plans of changing Lebanon Hills with some new proposal and I would just like to give my thoughts before you all vote. I have lived in Eagan for 25 years and I love how secluded and away from it all you feel while you are in the park. I personally do not like bigger citys and lots of people around so it is nice to go the park because you almost feel like you're in northern Minnesota. So please do not go through with all of the changes that are proposed, and if you do, maybe revise them to enhance the park based on the way it is now. Thanks for your time,</p>
Chappuis, Mike and Diane	2/19	<p>We are commenting on the proposed plan as presented. We do not support this plan and we implore you reject this idea of impacting the natural beauty and experience of the park.</p> <p>By creating this proposed access, you will be negatively impacting the very core of what the park was set aside for and represents. Nature in its' natural surrounding!</p> <p>If we did not have other resources to allow multi-access enjoyment of nature, then perhaps we might feel differently. However, since this is not the case, we will not support this plan and reiterate our objection.</p>
Chase, Rob	2/24	<p>From what I can see you have not adjusted your plan for Lebanon Hills at all to accommodate the wishes expressed by the citizens panel. This is unacceptable. You are charged with representing your constituents - not just paying lip service to their wishes.</p> <p>I do understand that there are some who like the current plan (not least of which are the companies contracted to do the work) and I appreciate the needs of citizens represented by the ADA. All the other parks in the metro area are ADA friendly. Those who appreciate the unique, irreplaceable nature of Lebanon Hills must be represented too!</p> <p>This is a once in a lifetime decision from which there is no going back. Please DO NOT destroy the last 'wild' area within the metro area by approving the current plan and making it just another park. Thank you for reading this letter.</p>
Chasse Family	2/24	<p>As a long time Dakota County residents, and frequent users of our wonderful Lebanon Hills Regional Park, we are writing to express our deep concerns with the Master Plan dated January 2015. We have read the entire plan.</p> <p>First, we agree that this is a resource that is special and unique, one that we greatly enjoy! There are many things in the Master Plan which we wholeheartedly agree with and would gladly support through volunteering as required in the plan.</p> <p>It is such a valuable and unique resource due to the natural feeling of the park and notably it's lack of pavement. We appreciate the formation of a Citizen Panel, although we have heard mixed reviews as to the "openness" of the Commission the Panel members comments and suggestions, as noted by one of the panelists.</p> <p>Specifically, we would like to see a more detailed population summary indicating which potential park users are not using the park due to a physical restriction. Your number of 17% includes all restricted users, including, we must assume, some users who would not be using the park even if the paved trails are installed (ie mentally challenged, etc.) If you are proposing over \$4,000,000.00 in cost to install the trail, let alone maintain it, the data should be very exact as to what percent of the population would use the park if the paved trails were installed. It would be an incredible waste of our taxes paid to the County if only 4% of the population, for example, would be added to the list of users. On a cost per added-user basis, even at 17%, the paved trails are quite an outrageous expense. Further, the Plan includes a graphic titled, "Regional Parks with 2 Miles or More of Paved Trails". This graphic clearly indicates that there are PLENTY of opportunities for access-challenged users to enjoy area parks.</p> <p>We feel that the addition of a paved trail with drastically, and permanently, change the park as a "wilderness within the county." The construction and mere presence of the trails will forever reduce Lebanon Hills to just another regional park, instead of maintaining its current</p>

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unique quality as an urban-removed outdoor experience. If any paved trails must be added to the East Park, where we personally most frequent, the original 2001 North trail would be the least intrusive way do this.

We are strongly opposed to the County giving any decision making ability or influence to the Metropolitan Council. This is a Dakota County park, and decisions should be made by the County alone.

Beyond the obvious and objectionable offense to the natural feel of the park, the maintenance costs of the paved trails would be a continual burden on County resources. Plowing and salting the paved trail in winter is just one of these expenses. As for intersection with ski trails, the addition of bridges at crossings is ridiculously costly and unnecessary. And if the plan is to keep snow over the paved trail to provide continuous skiing, that is a barrier to the people who the trail is supposedly being built for!

There has been, and continues to be, a strong majority opposition to the addition of paved trails. We count ourselves in this majority and adamantly oppose the addition of paved trails to the park. There are many ways to connect the areas of the park that the plan attempts to connect, including the use of sidewalks and bike lanes outside of the park which already exist. As long time county tax payers and frequent users of the park, we strongly oppose the addition of paved trails through the East Park.

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Chevin,  
Anthony

Phone Comment: I vote opposition against Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan. It is the crown jewel of the metro because it is kept wild with modest access. It is the main reason I moved to Egan. It is a place of relaxation.

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Christopherson,  
Todd

2/23

I want to ask that you please do not develop the park further. Please do not put in paved trails through the park or around the lake. I have lived in Dakota County for 29 years and I use the trails at Lebanon every Saturday for running and snow-shoeing with a group of men in our 50's. One of our members spoke at a recent public meeting (Brad Gluth) and talked about the importance of keeping this park natural for future generations to enjoy as we do. We already have enough paved access to parks nearby - please Keep Lebanon Hills Natural! Thank you for your consideration.

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Churchill,  
Dee

2/20

I am very much against development of a beautiful wooded nature area into a greedy contractor filling his pockets development. We have a lot of houses and store fronts and office buildings standing empty. Lets utilize the already built properties instead of taking away the already dwindling beautiful conections to nature.

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Clark, Nina

2/18

Leave the park the way it is. We have enough of the parks you are talking about making Lebanon into. We do NOT have enough of the true wilderness that Lebanon offers to residents of Dakota County. You want to develop all possible land. We want to keep all possible land as natural as it can stay. The original mission was to leave it alone. Let's stick with what's been working and leave it alone.

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Cocker,  
Robert J.

2/22

"Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you have till it's gone". These words written by Joni Mitchell should provide a caution for you as you consider the future of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I strongly object to the proposed Master Plan and to the process by which it has been updated. I object to paving a trail through the middle of the park, to the cutting down of hills and trees, to the filling of valleys, to the addition of more asphalt, and to the resulting additional maintenance costs. Mr. Nate Reitz- I am not a neighbor of the park and when I read your letter to the editor I was motivated to send this email. I guess I should thank you for the motivation. I actually became angry when I read your letter. I have talked to a number of people about this issue, none of whom are park neighbors and I have yet to find a person who supports this plan and they especially do not like the idea of a paved trail down the middle of the park. I am sure there is a way to be ADA compliant without this paved trail. Listen to the people! They do not want this plan approved. Most sincerely,

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Coffee, Tom	2/24	<p>First, thank you for taking the time to read this email. I recently found out that the public comment period ends tomorrow on the revised draft of the LHRP Master Plan. I felt compelled to write you regarding the plan.</p> <p>I've often been a visitor to Lebanon Hills Regional Park over the past several years. I've had the pleasure of experiencing it throughout the seasons. I've had the enjoyment of hiking and padding there. It is an outstanding gem of a natural area within the Twin Cities.</p> <p>The revised master plan would ruin and degrade this priceless natural area. I urge you to vote no on it, and increase funding to preserve the natural ecology of Lebanon Hills. Please be good stewards of Lebanon Hills for our generation and future generations. Thank you for your consideration.</p>
Combs, Patti	2/18	<p>I do not support the proposed plan. Please vote no. Note I love Lebanon Hills and go there frequently. It's a rare place. Please hold it as close as possible to the original park.</p>
Connelly, Steve	2/24	<p>Why do we need to waste money on something that no one wants? Why do we feel the need to obliterate every last piece of natural surface in the Twin Cities? What is the point? Lebanon Hills is a beautiful park. Let's keep it that way.</p>
Conocchioli, Staci	2/25	<p>To whom it may concern, Lebanon is a place to feel truly in the wild, and not feel the disturbance of industrialization. I love walking the trails and feeling one with nature. Please do not wreck this reserve. Please do not pave the trails. Thank you,</p>
Conrad, Jack Friends of the Eagan Core Greenway	2/25	<p>Thank you for dedicated service to Dakota County. I will keep this short, since Val Jackson and I shared our extended views about the County's Lebanon Hills Plan with the community last weekend in our Op/Ed piece in the Sun-ThisWeek. It represented the views of Friends of the Eagan Core Greenway's Board and active members.</p> <p>In case you didn't have the opportunity to see it, I enclose the link here: <a href="http://sunthisweek.com/2015/02/19/friends-of-the-eagan-core-greenway-oppose-trail-plan/">http://sunthisweek.com/2015/02/19/friends-of-the-eagan-core-greenway-oppose-trail-plan/</a></p> <p>In brief, I think the plan is not well thought out for a number of reasons. Most of these are discussed on the Op/Ed piece. But the reasons include the destruction of the characteristic features of the park; efforts to address ADA requirements which create liability issues with a single mixed use trail; construction of a trail that may duplicate the bike trail surely to be built along side Cliff Road when the road is expanded to four lanes; financial issues stemming from an outrageous expenditure of \$14 million dollars for park development, even if it is envisioned to come from State Legacy Funds or Federal Alternative Transport Funds; and the fact that the plan gives very little thought to future maintenance, the need to remove invasive species, and the added costs of maintaining the plan's new developments. Surely this latter subject would translate to increases in county taxes in the not too distant future.</p> <p>And if all though were not enough, an overwhelming fraction of the voters have already weighed in to express their disapproval of this high price-tag plan that is inconsistent with prior Master Plans and the mission of this precious county park. One never appreciates what one has until it has been compromised.</p> <p>Please listen to your constituents and revamp the plan. The call for prudence is growing. Thank you for your support for preserving Minnesota's great natural environments, especially those close to home.</p>
Cooke, Dan	2/22	<p>I do not support the trail development in Lebanon Hills. Once the trail is in it would take decades to reverse this action. we need wild areas of unbroken size to meet the needs of all. There are lots of other trail and alternatives to breaking up the wild area.</p>
Coon, Lea	2/24	<p>I grew up in Eagan near the trail head at Schulze Lake. Lebanon Hills was where I learned how to run cross country, which may have saved my life. I learned how to run on trails there, rather than streets, which requires more technique, attention, and a different mindset than running on a</p>

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road or track. (It is also much more enjoyable.) Lebanon Hills was, and is, a rare, perfect place to learn the sport. The place has inspired not just me but many others to trail run and explore the outdoors on foot and is one of the only places in the area people can experience the type of freedom long-distance trail running provides. Paving over trails will erase the possibility of this type of experience. Please don't do it. If you absolutely need to, please keep it to a minimum. If you install pavement to improve accessibility, you necessarily destroy the experience of cross country running and hiking, which would be a great loss to the many who have, and could have, benefited from it.

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As a frequent user of Lebanon Hills Forever Wild County Park, the paved trail debacle is very concerning and upsetting to me and thousands of other users of the park. Members of this community and users of the park DO NOT want additional paved trails in Lebanon Hills. Its challenging to come up with the rationale for proceeding with the proposed development plan and increasing paving of the trail system at Lebanon Hills.

Surveys: In my search to understand why persons want to pave the park, over the past year I have asked nearly every person I've met during hundreds of usages (multiple runs, family walks, nature hikes, camping, and skiing over the past year plus) their opinions on the development. I have individually surveyed, at minimum, a hundred individual persons. I'd simply asked: "So, have you heard about the proposed trail changes?" Nearly every person knew of what was being proposed and had strong opinions; nearly every single person (can't even make this up) I asked was strongly opposed to adding a single yard of paved trail to the park.

Why trust my 'scientific' survey I note above? Well unfortunately, I never ran into a person performing surveys on behalf of the County. A person would assume surveying actual park users occurred to substantiate the development of the park. In my hundreds of usages this past year, I didn't run into anyone doing a survey of current users of the park. Seems really interesting no time has been taken to understand what current users want; not knowing current user wants would make it very hard to know or predict what potential new users need (other than simply taking a wild guess and calling it a thought out plan). If zero time is invested to understand current park usage drivers, how a change of this magnitude be justified? Why not just bank on my 'scientific' survey above?

If there isn't appetite for using my survey method above: Please provide concrete survey results justifying the position to support development of the park. Who performed the survey (which independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party), when it was performed, and what logic was used to represent the survey length and number of individuals surveyed? If a survey was not performed, please help me (and many other users) understand how this dramatic of a change could be analyzed and understood without spending any time talking to users of the park. Were the park changes advertised clearly and concisely throughout the park to alert users to the potential development?

Current Infrastructure: Additionally, in my hundreds of trips to the park, I can provide an expansive and exhaustive list of To Do's that haven't even come close to being done (here are a few):

1. Blue Bird boxes (nearly every single one and I'm not joking) non-operational.
2. Buckthorn Infestation with zero proactive removal.
3. Walking bridge (South side of park) having a tough time staying vertical.
4. A-Frame Picnic Shelter with rotting wood floors and holes in roof.
5. Picnic shelter near Holland lake flattened by falling tree Spring 2014 (wasn't rebuilt at all and wasn't cleaned up for weeks).
6. Most picnic shelters in rough shape (need shingles, paint, cleaning of bird feces).
7. It's also funny to hypothesize why numerous large trees lining some of the main trails have been removed. Seems a bit premature...

In all honesty, if a proactive maintenance plan of the maybe \$50,000 of assets noted above cannot be executed or followed, are people really delusional enough to believe maintaining a multi-million dollar trail highway is going to happen?

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Cossetta,  
Frank

2/24

## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Connector Trail Connecting What? Alaska had a Bridge to Nowhere project; is the county really building a 'Bridge' to Nowhere right here in Eagan??? What exactly is this multi-million dollar trail connecting? Why is it needed? Do the benefits and costs outweigh the gains? It's troubling to think none of these basic logic questions have been answered rationally with concrete facts.

Currently, there are thousands of miles of other paved surfaces in the form of sidewalks and roads for bikers to utilize in Eagan. It's interesting to hear there is consideration of paving through the middle of one of the few natural parks in the Twin Cities metro in order to add 7.5 miles of paved trail. All things considered, it is a Forever Wild park. There are plenty of places to bike (on existing infrastructure) other than through the middle of one of the few wild places left in the Twin Cities. It is also hard to imagine this as a connector trail. There is minimal population on either side of the trail, so I am not sure who this trail will be connecting? Individuals are certainly not going to travel to Lebanon Hills to go on a 7.5 mile bike ride.

Collateral Damage: What is the impact to skiers, runners, hikers, equestrians and walkers? As a runner, I will not run on paved trails in the park (I can run on pavement virtually anywhere in the city - no reason to go out of my way to run on pavement). Skiers cannot ski on or cross a paved trail (the sun heats the pavement consequently melts the snow rapidly). As a skier, my skiing days will also be numbered at Lebanon Hills. With the proposed paving of the trails replicating Hyland Park in Bloomington, will snow making machines also be purchased to increase the snow base on the paved portions of the trail? Also, for the majority of the Commission members who haven't been to Hyland (assuming all have not since the majority had not taken more than a car ride through Lebanon Hills), it's a nightmare to deal with due to traffic volume and velocity. Good luck taking a walk or run at Hyland; what a logistical mess of people traveling at wildly different speeds on foot and bike along the multitude of paved trails.

Conclusion: Coming from a frequent user of the park, I find the idea of adding a paved trail system to the park to be non-value added, a waste of money, and simply ridiculous. To be honest, I can't believe this is really something being considered. Not sure why it's wrong to keep once piece of county property in its natural state. Also, we all know this would not be the only paving done to the park. Once the paving starts, it's only a matter of time before many more trails are paved. Seems to me people are trying to meet the wants of a select few by sacrificing many others enjoyment of this space.

The Commission can leave a strong legacy by preserving a gem of a park right here in the Twin Cities metro area, please follow the lead the public wants to see - NO additional paving of trails or development in Lebanon Hills Regional Park.

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Cowan, Lyn	2/18	Please leave Lebanon Hills Park as untouched as possible. No human imposition or major change is necessary. Enough of our reality these days is already "virtual," let us leave the wilderness as wild as we can. Lebanon Hills is unique and must remain so. Just because we can do something, doesn't mean that we should. Re-think, re-consider, re-imagine. Generations to come depend on it.
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Cowles, Rich and Jackie	2/10	Thank you for the opportunity to provide public input. We have been tax-paying residents of Dakota County for 42 years. We value the lifestyle this area affords and have generally been supportive of planning and management efforts. One of the things we value most is our open spaces and the high priority placed on caring for our natural resources, especially Lebanon Hills. LHRP is one of the unique and most attractive parts of living here, and we are grateful to the planners who had such a strong conviction of natural preservation. Our comments relate both to the final plan and its process: We are strongly opposed to the master plan's development vision--particularly, but not limited to, the Connector Trail. The plan clearly places a priority of development over ecology. We are sympathetic to improving disability access, but that could be done without leaving such a giant footprint, permanently altering the park's natural beauty, which is the inevitable outcome of implementing this plan. Secondly, we are concerned about the process in which public input has been handled. In an era of public distrust in government, local government can ill afford to alienate well-meaning citizens who feel invested in their community. Unfortunately, while the board has shown a bit of flexibility in some of the details of the plan, the process has appeared to be one of "going through the motions" in terms of meaningfully
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altering the board's original intent.

In particular, we are disturbed by the response of one of the board members to well-meaning, well-articulated, representative disagreements with the plan. The responses we've been privy to were combative, dismissive and unbecoming of an elected official, who showed no interest in engaging—thereby reinforcing the prevailing view that "public input" is an exercise in futility. If the board has not presented a convincing vision for LHRP to the public, it is not the public's fault.

One of the ways we've considered this area a model community has been its representative and responsive local government. We trust that you will uphold that view and listen to the democratic wisdom of the public voice.

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Craig

Phone Comment: Keep the park as-is and don't build trails that are expensive to maintain.

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I served on the 2001 stakeholder task force. Despite my continued passion and love of the park, unfortunately my work travel schedule did not allow me to even apply to serve on the task force again this time. I am as concerned now as I was back then that the plans for additional physical development are out of balance with the need to take care of what is there and properly manage the ecological health of the park. Lebanon Hills is a rare natural treasure in an urban setting. In its quiet beautiful way it is also working hard to make our community a better place; providing environmental benefits by naturally cleansing our air and water, enticing healthy behaviors from an increasingly unhealthy and overweight population, providing an extended classroom for young and old to learn and explore and delivering mental health benefits to many who need to refresh and recharge by escaping into wilderness. In return for this vast contribution the master plan threatens to slice it down the middle, cut and fill its bones and pave a road through its heart.

Cummings,  
Patricia

2/25

Why would you do this? Because you can? Because other regional parks did it so we should too? Or because the type of funding that is available is for transportation/ bike paths so that's what you have to build, whether it makes sense or not? Because a poorly worded survey asked a small percentage of citizens if they wanted the moon and the stars without balancing what they would lose? Because somebody wants to chase cross country skiers out of the park?

I ask that you let common sense prevail. Its really hard to 'undevelop' something, once its gone its gone. Lebanon Hills is doing its part to make Dakota County a better place. Please don't undermine that. Please use restraint in hardscape development in this urban wilderness treasure, don't take away the unique opportunity of escaping to nature without driving to the boundary waters. Priority should be on restoration and maintenance of the biological diversity of the park, and through thoughtful design decisions bike paths can be added strategically to connect to Eagan's existing bike paths and handicap accessible trails can be constructed around the lake and near the visitor center accommodating that need, and can all be done without slicing through the center and destroying the wilderness experience.

Please do the right thing, say no to the connector trail through its core, make ecological management a priority and let Lebanon Hills continue to do its job making Dakota County a better place. With sincere determination,

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Cummings,  
Krista

2/25

I just wanted to voice my opinion on how much I enjoy Lebanon Hills Park. I have been going to Lebanon Hills for many years now. During the summer and winter months it is the part of my day that I look forward to the most. Hiking and doing all the activities that Lebanon has to offer. The trails give me a sense of being far away from the cities for a short but much needed getaway for the day. Please don't make this park into anything but what it is now.

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Cunningham, Leah	2/20	<p>Ones of primary reasons my husband and I purchased our home in Apple Valley was its proximity to Lebanon Hills Park. During college, I worked at the Dakota County Park system and fell in love with the gem. The level of wilderness Dakota County provides is truly unique in the Twin Cities metro. Friends, who don't live in the area, come to visit and often are wowed by how wild these woods are. The park staff does wonderful work - so thank you!</p> <p>In reviewing the Master Plan, I am deeply saddened and concerned to see the proposed development of a 6.5 mile paved trail. If accessibility is the goal, I point to the ADA dirt trail - that I helped build in the early 2000's - encircling Schulze lake. Why not make another ADA trail rather than another paved trail? Why not invest that money into further restoration or conservation education programs? Lets protect our natural resources.</p> <p>Aldo Leopold wrote these words: "All conservation of wildness is self-defeating, for to cherish we must see and fondle, and when enough have seen and fondled, there is no wilderness left to cherish." Once you have developed nature, it's gone. There is no getting in back as it was. One might think to herself that "it's only 6 and a half miles of pavement". But it's in that slippery slope of thinking where I am most frightened and saddened. Miles and miles add up. Well before you know it, the wilderness is gone and we are left on a asphalt path looking out where the wild things <i>were</i></p>
Daker, Jan	2/18	<p>I feel strongly that the park should remain as it is. With the recent comments from scientists stating that in the next 10-20 yrs huge quantities of animals will become extinct, we would be thinking ahead by keeping one of the few places that nurture local animal species. The flip side are bike paths which will increase use in the short term. Long term, more people will come to one of the few places taking care of our native species. MN is known for its care of wildlife. Let's do this one right.</p>
Dallager, Chris	2/18	<p>There are no places like the expansive trail system offered by Lebanon Hills Regional Park with minimal development to maintain the experience of being in the wilderness so near urban and suburban life. I urge the planning committee to stop plans for development of Lebanon Hills Regional Park to pave trails and make the park like the 100's of parks surrounding it, removing the truly special experience that Lebanon Hills has to offer. I hike at Lebanon every week and would lose that experience I have come to love if paved trails are put into the park.</p>
Damro, Melissa	2/24	<p>I do NOT support paving the trails at Lebanon Hills. It is my sanity to run through there daily Spring, Summer, Winter or Fall. I have never experienced anything like these trails and so close by. I would only move if these trails, UNPATHED were no longer here. My kids also look forward to weekly walks/hikes through these trails. It is a place so near the city, yet you feel so far away from the hustle and bustle of it all. Please, PLEASE, PLEASE DO NOT PAVE these trails!!!! My husband and I donate yearly to Lebanon Hills and would not if these trails become paved.</p>
Damro, Nate	2/24	<p>I don't support paving the trails at Lebanon Hills! My family donates to the park each year to keep it WILD... please make sure it stays this way!</p>
Danneker, Brigid	2/6	<p>I do not approve of the proposed additional paved trails to the park. We have more than enough paved areas in the Twin Cities that people can use to bike or walk on if they want. The thing that this park is best know for is its relatively natural state. It is a piece of heaven in the heart of the Cities. Adding more people and bikes is not going to help that! I love to ride my horse there, and many people do not understand common courtesy when it comes to bikes and how to approach a horse when they are on foot. It just doesn't make for a pleasant experience at times. Please listen to us as taxpayers of Dakota County.</p>

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Danner, Jill	2/20	<p>Please have the strength to turn down the funds to add a bike path through the middle of the park. It is a disaster in terms of the natural habitat of the park and the future finances of the park system. Do not destroy this jewel because you can. Listen to the comments against the bike path. The voices are against it because you can not undue the damage that will be created by such a wasteful use of funds. When I was chair of the St Paul parks Commission we frequently turned down ideas that came to the commission. We even went against the Mayor and refused to allow negative development to the parks. I plead that you will have the determination to protect this jewel in its natural state. If you must do something then be proactive and remove the invasive species in the park. Bike riders would most definitely be an invasive species to the park. Horse rider user of the park since 1978,</p>
Darger, Michael	2/20	<p>Lebanon Hills is a unique place in the Twin Cities metro park system because it is largely undisturbed and undeveloped. As such, it is an amazingly wild and precious jewel among our great regional parks. There needs to be such an oasis from the built environment, an actual preserve that is not penetrated and criss crossed with paved trails, lighting, buildings and the like. We have many, many facilities that have been developed in that fashion throughout the other regional parks. What we don't have - except for Lebanon Hills - is a true nature preserve.</p> <p>I have only been to Lebanon Hills once. My friends from Northeast Minneapolis and I sought it out in order to have a Boundary Waters like experience. We tested our canoes and canoeing skills and marveled at the wilderness right there in Apple Valley and Eagan. We look forward to returning.</p> <p>I am an advocate for biking amenities and for handicapped accessibility. However, I believe there needs to be some places excluded from the built environment. And some of them should be close to home as opposed to in the Arctic and on the Canadian border. Thanks for your consideration of these thoughts as you decide the future of Lebanon Hills.</p>
Davies, Nika	2/14	<p>I am writing to ask you not to support the Lebanon Hills Master Plan. Below is my letter to the Editor where I explain why I think this is a very poor plan. Unintended consequences February 12, 2015 at 8:57 am</p> <p>I am writing to encourage residents of Dakota County reject the Lebanon Hills Master Plan. It is not well designed for people who use wheelchairs and future maintenance could prove costly. The paved paths in the Lebanon Hills Master Plan, if approved as it is currently written, will be a disaster citizens who use wheelchairs, people pushing strollers, and those who visit the park with small children or to walk their dogs. I am basing this statement my frequent use of paved paths through Crosby Farm Regional Park, Schaar's Bluff, and those around Lake Harriet and Lake Nokomis.</p> <p>Like the planned paved path in the Master Plan, Crosby Farm and Schaar's Bluff are multi-use. We have given up walking both in the summer, and much of the spring and fall. Bikers fly around curves (in both directions) without thought of who else may be using the path. I have dragged my dogs out of harm's way numerous times. I have never encountered anyone using a wheelchair or pushing a stroller there, and I can hardly blame them.</p> <p>The plan says the paths will be ADA compliant, but that only refers to the physical design. It does not take into account heavy bike traffic. If you have ever walked around Lake Harriet or Lake Nokomis you know that they have sensibly separated the bikers from the general public. I think the Master Plan should be rewritten to include a real solution that provides safe, ADA compliant access to our parks.</p> <p>My other concern is that there is no money for maintenance in the current budget. I question whether residents of Dakota County will be willing to cut funds from some other county program or raise taxes to fund future maintenance. Please do not support this plan.</p>
Davis, Joanie	2/23	<p>You can't take care of Lebanon Hills park in your budget now, by allowing footpaths to degrade for lack of care, and invasive species to flourish for lack of budget and labor, how will you care for yet more invasives due to ground disruption following major construction, and increased traffic?</p>

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Davis, Logan	2/19	Please dont develop on this park. I grew up running around in it and learning more from it then i ever learned in a classroom. Plus we need to conserve all the wildlife that we can.
Deeg, Mary Ann and Dan	2/26	Our family would like to see less, not more, "development" in the Lebanon Hills park. Less, not more, pavement. Less signs of encroachment and more habitat for nature, native plants, birds and animals. Please put more money on removal of non-native plant species, like buckthorn. We love to walk, snowshoe and ski in the park and love feeling that here, near home, is a place where humans can appreciate quiet stillness, see deer, owls and rare birds, like you are in the northwoods. It is definitely not a city park, like Thompson, or a converted farm park like Spring Lake and Whitetail. Those are nice, but are not wild; they have the human stamp all over them. Lebanon Hills is an extremely rare jewel that we were entrusted to care for by the generation that painstakingly collected the parcels that make up the park today. Do not spoil it for future generations, please.
del Furia, Lisbeth, Richard, Isabella, andGiorgio	2/15	<p>Please be advised that we do not support the plan to pave of trails and other simlar changes to Lebanon Hills Regional Park. We are a family of four, who come to Lebanon Hills every weekend to hike for hours on the nature trails. Our children, aged 8 and 11 are learning valuale lessons about nature. How things grow, the seasons change, the fauna and wildlife, and how we can be respectful and part of nature.</p> <p>Lebanon Hills Regional Park is a beautiful natural space where we can find balance from the urban life. A space that is big enough and undamaged enough to fell completely immersed in nature. The topography and wildness of the trails is exactly what we are seeking. Paving and/or widening the trails through the interior of the park would ruin the park for us - we would be forced to seek out other parks, along with many other current park patrons.</p> <p>It is difficult to understand why such changed would be proposed, much less actually cosidered? The Twincities and the surrounding areas are already full of parks with paved trails, parking lots and facilities. Lebanon Hills Regional Park is beautiful and perfect - please do not allow anyone to change it!</p>
DeSutter, Beth	2/10	Our family enjoys the park just the way it is. The wilderness and wildlife available in this park is unique, don't destroy the habitat.The cost for building and maintaining things like new paved trails is high. If money is available, maintain what we have or put it into programming. Keep nature
DeSutter, Beth	2/22	I do not support this plan. Vote No to this plan. <a href="http://wildlebanonhills.org/">http://wildlebanonhills.org/</a>
Detlefsen, Erik	2/24	I was born and raised in Eagan adjacent to Lebanon Hills, and I have used (and still use) the park my whole life. The park is unique and its natural character should be preserved. If improvements must be made, please do so in a way that primarily preserves the natural character of the park. The current proposal, in my opinion, does not preserve the natural character of the park. Thanks!
Devereaux, Sean	2/25	Please Leave Lebanon the way it is!!! I love this park for mountain biking, by adding paths to the park it destroys what makes it so unique people come to Lebanon for what it DOESN'T have not the other way around.
Dickerson, Judy and Family	2/18	We have lived in Eagan, adjacent to Lebanon Hills Regional Park for 25 years. One and a half years ago, we moved 5 miles south to Apple Valley. We continue to use and love the park. We have ridden our horses, hiked, done photography in all seasons, picnicked and camped with family. WE URGE YOU NOT TO PROCEED WITH THE PLANS TO DEVELOP THE PARK!!! PLEASE PRESERVE THIS BEAUTIFUL, NATURAL PLACE!!!

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		<p>There are so few like it. Most other parks have been developed to a large extent. There are plenty of parks and places that are accessible to all. We say this even though we are 66 and 70 years old, respectively and there will come a time that hiking in the park as it is will be difficult. Once you further develop and change the nature of Lebanon Hills Regional Park, there can be no going back to its natural and former beautiful state. It will be a tragedy if you proceed. PLEASE STOP!!!</p>
Dickerson, Trudy		<p>Phone Comment: I live adjacent to the park and am an avid user. It is a mistake to develop it. Do not go forward with the plan.</p>
Dieter, Robert		<p>Phone Comment: I am not in support of Lebanon Hills Regional Park especially the road proposed in the park. Legacy funding is being used only for development. I am disappointed with the plan.</p>
Discenza, Pete	1/30	<p>I've attempted to read through the 224 page master plan for the area. I'm sure I've missed some important points but letters to the editor from more diligent people direct me to two issues. First, paving the trails to make them ADA compliant. No one would vote to deliberately exclude any users from public property. Nevertheless, if the area is to be kept as natural as possible and minimize pollution (petroleum product runoff), asphalt pavement is contraindicated. Aside from getting the equipment into back areas to do the original work, paving will eventually require continued maintenance beyond the scope of handtools. Having walked Jensen Lake trails, I know that runners and bikers can be heard well before they are seen, rounding a bend. Would this be true if the loop is paved? I have to think they would be quieter and more surprise encounters would occur, particularly from bikes, now able to travel faster on a smooth surface. I can't speak to ADA compliance but surely not all trails have to accommodate wheelchair-bound people, though certainly some should.</p> <p>The second issue, though I can't find it, is the cost of two bridges somewhere in the area. A writer in today's SunWeek mentions a cost of a million dollars (each?). Since I'm not sure what these are to span and what, if anything, they are to replace, I can only note that a million dollars (or two) is real money. Are these necessary in the planned form or might they be built with surplus/replaced telephone poles at some reduced cost? I don't want a bridge to be all-weather, gold plated and deiced since they are unlikely to be used at those times. If they have to be built at all, go rustic and Low tech, please. KISS is generally a good philosophy. Asphalt and concrete can't be maintained by Eagle Scout candidates, looking for a project.</p>
Doughty, Matthew	2/23	<p>I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed build up plan which will reduce the beautiful natural outdoor ambiance of the Lebanon Hills park. As someone who has grown up in Apple Valley and spent the majority of my life in and around the area, I frequent the park because of its connection with nature and undisturbed feel. I am with others in believing that utilizing this location as a hub for many trails and including those associated with the greenway will bring unwanted traffic, pollution and remove the natural beauty of this location. Within Dakota county alone there are numerous other parks and locations that can be used for these types of activities. I encourage you to vote against this proposition and allow the nature, birds, and wild life to remain undisturbed. Thanks you for your time and consideration in valuing my opinion and preference. Should you have questions, feel free to contact me.</p>
Dregni, Jonathan	2/23	<p>Diversity in our parks means differences in access and expectations. We have plenty of parks with paved paths, but very few are as rugged as Lebanon Hills. The hills, woods and lakes are difficult to traverse, yet there are many beautiful vantage points for everyone to enjoy. My family had a large picnic in a shelter in Lebanon Hills, just feet from our cars: there is plenty of access for all, but there remains wildness and that is what really sets this park apart from the rest of the METro area. Please keep the hilly wooded lakes in Lebanon Hills Park free from pavement.</p>

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Drews, Nancy	2/24	<p>I am sending you my comments on what you plan on doing to Lebanon Hills, by putting in paved trails. As you can see from this picture above, taken last week, in Spring Lake Park Reserve, your paved trails destroy land and the wilderness. You bullied us to sell you 2 acres of our property on Spring Lake to put in a 10 ft wide paved trail. You have taken down all of the trees on that 2 acres. You cleared the beautiful woods by 100 + feet just for your 10 ft trail. You claim you will replant new trees. These woods will never be the same. You claim that property owners don't know how to take care of their property and that the county knows better. You state that no one should own private property. You have taken away private property owners rights. No one wants Lebanon Hills to look like this and be ruined also. Leave Lebanon Hills alone. Do not pave trails and tear down the beautiful trees. Would any of you honestly want your back yard to look like this? Please do the right thing for Lebanon Hills. Why ruin a good park?</p>	
Driessen, Dan and Joyce	2/6	<p>We live on the south side the Park by Valleywood Golf Course. We love the natural trails. Knowing there is a big issue with some about the paved connector trail we looked at the proposal and it seems reasonable. Keep it on the perimeter of the park and there is AMPLE room for all of us who don't want to see bikers.....Thanks for listening, We LOVE the park.....</p>	
Drury, Jason	2/20	<p>Lebanon Hill Park is an oasis of wilderness inside of a constantly developing region of the Twin Cities. It's great to see investments to attract businesses and jobs. It's nice to see new homes being built and investments in our schools. Future generations will thanks us for leaving this little clump of woods as a place to escape the pavement and strip malls. Thank you for maintaining excellent parks and facilities.</p>	
Dumke, Beth	2/19	<p>I have been an Apple Valley resident since 2005, and I am an active visitor to Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I recently learned of the new master plan for the park, and I am very concerned about the impact on the natural beauty of the park land. During the spring, summer, and fall months, my husband and I visit Lebanon Hills at least once a week. Our visits are typically to hike for a couple of hours on the trails, but we also occasionally bring dinner with us to have a picnic. We love the time we spend "getting lost" on the trails as we wander in any direction that suits us. One of the benefits to Lebanon Hills is the ability to hike a completely different route each time you visit. We love Lebanon Hills so much that it's where my husband proposed, and where we took the majority of our wedding photos. It would be a loss for the community to destroy the beauty of Lebanon Hills with additional development. There are already many amenities available to park goers. I understand the desire to join Lebanon Hills with the Greenway Regional Trail. I implore the Planning Commission to consider ways of doing this that don't include additional paved pathways through the park. Perhaps a route that goes around the outside of the park or that connects only to the mountain bike trails. Bike parking could be added to allow bikers to safely lock their bikes and enjoy the park on foot. Please don't allow the natural beauty of this amazing park be diminished or worse, destroyed. Please reconsider this development.</p>	
Dunlevy, Jim	2/24	<p>I do not support this plan. I Vote NO. Does my vote count?</p>	

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		<p>please please please do not expand the development in lebanon hills! why??</p> <p>we have many places to play. do we really need more? go to the places that are already developed instead of cutting down more trees and paving paradise!!</p>
E., Susan	2/25	<p>what we are losing are places to hear birds sing. we have so few places left where we can really observe and enjoy nature. so few places left that are quiet and green. do you know that we NEED that too?? and i mean "NEED"!!</p> <p>i am hearing more and more reports on noise and light pollution. i am a teacher and i know there is a connection between all this and the health of our children. (and all living things really) please consider leaving some places for us that NEED to find places to be in nature, so we don't go crazy!! thank you</p>
Eckstein, Ari	2/25	<p>Please do not add buildings, pavement or lights to Lebanon Hills. Preserve the uniqueness of this park by protecting its natural beauty and not allowing further development. "I do not support this plan. Vote NO to this plan." Thank you,</p>
Edelman, Jill	2/20	<p>Please keep Lebanon Hills Regional Park "forever wild" - and please do NOT approve further development. The park is a gem. Please keep it that way. Please vote NO on the proposed development plan.</p>
		<p>I write to give feedback on the proposed development plan for Lebanon Hills. I moved to Eagan in the fall of 2013; one of the reasons I chose Eagan was the presence of Lebanon Hills and the county's plans to further develop a system of greenway trails that connect to other regional and state trails. I am an avid hiker and bicyclist and fully committed to an active lifestyle. I am also a homeowner, a member of my townhouse association's board of directors, and broadly committed to the community's well-being, which to me includes both economic development as well as broad and fair access to natural spaces.</p> <p>I have closely followed the press coverage of the plan and have gone online to read the original and revised LHDP files. I will limit my feedback to a few specific points:</p> <p>1) I am strongly in favor of having a paved connector trail that passes along the edge of Lebanon Hills Park, making it a "hub" for regional bike trail development; and the 10-foot width seems right to me (there needs to be space to pass safely and to handle the joint bike/pedestrian traffic such a trail is likely to generate). I strongly oppose passing this trail through the middle of the park, due to the obvious deleterious effects it will have on wildlife habit and on the ability to experience hiking, skiing, and snowshoeing in the park as passing through a truly natural, undeveloped area. Such opportunities for experiencing nature in this way are rare in the Twin Cities; most regional parks are highly developed, and the character of Lebanon Hills is unique. Is it really the case that it has to be spoiled by passing a paved thoroughfare through the heart of the park? You are all smart enough to know that it is not, and I urge you to make the right decision that maximizes <i>both</i> development goals that generate broad and equitable access <i>and</i> preserves the distinctive nature of the park.</p> <p>2) I am disheartened by the press coverage of the Board's views which has indicated that some Board members are intentionally - and disingenuously - portraying those as concerned about over-development as being hostile to bringing the park up to ADA accessibility standards. Putting a paved thoroughfare through the heart of one of the few natural areas left in the tri-county region is clearly not the only way to ensure ADA-compliant accessibility. Those in favor of no-holds-barred development should be ashamed of themselves for using this divisive tactic; it shows a lack of leadership and a lack of a broad vision of the public good which we ought to be able to expect from our commissioners.</p> <p>Thank you for listening to my input. I appreciate your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.</p>

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Edmond, Scott	2/25	I would like to encourage you all to vote against the proposed plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. While some development is probably appropriate to allow access to elderly and handicap visitors (limited trails around a lake or two), the overall plan is potentially ruinous to the park. Lebanon Hills is a unique asset to the metro area and offers a different experience than other metro parks do. Why make it like the others? Thank you,
Eggenberger, Margaret	2/25	I do not support the revised Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. The current habitat is critical to a number of bird and other species and should not be disrupted with a paved greenway. Should the current park environment be developed further, I would go elsewhere for wildlife observation and nature trails.
Ehret, Gary and Sherry	2/12	Greetings! We have a lovely parks system in Eagan, managed wisely. Finally my husband has retired and we have been using the many extensive trails. However, I DO NOT support the Countys' new direction for Lebanon Hills, for new development.
Eidem, John	2/21	Keep it "Forever Wild"! No paved commuter paths. Control evasive species and erosion. Allocate funds for future maintenance of the park and trails. Get the dogs on leashes. I enjoy the park as I hike 1½ to 2 hours each week year round and also waiting for snow so I can cross country ski. Thanks
Elinson, Jane	2/4	<p>After skimming through the latest plan, it is disappointing to see that the Forever Wild park will not be forever wild-----despite the fact that "71% of the respondents wanted the parks woods, prairie and wetlands to be protected and restored". Instead a paved trail that only 35% of respondents indicated a desire for will run along a housing area of Brittany Estates likely ruining the privacy, quiet, wild life habitat and view of those Eagan residents who live there. Those using the proposed paved trail will not get a view of wildlife but of mowed lawns and homes. In other words they both lose!! The likely necessary grading of the landscape required to make the trail will ruin more than just the 10 foot wide paved trail but extend far on both sides creating more loss of vegetation for the wildlife and privacy for the residents.</p> <p>How can this be the solution? If a connector trail must be made, why wasn't it considered to run on the border of Camp Sacajawea and Lebanon Hills? Is this connector trail occurring due to a real desire for it (if so by whom?) or because someone sometime agreed to have Lebanon Hills be part of the connector trail greenway without considering the wishes of the residents?</p> <p>This is very disappointing and not a plan I support.</p>
Elinson, Keith	2/21	<p>Although I always applaud those that server their community, city, county, state, and country I can only think that in the case of the planning behind the so called improvements to Lebanon Hills park, there is something that the citizens are not being told. Although it has surfaced many times in government and society, I would like to think that our county officials are truly making decisions based upon what is good for the majority and not the few.</p> <p>In this email I could easily just restate all the points that many have made against the paved trail or as in the last few months the name has all of a sudden changed to the "Greenway Connector" but I will not, since it is evident that the board and planning commission is not listening and will eventually go ahead with their own agenda no matter what we say. As you can guess I am totally against the building of a transportation route through Lebanon Hills no matter what you call it, especially a paved one.</p> <p>I do have some new points to make that I have not seen in either the revised plan or the citizens report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If you must appease the special interest groups pushing for this, then take some cues from other trails that are not paved with asphalt, such as the Sparta trail in Wisconsin which has not resorted to the use of asphalt.</li> <li>2. I would like to know why the proposed routing of the west trail was drawn to be so close to the neighborhoods on the north side of the park?</li> </ol>

## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Was the Apple Valley representatives more convincing than those from Eagan?

3. Why do the bicycle special interests wield so much power in the county. Money would be better spent on increasing the parking at the bicycling facility on Johnny Cake Ridge. The facility has proved to be very popular and since there isn't enough parking or when the lot is closed, parking spills over to the streets of the communities across the street. Also there is increased traffic on Johnny Cake that should be addressed.

4. Why is the county planning on spending millions of dollars to build a bridge over McAndrew for the connector trail when there is a perfectly good street light at the corner McAndrew and Johnny Cake Ridge? So if the county builds the bridge and builds the trail to the north, then how are people going to safely cross Johnny Cake Ridge? Is there a plan to build a tunnel? Driving on that road is bad enough with all the traffic going back and forth from Cliff Road to McAndrew.

5. This is not be politically correct to write but I cannot see almost any handicapped people, or elderly, or family with strollers going the length of the proposed paved trail then turning back to return to their homes or cars. So, this just leaves either the trail used by bicyclers or those with motorized chairs. Shorter maintained trails is what is needed not paving.

The majority of the people of the county have said no, so why are you not listening? Maybe it is time to make you listen by our votes in the next election!

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Ellenbecker,  
Barb

2/18

I am sending this message because I need you to know that the proposed draft plan for Lebanon Hill Regional park does not reflect my vision for the future. Know that I do not support this draft and want you to vote NO to this plan.  
I strongly oppose the loss of wilderness and environmental damage it will cause.

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Elliott,  
Patrick

2/24

I do not support the revised plan. It does not allocate enough funding to environmental concerns. The paved bike trail is not necessary and would jeopardize the rustic nature of the park. I am not a citizen of Dakota county, but I am a user. This plan would basically destroy the park.

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Ellis, Jesse

I strongly object to the proposed Connector bike trail designed for bike speeds up to 20 mph through Lebanon hills regional park. The park is a prime and rare remaining example of the foresight of regional planners to have a WILD park near the Twin Cities. It should remain so. The connector link will compromise that value only to duplicate resources elsewhere in the park system. As a birder and regional user who brings my family to Lebanon Hills on a regular basis, I really hope you will think again about this proposed path.

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Elnes, Rick

2/18

There are numerous parks within the metropolitan area that offer several amenities to the visitors. Lebanon Hills is the only place where I feel that I am escaping the trappings of the city and having the opportunity to enjoy the tranquillity provided by the natural setting. There are numerous parks closer to my home, however, the trip to Lebanon Hills is time well spent. Please consider the diversity that Lebanon Hills offers and embrace it rather than trying to improve upon what nature has perfected.

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Engdahl,  
Rebecca

2/25

Despite the fact I have never even lived within a 10 mile radius of this lovely park, it has continued to bring me back, and over the years has become one of my favorite parks in Minnesota. The current proposal for Lebanon Hills is highly unacceptable and will utterly DESTROY this beautiful and valuable park. Maryann Passe of the Star Tribune hit the nail on the head in her article 'Everyone loses if Lebanon Hills plan is approved.' "Dakota County should be proposing a visionary park plan that respects Lebanon Hills' unique and valuable sense of wilderness. A plan focused on a large, healthy natural environment — and innovative ways for city residents of all ages and abilities to enjoy and learn about it. A plan designed to draw visitors and revenue exactly because it offers an escape from the built environment." - Maryann Passe. I urge you to please, PLEASE vote NO when it comes time to make a decision on this matter. I absolutely do NOT support the current plans proposed for Lebanon Hills!

The future of Lebanon Hills would be MUCH improved if these proposed plans were revised with conservation and the Dakota County Park's

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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		slogan of "Forever Wild" in mind. Thank you kindly for your time and your careful consideration of this matter!
Engebretson, Jeff	2/24	<p>I would like to comment on the Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan. My concern is the increased development, specifically the paved trail. I have used the park for hiking and skiing and do not see that a "connector Trail" is a good fit for this park. Three key reasons are cost, change of direction from a natural park, and that the connector concept is flawed. I believe Dakota County is planning to spend more on new infrastructure when they are going to have a harder time supporting the current infrastructure. The Lebanon theme is a natural park, the proposed pace of development will move the park in a direction counter to that. This does not mean I do not like what is there now, I actually think it is a great park with very good mix of facilities, natural and man made.</p> <p>The last concern is thinking this would be a connector trail. But for what purpose? There is already various mapped bike routes using current off road paths or on road shoulders for routes to go in all four directions (NSEW). I have ridden these routes numerous times and have never thought I would like to ride my road bike through the park. Please reconsider a new plan for the Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan.</p>
Engelhardt, Almut	2/9	<p>I am writing today to let you know that I do not support the proposed development plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park and urge the County Board to vote against the Master Plan. The park's natural environment with its minimal development is Eagan's greatest asset and needs to be preserved for generations to come. My family and I enjoy the park as it is and you do not wish for it to change in any way, and certainly do not want \$13.7 million to be spent on expansion of parking lots, buildings and pavement of trails. Thank you for your consideration!</p>
Engelhardt, Rosemarie	2/25	<p>For me as a European, it is particularly special to experience a park that allows me to imagine what nature looked like to immigrants who came 150 years ago as well as Native Americans who lived in the area for much longer than that. To protect this wild stretch of nature in this original state and to allow it to remain untouched for generations to come seems to me to be high priority. With much appreciation for your consideration,</p>
Engelhardt, Volker	2/25	<p>Whenever we arrive in Eagan as visitors from Germany we always particularly look forward to hikes in Lebanon Park with its magnificent Landscape and its "forever wild" flora and fauna. While we do appreciate being able to drive right up to the edge of the forest, we always thoroughly enjoy the fact that we do not have to worry about yielding to cars, bikes or skaters as soon as we enter the trails and that no buildings disturb the perfect vistas in the park.</p> <p>Surely there are excellent reasons for the master plan for Lebanon Hills and we do not presume to judge those from afar. However, we are concerned that the special character of the park and the undisturbed beauty of the landscape, which leave such an impression on anyone, but particularly someone from Europe, might be irrevocably impacted and we hope that this aspect will receive serious consideration. Thank you for your consideration !</p>
Erickson, Kay	2/18	<p>PLEASE Keep it wild. Trails of any kind interrupt birds' habits. Let's drop the so-called "improvements". Mother nature doesn't need improving. Save it for our grandkids to enjoy undeveloped by humans.- <i>We all spend time on both sides of the giving and receiving of compassion. It's how we build a strong community. Let's not leave anyone out. Wes Hopper</i></p>
Essen, Emily		<p>Phone Comment: I read the editorial and highly disapprove of a paved trail in Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I will start a petition if this occurs.</p>
Everhart, James	2/24	<p>Hello, my name is James Everhart a citizen of Apple Valley currently residing in Canada for University. I have recently read some articles focusing on the plans to reconstruct Lebanon Hills regional park in Apple Valley/Eagan. This is what i have to say.</p> <p>Lebanon Hills is a very popular location in the cities and rightly so. My experiences there are some of my favourite. I believe wholeheartedly</p>

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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that it should remain in its current stature. You must understand that this is simply urban sprawl in effect and it shall take its toll on our wonderful park. I ask you to look out of your windows and into your yards, what do you see? fox? deer? Great Horned owls? snapping turtles? do the birds come close or do they flee? in Lebanon hills i have seen all of these animals and more and they do not fear civilization here. the big picture of this is that if urban structures move in the nature will move out. even if some of the structures claim to be low impact, there is still impact. If these plans are carried forth then the park will perish. no more tourists no more campers or RV's. Changing the park will not have the desired effects i promise you.

secondly the School of Environmental Studies at the Minnesota zoo and its students and staff are welcomed guests to the park. It is much a classroom as it is public attraction. One thing students at the school do is they take a day to teach 4th graders from Greenleaf elementary about wilderness and excite them to go out and explore the nature that surrounds the city. If those young children are not taught what true wilderness is then they will have no interest, once again leading the park to ruin.

as a final point and possibly the most obvious, the plans to have a concrete trail for bikes and joggers that would have run straight through the park was overwhelmingly unpopular and voted down. how do you think these new plans will be welcomed with anything less than harsh criticisms?

As the ideas and plans that come from the County Board lose popularity so does the Board itself and much like what is suggested for the park the board can be reconstructed as well. so in short, do not change the park you will lose tourism, money, popularity and the respect of the cities.

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Everling, Nicole	2/23	I'm writing today to express my opposition to the current plans to make trails through Lebanon Hills. I don't think it's truly in the public interest to flatten hills, fill in valleys, and create more budgetary demands by making paved trails that will require upkeep. Not to mention the environmental strain of asphalt and salt runoff into the nearby lakes. Please keep Lebanon Hills "forever wild" by keeping to less invasive practices that protect our local ecosystem
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Ezolt, Margo		Phone Comment: It's important to emphasize the bird life in a wild park. Adding noise with development will affect the birds in the park.
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Fagerstrom, Jill	2/18	As a Rosemount resident, I have often enjoyed Lebanon Hills as a place to run, hike, and ski, and am grateful that we have it when we are so close to the cities. Therefore, I am very concerned about the 2015 draft plan summary and the proposed changes to be made to Lebanon, as I do not feel that these would add anything and would in fact be detrimental. Please vote against this plan.
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Fall, Bruce A.	2/25	I writing in response to the recent master plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park, which I have downloaded and read. I am strongly opposed to this plan, in particular the proposed 10-foot-wide, 6-mile-long paved trail east to west across the park. This will be hugely expensive to build, even more expensive to maintain, and very detrimental to the quality of the park. I am a resident of South Minneapolis, near Lake Hiawatha, and have been for 30 years. During the time that I have lived here I have made many trips (about 12 miles each way) to Lebanon Hills for the purposes of cross-county skiing, hiking, and birding. I have led many birding groups from the University of Minnesota to the park over the years as well. The proposed new trail will be essentially a paved road through the park with a wide right-of-way, cutting across existing trails, grading hills, removing trees, etc. Although allegedly multi-use, the trail is certain to be used primarily by bicyclists (who have a vast amount of trails elsewhere in the metro area) for high-speed travel. I am an avid bicyclist myself, but I see this proposed trail as detrimental to the quality of the park and completely unnecessary. I was chagrined to see the new trails created about five years ago in the park, often right next to existing ones, with the result of further fragmenting and opening up the forest. This new paved trail will be even more detrimental. I do not understand the rationale presented by the planners for this--it is going to be a bicycling freeway. It is a waste of many millions of dollars. Put that money to better use. Thank you for listening.
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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Farmer, Dan	2/18	I want you all to know that I am adamantly opposed to this idea of putting a paved trail in Lebanon Hills! Leave it ALONE! The park is too overdeveloped for me already, as it is. I use Lebanon Hills on a regular basis. I also use Schaar's Bluff routinely and was very dismayed by the addition of the paved bicycle trail that was (and will be) run right through the wooded part of the park, opening the forest up to new sunlight, allowing the buckthorn and garlic mustard to thrive. Park funds would be much better spent in controlling invasive species, or in another generation, we won't have parks as we know them. Please, for me... vote <u>NO ASPHALT</u> .
Fast, Larry and DeAnn	2/23	Here are two more oppositions to the proposal to destroy natural vegetation and habitat to add Asphalt to a park that is better suited as is. We do not need to spend \$14 Million unnecessarily and then add annual maintenance cost on top of that. I could repeat all the creditable arguments against this project as you have already heard. Hopefully you will use common sense in government for a change.
Fedde, Meghan	2/20	I grew up next to an area in which the master plans calls for a paved trail running through the park. This would be a tragedy of the utmost proportions if this were to go through, the area is beautiful and peaceful with a large user group already using the trails as they exist. "Progress" for the sake of progress at the expense of destroying the natural beauty that encompasses Leb and draws so many people to the park would be a tragic conclusion to a "forever wild" area. Please don't ruin this gem. Thanks
Fedde, Mickiel and Betty	1/26	<p>First of all I would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the report from Master Plan Citizen Panel.</p> <p>As background I would like to tell you about new neighbors we met who have been in Eagan two years. We talked about the park and the plan for the Greenway bike freeway through the park. When I told them there was a citizen panel still working on it last fall they were shocked that such an idea so soundly rejected by the public was still being considered.</p> <p>I did attend some of the meetings of the Citizen panel. It was difficult to watch as the format was a spoon-feeding of information to the panel and most discussion by panel members was squelched and of course all opinions from the public were totally squelched. The method is best described by Steve Yaeger, District 13 Representative. "First, meeting agendas were set and dominated by staff and by the County's paid consultants, who have a financial interest in the continued development of Lebanon Hills." You have more extensive comments from Holly Jenkins but the gist of the Citizen Panel was to be an infomercial for pre-planned conclusions. The most common statement made by many of the panel members was that they really did not like the trail ideas but had to make a recommendation for the least worst option as the county commissioners were going to build a trail anyway so they did not want to make a recommendation that would be disregarded. This statement of course undercuts the complete integrity of this commission.</p> <p>This infomercial did cost \$200,000 as I understand it. Both the waste of money and the conclusions that are so far away from public consensus – what the citizens of Dakota County want – is embarrassing to we residents of Dakota County and should be especially embarrassing to Dakota County government. It was clearly an exercise in getting some desired outcome with little regard for the public. The members of this Citizen Panel deserve some recognition for putting up with this abusive process of "infomercialism". The greater public will not support any of the conclusions or findings of this effort as the starting premise is a bad idea and the process was basically dishonest.</p> <p>Going forward I would strongly recommend that the Dakota County start over in both planning method and process. First there was a plan that was a general flop with Dakota County residents – the bulldozed bike Freeway in Lebanon Hills. Next there was a panel methodology to try to Greenwash the flop which was manipulative and dishonest. The Greenway as envisioned is an expensive boondoggle that duplicates trails and destroys parks including the destruction already visited on Dodge Nature Center. Scott County has rejected this unpopular and dumb Greenway trail into Murphy Hanrahan. Residents of Dakota County are doing their best to tell you the same for Lebanon Hills</p>

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Fedde, Mike	2/10	<p>I object to the plan recently published for Lebanon Hills for the following reasons.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. There is no real commitment to stewardship or restoration. Described and funded in vague terms. The Lebanon Hills forest is in a state of rapid decline.</li><li>2. Most of the restoration dollars goes to cleaning up the mess made by bulldozing a high speed bike road into the park.</li><li>3. The park is called Lebanon Hills and the bike road construction entails hill demolition and valley filling. Removing hills to allow people to see Lebanon Hills is poor judgement. Around 40 acres is in a permanently mowed and paved ribbon. That is explicitly in the plan.</li><li>4. The bike road will cause loss of thousands of mature trees.</li><li>5. The user profile of sharing a 20 mph bike road with disabled, families with children, elderly is absurd. All experienced and sensible government entities from City of Minneapolis to City of Apple Valley double track this user profile. This is dangerous to all pedestrian traffic and it shows an immature and childish methodology has been allowed to predominate in the development of the plan. If there is heavy use of the trail it is hazardous and if not heavy use expected then it should not be built in a busy park like Lebanon Hills. The 20 mph bike road design is explicitly in the plan.</li></ol> <p>There are possibly some things in the plan that are good ideas but you really need to start over with a more sensible process.</p>
Felton, Jenny	2/24	<p>Hi, my name is Jennifer and I heard that you are still accepting comments today regarding the park revisions for Lebanon Hills. After reading the article on the matter, I knew I had to send an email in. Lebanon Hills is a park that means a lot to me and my family. We have gone there for years and the "wild" nature aspect of the park is what draws us to it. Not only that, but me and my friends use the park as our place to hike, and what makes this park different from the rest is the natural paths. The natural paths are what make Lebanon Hills unique. As a resident of South St. Paul, the park is the closest place that me and my family and friends have for a taste of that. I sincerely hope you do not add these revisions.</p>
Ferley, Michelle	2/25	<p>I grew up in Eagan and have come to know Lebanon Hills as a very important wilderness destination for many people in the south metro area, Minnesota, and even on a national level. I have seen people and license plates from far and wide at Lebanon Hills. It is a beautiful place to hike, mountain bike, bird watch, and identify native plants of Minnesota. There really aren't very many places left that allow one to feel submerged in the native wilderness of their home region. Please do not implement paved pathways as they would diminish the quality of wilderness in the park. Paved pathways would disturb natural wild life, increase runoff and encourage a faster paced and less aware biking environment. There are truly plenty of parks in the metro area that have paved paths, please keep this one as natural as possible! Thank you, and please consider this comment!!!</p>
Feterl, Katie	2/24	<p>I wanted to express my thoughts and concerns on the proposed changes to Lebanon Hills Park. I am primarily concerned about the paving of trails and the proposed greenway system. I agree that certain areas of the park (such as the pier, beach, a few trails) should be ADA accessible. I also think it's important that the park should be more accessible to people in general, potentially via greenways; it feels silly to me to drive to the park when I live fairly close, but it's currently the safest way to get there.</p> <p>However, what I value in Lebanon and similar parks is the comparative lack of constructed environment. When I go hiking, I don't go to spend more time walking on asphalt. I can get that in my own neighborhood. There are many parks that have mostly paved trails. Lebanon offers something different, and homogenizing the parks would be a shame.</p> <p>People with disabilities in the surrounding area rightly deserve access to outdoor recreation that others enjoy. Perhaps a good solution would be paving a very limited amount of trail in Lebanon, upholding its "wild" reputation, and arranging for better transportation/access to other nearby parks that already have many ADA accessible trails.</p>

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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I recognize the values of greenways in connecting parks, but am strongly against their planned path through Lebanon park. Greenways should provide better access to the park, but not infringe on its character. Surely there is a way for the greenway to skirt the perimeter and have minimal environmental impact while providing better access to the park. If not, I don't think it is worth it.

Please keep Lebanon as "wild" as possible. It is a gem of a park in the metro area. In your decision about the proposed plans, I ask you to strongly consider the value of what sets Lebanon apart from other parks, and how minimal improvements can be made to maintain safety and accessibility without stripping the park's natural appeal and converting it into an overtly constructed human environment that so many other parks have become.

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Figenshaw,  
Chris and  
Mark

2/6

We do NOT support the development plan for Lebanon Hills. There are many other compromises and solutions to this plan that have not been heard or considered. You are destroying a very, very unique park.

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I have read both the Revised Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park and the report from the Citizens Panel and I write in support of the recommendations of the Citizens Panel. The reports reflect an extensive investment of time and effort by both groups to shape and improve the status and stature of the park but the Citizens Panel report most closely reflects my values for the park by placing natural resources as the highest priority.

Finger, Judy

2/23

I also agree with its priorities regarding soft-surface trails and the paved connector trail. I agree that maintenance of already existing facilities should come before the addition of additional amenities and additions should not be made unless funds for maintenance are available.

I appreciate the work that has been done by the County and the Citizens Panel but it appears there is still work to be done to achieve the best outcome the the residents of Dakota County and the users of the park. I hope that revised plan will NOT be approved at the next meeting of the County Board, but the Planning Commission and Citizens Panel will be allowed to work on a consensus for the issues that remain between the reports. It will reflect well on Dakota County to be seen as living up to its Parks logo "Forever Wild". Thank you for your consideration.

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Fisher,  
Joseph

2/22

I mountain bike and cross country ski at Leb, summer and winter. I do not support this plan. Vote NO to this plan!!!!

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Fitzgerald,  
Damon

2/19

As a long-time Egan/Inver Grove Heights resident living a very short distance from Lebanon Hills Park, I wanted to weigh in on the plans under discussion to further develop this wild space. My family and I use the park every season of the year – lakes in the summer, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in the winter, and hiking in the fall/spring. I applaud efforts to make parks accessible to everyone, but fail to see how the proposed plan will do anything more than alter/destroy many of the pristine conditions in the park that make it so attractive. I'd like to voice my support and that of my wife and daughters in keeping the park as is.

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Fitzgerald,  
Julie

2/18

It seems like the current plan still has gone too far with over commercializing Lebanon Hills and putting in too much infrastructure and disrupting what makes Lebanon hills special – that it is wilderness. Please don't approve this current plan and find another plan that scales it back to something more reasonable. Concerned citizen of Dakota County that uses Lebanon Hills for cross country skiing, hiking and walking and to get away from the stress of the city.

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Fitzpatrick, Brian	2/5	<p>My family and I are Dakota County residents, having lived in Eagan for the past 22 years. Throughout those years, we have been - and continue to be - regular user of the Lebanon Hills park system. I speak for both myself and my family when I say we are NOT in favor of paving additional pathways through the park, as the wilderness feeling is exactly why we use the park system multiple times each year. We've already lost some of the that with some of the recent 'improvements' that have been made over the years. Sometimes 'less is more' and I feel strongly that is the case with regard to the park here. We take regular hikes along the unpaved trails to get away from the feeling of the over-developed city/suburbs in which we live and feel the earth – not pavement – under our feet. We ARE in favor of using funds to preserve the natural beauty of the area, such as buckthorn removal and the like, though strongly against additional development through the natural area that we love. Please leave well enough alone!</p> <p>I can't help being reminded of a song when I think of this issue. "Don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you've got till it's gone. They paved paradise and put up a parking lot." Thanks for your consideration.</p>
Fitzpatrick, Carol	2/20	<p>I have been a Dakota County resident for over 20 years, and my family and I have enjoyed Lebanon Park for all these years. I absolutely hate the idea of a wide, paved path being installed in the park. The whole idea of this park is to preserve nature, and the proposed plan will most definitely go against the natural habitat and all the creatures that live in the park area. It's sad that some people think this is progress, but I believe that if this project moves forward it will be one of the most disappointing decisions that the county has ever made. Once the natural habitat is ruined, there is no going back. Let's preserve one of the most beautiful and unique areas in Dakota County.</p>
Ford, Dale	2/15	<p>The 2015 revised draft Master Plan for Lebanon Hills promotes the construction of a 10 foot wide paved Connector Trail through the park. On page 186, the 2015 revised Draft Plan states: "Inability to complete the paved, bike able trail through Lebanon Hills would undermine the quality of the greenway network concept of providing an off-road, park-like experience to the greatest extent possible." This precept puts the priority of the greenway network ahead of Lebanon Hills. Bicycle greenways are great, but they do not need to go through Lebanon Hills.</p> <p>Natural surface connecting trails already exist between the Jensen Lake Trail Head and Schulz Lake. As stated in the Draft Plan on page 152, the addition of the Connector Trail "is largely in a separate corridor." New Trails in the park, further segment the park.</p> <p>Other alternatives exist to a greenway style connector bike trail for ADA accessibility into the park. ADA Accessibility Guidelines 4.5 simply state that ground surfaces "shall be stable, firm, slip-resistant and comply with 4.5". The guidelines do not specify bituminous paved surfaces. The U.S. Forest Service has developed accessibility guidelines to provide guidance for that agency to maximize accessibility while at the same time recognizing and protecting the unique characteristics of the natural setting by using different tread surface materials. Dakota County should investigate this approach thoroughly for Lebanon Hills.</p> <p>Because there is a paved connector trail included in the 2015 revised draft Master Plan for Lebanon Hills, I do not support the plan. Please vote "NO" to this plan.</p>
Ford, Heidi Hetherington	2/24	<p>I along with so many of my friends and neighbors who have attended numerous informational meetings regarding the future of Lebanon Hills are opposed to the 2015 Revised Master Plan. I urge my county board members to vote NO. Please help keep our Lebanon Hills Regional Park "Forever Wild"! Thank You in advance for your NO vote.</p>
Fors, Elizabeth	2/24	<p>PLEASE keep Lebanon Hills just as it is!!! I live in Apple Valley. I love walking the trails around the lake and exploring! The trail is rugged and different each time I visit. It's wonderful that the park is natural and untouched by pavement! What a gift we have here in Dakota County w/ this park! We can enjoy a park with NO paved paths and feel like we are in a more remote spot!</p>

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Foster, Roger 2/24 I oppose the revised Lebanon Hills Master Plan. Comments saying only those who live around Lebanon Hills oppose this plan are ludicrous. I live in Burnsville and am opposed, because the plan destroys too much of the park for paved trails and the associated sloping and wide views needed for the paths. The only good that can come from all this paving is in those areas the buck-thorn would be mitigated on the path, but other areas cleared for the trail would encourage buck-thorn growth.

Complete the 2001 plan to show that a plan is used on a long term basis or something closer to the 2001 plan. All this spending on paved trails and large bike bridges should be halted before the county becomes prisoner to high maintenance and replacement fees for these large proposed bike trails systems that stand idle 75% or more of the time.

There is much more that could be written, but with over 80% of the comments negative on this and many similar projects it seems the only time someone might listen is if a few of those in charge are removed from their positions.

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Fox, Amanda 2/24 As a resident in Dakota County I beg you to allow Nature to remain Nature. There are so few places in this area that remain undisturbed by our human need to "fix" and "accommodate." Please reconsider your plans and leave Lebanon Hills alone! Thank you for your time,

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Franson Hager, Jenna 2/24 My name is Jenna Franson Hager and I grew up in Apple Valley from 1989-2007. I attended Greenleaf Elementary, Falcon Ridge Middle School and graduated from Eastview High School in 2003. My parents, Richard and Diane Franson still reside in the house I grew up in near Falcon Ridge and Lebanon Hills. As a child, I absolutely loved riding my bike to Lebanon Hills and exploring with my family & friends. I credit the love I have for parks & trails because of the great memories and experiences I had hiking through Lebanon Hills and Isaak Walton growing up. I now live in Colorado Springs, CO where I am an avid hiker as well. When I make it back home for visits, the first place I go with my parents is to walk the dogs through the trails of Lebanon Hills. We absolutely love the serenity of the dirt trails and the canopy of trees. Going for a hike at Lebanon Hills is always one of the highlights of our trip!

The purpose of my email is that I've heard that there might be some proposed changes to this beautiful park that we love so much. I wanted to share with you how I credit so much of my love for nature and hiking because of the uniqueness of Lebanon Hills, and I'm sure I'm not the only one. I would like to urge you to listen to the people who love this recreation area for it's serenity, despite being in a metro area. I believe in the preservation of this beautiful park rather than development.

Although my husband and I live in Colorado, I will always consider Apple Valley my home. Colorado is beautiful, but it lacks the strong sense of community that I love and miss so much in Minnesota. The community of people in Dakota County who come together to support one another and share in each other's experiences truly amazes me. When you grow up in such a great place like Dakota County, it's kind of a rude awakening when you find that community doesn't exist everywhere. For me being away from my hometown for a bit of time, it is refreshing to come home to this sense of community and feel like I belong again. I hope that someday my husband and I will be able to move back to Minnesota because it is so family oriented and there are such great schools. I hope that when we return, Lebanon Hills is still a sanctuary tucked away from the lights and noise of the city life. Thank you for your time! Dakota County resident at heart,

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Franzen, Doug 2/25 The "Plan" has been around in one form or another since 2001, as has the opposition to the plan. The park has been doing quite well for all of these years which should indicate there is NO need for an asphalt expressway through the it's middle. Lebanon Hills is a gift that needs to be nurtured and preserved not bulldozed and paved. There are plenty of asphalt paths throughout the area and in close proximity to be used and enjoyed. Leave Lebanon Hills alone. I bet if the park could talk she would say "nope do not want it"

One of the best events ever at Lebanon Hills is an evening with all the paths lit with luminary people snowshoeing, skating, cross country skiing, warming up around one of the many campfires throughout the park. Hiking some of the trails, sledding, grabbing a quick bite to eat at the many different food trucks. This event attracts such a crowd that off site parking is needed with shuttles to accomidate everyone. All of this in the parks NATURAL splendor. No plowed salted roads in site.

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The board is blinded by state Legacy funds and federal Alternate Transit Funds that will be used for this project. is it prudent to use these funds for such a project? I don't think so. How very short sighted this whole project is, where is the money going to come from to maintain this thing. An asphalt monster is being created right in the middle of an unparalleled urban nature preserve. Where is the value in this project. There is none. The park struggles now with underfunded maintenance. This project would do nothing but compound this issue. There are a number of paved paths that are 8-10 years old throughout the state and are in need of repair with no funding to do so. So why put a major bike trail in of all places a preserve and no plan to maintain it.

The board has solicited input. The majority oppose this plan The Citizen Panel and the Friends of Eagan Core Greenway [oppose.it](#) Why is this being ignored? Again, I ask what part of "NO: is not understood. Lebanon Hills is a wonderful natural urban nature preserve. We cannot build another one. Let's not ruin this irreplaceable gift.

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Frederickson,  
John and  
Becky

My wife and I are regular users of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. We love hiking and cross country skiing there. Its natural character is, we think, unique in the Twin Cities, and is absolutely the best thing about the Park. We have studied the proposed 2015 Master Plan for the Park. The proposed construction of a six mile paved trail, with associated grading, through the middle of the Park, is a terrible mistake. It would not only permanently change the character of the Park, but would create a lasting maintenance liability for the county, to the long term detriment of the citizens of the county who love Lebanon Hills. We urge you to vote against this misguided idea. We are completely opposed to the Master Plan for Lebanon Hills as it is presented now. We very much appreciate your consideration of our views.

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Fredlund,  
Jean

2/22

I would like to go on the record as being opposed to the proposed project of a paved and graded connector trail through the park. I have lived and worked in Eagan since 1971, but currently reside in St. Paul. I hike, snowshoe, and pay the fees to ride my horse in Lebanon Hills Park. I have used the park for 15 years. I have a disabled family member, and my best friend has a disability. So I have personal experience with accessibility issues. Thank you for considering my opinion.

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Freier,  
Brenda

2/18

Please do not approve the new master plan for the Lebanon Hills Park. The addition of paved trails for high-speed bikes will degrade the natural wild nature of the park. Lebanon Hills is such a unique treasure of our community and one that needs to be protected from this kind of development. There are many places for high speed bikes in Dakota County, but very few where a dirt path can be walked thru a forest. I know there are new parks at White Tail Woods, and the Ravine nears Meisville, but those are a farther drive from most of the Dakota County Population. Please preserve the wild nature of Lebanon Hills - Thank-you for this consideration.

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Friel, Bernard

2/16

I have read in its entirety the "Final Report to the Dakota County Board/Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan Citizen Panel" draft plan as revised, which I will refer to here as the PLAN. For the reasons set forth below, among others, I DO NOT support this PLAN. The PLAN in my opinion is designed to incrementally destroy the wilderness characteristics of one of the few remaining properties in the Metropolitan area that has claim to such qualities. It is no mistake that it has often been referred to and characterized as "Wilderness in the City". It is its significant size and relatively undisturbed condition, and its biodiversity and ecosystem diversity that make it so unique. The Park while not a pristine wilderness, nevertheless has many wilderness features, characterized by quietness, the lack of civilized noise, the opportunity for solitude, habitat for wildlife, a location that is useful in an unimproved condition, and where there is NO CROWDING.

The PLAN is an assault on those characteristics. The PLAN'S proposals for structural development, trail lighting, and trail construction, particularly its wide paved trails are destructive of the Park's wilderness qualities. Such "improvements" remove the physical characteristics of a wilderness environment... the trees the indigenous plants and shrubbery, and doing so destroys wildlife habitat, and the solitude and quiet atmosphere of the Park. Every added structure, every new trail, every new slab of concrete, every strip of asphalt, every light fixture diminishes the wilderness qualities of the Park, and destroys the habitat that supports its abundant and diverse wildlife.

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Of particular disappointment is the failure of the PLAN (and the planners) to give credence, except rhetorically, to the primary objective of the 2001 Master Plan which was to preserve the natural settings of the Park for future generations, and in carrying out that objective to prioritize removal from the Park of invasive species, particularly buckthorn. While there is in the Plan verbal priority for such purposes, funding commitment is noticeably missing. Also missing from the Plan is any rationale for that important departure from the 2001 Master Plan, and that may prove to be the Achilles heel of the PLAN. It was surprising and disappointing to me that the "consensus" points in the Plan were based on "surveys" of Panel members, rather than by discussion debate and vote. Disappointing because survey questions like poll questions often depend upon how the question is framed, and so can be framed to solicit particular answers, and the answers are then also subject to interpretation, and misinterpretation, by those preparing the survey.

There is a perception that there are two motivations driving the PLAN from the County's perspective...and when I say County's perspective, I'm not sure if that is the County Staff or some or all of the County Commissioners, or some or all of both. Those two motivations are a misdirected penchant to increase use and accessibility on the one hand, and available sources of funding from non-county funds on the other, and it is also troubling that the latter appears to be driving the former.

Adoption of the PLAN is a choice, and such a choice turns it's back on the original 2001 Master Plan, and will certainly result in the permanent denigration of the Park's wilderness characteristics. Making the Park "accessible to everyone" suggested one of the Commissioners, was the objective of making improvements. It has also been suggested that those of us who seek to carry out and implement the 2001 Master Plan, and maintain the "Wilderness in the City" characteristics of the Park are guilty of being selfish... but that accusation may reasonably run in both directions, for the PLAN will by destroying those wilderness characteristics significantly diminish visitation by those who visit because of them.

While it is certainly important to see that park facilities are provided in the county that are reasonably accessible to the needs and recreational desires of all its citizens, I don't think that it is written anywhere that EVERY park in the County must be reasonably accessible to ALL citizens or respond to ALL the reasonable recreational needs of ALL citizens. If that were the requirement then there would be many of us clamoring for more wilderness qualities in ALL the County Parks, and that would be just as unreasonable. Furthermore, the penchant to provide access and infrastructure so a greater number of visitors can enjoy the wilderness characteristics of the Park is designed to destroy the very experience it promises to provide.

Furthermore additional users might be attracted to the Park if the county made a better effort to advertise the existing features of the Park, particularly its wilderness characteristics.

Perhaps the single most objectionable feature of the PLAN is its paved multi use trails...trails for use simultaneously by runners, joggers, walkers, people with baby strollers, recreational bikers, commuter bikers, wheel chairs, skate boards, in line rollerbladers, roller skis, etc.

It appears, at least from information in the PLAN, that except perhaps for anecdotal evidence, no information exists from which to reasonably estimate, the extent of use by each category of projected user, or in which future time frame such use might occur. There was a suggestion that when use reached 200,000 users, it would then be necessary to provide trail separation.

Such a conclusion seems to ignore the experience of the Minneapolis Park system which, in 1972, long before its multiuse trail system on Lake Harriet reached such a number, experienced a pedestrian death after the pedestrian was struck by a cyclist. The following is quoted from an article appearing in the April-May, 2014 Southwest Journal.

" In May 1972, Malkerson, a pedestrian, was killed in a collision with a cyclist on Lake Harriet's single path. Her death inspired the separation that bike-path runners ignore today, and also the park trails' 10 mile-per-hour limit — the rule cyclists most commonly break. (If cyclists think the car-driving culture holds them in low esteem today, imagine their standing in the wake of Malkerson's death.) "

No such paved trails have any place within the Park, for any such trail will eventually beget a parallel trail or trails to accommodate the multi

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uses, and result in further destruction of the wilderness characteristics of the Park making it sooner or later like every other of the already many multi use parks accessible to all in the Metropolitan area, while destroying a unique one of a kind "Wilderness in the City" experience for both current and future generations.

If a Commuter or Greenway trail is to be constructed at all construction should be confined to the west and north PERIMETERS of the Park, well away from the eastern more environmentally sensitive parts of the Park.

In conclusion let me say that wilderness and the wilderness qualities of the Park need no defense, but they need defenders, and I hope the members of the County Board will be numbered among the Park's defenders...that you reject the PLAN, and make only modifications to the Park that are consistent with the 2001 Master Plan.

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Frisvold, Megan	2/19	<p>I will begin by saying I have come to regard Lebanon Hills Regional Parks as a second home to me. If I need to get away or relax, that is the first place I think of. Walking along the wooded paths, many times getting lost within all the beauty and wilderness, I realize I've learned so much just from exploring, and am so grateful I have a place that feels wild, and feels like another home.</p> <p>That being said, I know deep in my bones that I speak for hundreds if not thousands of others who share my sentiments towards the treasure we have come to know as Lebanon Hills Regional Parks. I am URGING you to vote AGAINST the upcoming plan, in order to keep Lebanon Hills wild, <i>the way it should be</i>. If you do not share my sentiments and decide to vote in favor of the plan, and in the process of doing so lose a great deal of beautiful wilderness, I guess I can't really stop you. However, I hope my words have made you reconsider what this plan means for Lebanon Hills future. Thank you for your time.</p>
Funk, Bill	2/20	<p>I have canoed in the Lebanon hills park for years. It is the only place near the city that I can show people what to expect in the BWCA. Please don't waste tax dollars ruining that. No matter how much money you spend, a paralyzed person will not be able to portage a canoe. Don't take that experience away from the majority in a delusional effort to make life fair.</p>
Gabriel, Pam	2/6	<p>Please do not go through with this paving of trails at Lebanon! I don't understand why people wouldn't like to feel actual dirt, grass, and earth beneath their feet. There's plenty of pavement and sidewalks around already.... I think it's only reasonable to leave some trails/areas as they are...natural!</p>
Gallagher, Krista	2/24	<p>I do not support this plan. I am a resident of Corcoran neighborhood in Minneapolis. I chose to stay in the Twin Cities because of its many parks. When I discovered Lebanon Hills last year, I was amazed that there still existed land that was seemingly un-touched. I am so happy that I don't need to drive a long distance to experience true nature. Things like this is what makes the Twin Cities so special to me. I've become aware of the plan to develop the park to become more like the other parks in the cities - paved trails, bike paths, and other amenities. This truly saddens me, as it will destroy the only place that is like it in the city. I am also concerned that a large amount of money is being spent unwisely. There seems to be a lot of conflict over this plan also. Perhaps decisions are being made too hastily. For these reasons, I do not support this plan. Please vote No to this plan.</p>
Gallagher, Kristin	2/23	<p>It has been brought to my attention that a proposal has been made to change the natural beauty of Lebanon Hills. This is a waste of money and an egregious assault to the park! Please do not pave trails that will increase bike traffic, endanger hikers and annihilate the native flora and fauna.</p>
Galloway, Mark	2/23	<p>Please know that at least one citizen of Dakota County opposes your plan to destroy Lebanon Hills park by putting a connector paved trail through the middle of it. Tom Egan, you lived and worked so hard to make Eagan a great city and now as a central and influencing figure on this</p>

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		<p>board, you are striving to take away an irreplaceable asset to Dakota County, the city of Eagan, and the entire Metro area. Shame on you! Sometimes progress dictates that leaders such as you make tough decisions. This will no doubt be a tough decision for you. But don't fool yourselves into believing that the only way progress can occur is by destroying a small slice of nature nestled in the midst of an overdeveloped Metro area. Please don't vote to approve putting the connector trail through the Lebanon Hills Park. It will be an irreversible BAD DECISION.</p>
Gannon, Joshua	2/24	<p>Let's keep Lebanon Hills preserved according to its master plans regarding preserving and protecting significant natural resources. Let's keep this area natural, not all "parks" need to have rides and slides and paved trails and wave pools etc.....Here is the original park mandate. <a href="https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/parks/Planning/ParkPlans/Documents/LebanonHillsMasterPlan/LebanonHillsMasterPlanDraft.pdf">https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/parks/Planning/ParkPlans/Documents/LebanonHillsMasterPlan/LebanonHillsMasterPlanDraft.pdf</a> Thank you,</p>
Gerdes, Josh	2/23	<p>I am writing to let the board know that I do NOT support the new Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan that is currently under review. I urge you all to vote NO on this plan. The park is the #1 place my family likes to hike in the entire metro region. It is a natural gem in Dakota County and one of our families links to nature. The reason it is so great is because it has a large natural unpaved trail system that traverses some wonderful wooded areas. The unpaved trails are what give the park its charm and gives my family the chance to feel like we are actually out in the woods and not in an urban area. I would hate to see that change, so I do not support this plan or any plan in the future that would start add additional paved trails (whether they be loops around lakes or connectors to other park areas).</p>
Gingerich, Barb	2/23	<p>Please keep our Park "forever wild". This park is a gem because it is so wild. The past changes have already altered a beautiful beach--that now has a cement path going through the middle of it. We have lost a huge green space already (Parkview Golf Course) once these spaces are gone--there is no getting them back. Parkview felt like a bait and switch deal and this is starting to feel that way too. Please listen to the users of the park. Consider the width of the paths (6 feet and under), what they are made out of(can you use natural materials?) and where they go (keep them on the outside areas not through the middle)--keep in mind what you disturb (plant life and wild life), and the cost of maintaining these paths (who pays for this?). Around the city of Eagan there are paths that do not get plowed in the winter and people walk on these--or they walk in the street because they can't walk on the paths. Our tax dollars already are not enough to keep these clear and maintained. Where does the money come from to maintain the paths in the park? 6 miles is a lot of maintenance.</p> <p>Listen to the committee set up to help work this out--they should not be just for show. Listen to the Wilderness in the City group--they have dug into the details of this and found some things that are not right for a "forever wild park". They are the experts of this park and need to be listened to. It is easy to look at this plan and think what is the big deal but start to really get into it and you find out what the big deal is--it alters the original feel of this park. We live where we live partly because of this park. You have a chance to make a big impact on the park--please make sure the impact goes with the "forever wild" theme of the park.</p>
Gleason, Michele	2/24	<p>I love Lebanon Hills just the way it is!! I hope you don't change anything! I really love the natural, expansive wilderness feel! To have a huge piece of land in Eagan &amp; Apple Valley, as a natural habitat but still can be used for picnics, swimming, family fun, cross country skiing, snowshoeing and hiking and have the feel of the north woods is priceless! I love that it's still somewhat undeveloped land but still very usable, gorgeous, precious, natural and rustic!! We already have so many parks in the Twin Cities which are fully accessible &amp; developed with many amenities! Let's keep Lebanon Hills the gem that it is!! Thanks!</p>
Gmach, Jessica	2/16	<p>As a tax payer and landowner who lives near Lebanon Hills, I do not support development of this Lebanon Hills with paved trails and more buildings. Please do not destroy woodlands and diminish wildlife habitats. Please keep it "forever wild!"</p>

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Graham, W. Barry	2/25	<p>I am opposed to the revised draft master plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park and urge you not to approve it. I take this position for the reasons cited by Wilderness in the City, summarized below:</p> <p>1) <i>Natural Resources: Since 2001, Dakota County has not committed adequate funding for successful restoration in Lebanon Hills. The revised plan will allow this trend to continue.</i></p> <p>2) <i>Connector Trail: Revised plan emphasizes recreational use, but design criteria did not change: 6-miles, minimum 10-ft. wide asphalt; free of snow/ice; wide construction clearance; grading to 5% requiring cut/fill and structural support; site lines for bicycle speeds up to 20 mph.</i></p> <p>3) <i>New Development: \$13.7 million estimated total. Commissioner have not stated how they will fund annual maintenance expense increases at Lebanon Hills while also adequately funding pertinent park services including stewardship, staffing, marketing and programming.</i></p> <p>The park is highly valued by all current users for the opportunity it provides for connecting with the natural environment and enjoying quiet contemplation near the center of population of Dakota County. The soft surface trails are among the best in the metropolitan area and are prized by hikers, birders, trail runners, cross country skiers and equestrians. If adequate funding is not allocated for the restoration and maintenance of the natural environment of the park, the primary reason that it is so enjoyed will continue to be diminished. The revised master plan emphasizes development rather than stewardship and restoration of the natural environment.</p> <p>The paved connector trail will result in the creation of a wide expanse of pavement as well as cleared and re-graded topography. This wide expanse will be devoid of wildlife and will have no relationship to the original vegetation and hilly terrain, for which the park is named. In addition, it will combine incompatible types of traffic: hikers and walkers both abled and disabled, parents with small children in strollers or in hand, and groups of children on a wilderness walk with teachers will all be on the same trail as bikers having the ability to travel at 20 mph. This seems to be a recipe for an accident! While lower, recreational speeds for bikes are mentioned in the revised draft master plan, there is no way that this can be enforced.</p> <p>In summary, unless there are additional significant revisions to the draft master plan, the 2001 master plan is a superior document to guide the future of Lebanon Hills Regional Park.</p>
Graves, Rick	2/12	<p>This revised plan has the same flaws that I commented on in the previous plan. I think th plan should be modified to: Eliminate the connector trails from the plan. Eliminate paved trails from the plan. Deal with invasive species should be a top priority. Seriously plan for the maintenance of existing trails before adding new ones. Reduce the number of new trails.</p>
Gregg, Aleta	2/22	<p>Please do not move forward on any plans to develop the Lebanon hills wilderness area. The trails here are peaceful and wonderful, and should not be spoiled with all the commotion that comes with the proposed amenities. Minnesota and the twin cities area are known for their parks, and there are already plenty of places very nearby which have paved trails for those who need/want them. Please do not pave the existing trails at Lebanon or add any paved trails to this scenic, quiet wilderness area. Perhaps instead the county could put funds towards maintaining the other paved trails in the county.</p>
Grimes, Laura	2/23	<p>I'm sending a quick note to say that I am an Egan resident who is opposed to adding a paved bike path through Lebanon Hills. I know people who travel over one hundred miles to visit the park because of its beauty. Paving part of the park will make it like most others in the Twin Cities. We have a gem in Egan that we should leave as it is. Thanks for your time,</p>
Grimwood, Ross	2/19	<p>Have used the park for many years. I would prefer the park to remain as is, without the proposed development. Just leave it alone and let nature do it's work. I think there are too many trails now.</p>

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Gross, Melissa and	2/23	We do not support the revised plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. First and foremost, the plan does not foster the motto of Dakota County Parks of "Forever Wild." The plan allocates too much funding towards development, for items such as paved trails, and too little towards preservation and restoration of natural areas. Not only will the plan destroy the unique wilderness character of Lebanon Hills Park it will be quite costly at its inception and to maintain. This plan will become another financial burden for taxpayers. "Forever Wild" best describes Lebanon Hills Regional Park as it stands today. When one visits the park it is not hard to see why it has been voted "Best Park" by several publications. It is a rare gem found in such a large urban area and one that we hope will remain that way for generations to come.
Grossman, Liz	2/19	We do not want the development that we find at other parks in this one. It is special and extremely valuable, especially to our kids and future generations to leave it "wild"
Guenther, Wendy	2/24	"I do not support this plan. Vote NO to this plan."
Guinee, Michael	2/18	Although I live in Bloomington, I work in Burnsville so my life is somewhat equally split between the two counties. I want to share with you what a gem Lebanon Hills is, nothing like it exist anywhere near Bloomington, including the rivers edge. Many times I have brought my bike to work and met my friends for an evening ride around Lebanon Hills. Please consider letting the park remain the urban gem it is today and not move forward with the plan to pave thru. Being an active member of IMBA and MORC I know, first hand, the value of what you currently have and the economic impact that all the park users have on the surrounding businesses. Thank you for letting me express my thoughts on the subject and I hope you will forever preserve your Lebanon Hills gem.
Gustafson, Tom		I am an Eagan resident since 1982 and enjoy the park year round for hiking and Nordic skiing. Please do not add any paved trails to Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Paved trails add nothing and detract from and irreparably damage the all too rare natural beauty found in the park. If there is money available to be spent on pavement, those funds would be better spent on replacing the dilapidated bridge, as well as buck-thorn and emerald ash borer abatement programs.
Guttman, Jim	1/29	<p>Thank you for providing this opportunity to share my comments on the January 2015 revision of the Lebanon Hills Master Plan Draft document. I frequently visit Lebanon Hills, primarily to hike the wonderful soft-surface trails that are found in the park. As a result, my feedback is largely focused on this aspect of the plan's content.</p> <p>Overall, I think the plan does an admirable job of respecting the important role that soft-surface trails play at Lebanon Hills and ensuring that their special character is maintained. The planned additions and refinements to the soft-surface trail network throughout the park - east, middle, and west - appear to be positive, well-thought-out changes. Nicely done!</p> <p>With that said, there are a few specific suggestions I would like to offer for your consideration as the plan is finalized.</p> <p>1) Soft-surface trail around Holland Lake The soft-surface trail loop around Holland Lake is a great addition to the plan, but it may be a bit of a misnomer. The trail map in Figure 7-10 on Page 154 depicts soft-surface segments around the western, southern, and eastern portions of the loop, but a stretch of paved connector trail appears to complete the northern portion of the loop. I suggest finding some way of completing a full soft-surface loop around the lake, perhaps by adding a separate soft-surface trail segment on the north, or by providing a wider (4- to 6-foot) mowed shoulder along this stretch of the connector trail to accommodate soft-surface hiking alongside of it. This would be a highly desirable outcome for hikers who would prefer to avoid walking on the paved, mixed-use, high-traffic connector trail.</p> <p>2) Hiking/equestrian trail intersection near Portage Lake</p>

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Figure 7-10 on Page 154 depicts a hiking trail segment that runs southwesterly from Schulze Lake toward Portage Lake. It appears that the hiking trail reaches a dead end at its intersection with the equestrian trail. I suggest either extending this hiking trail segment across the equestrian trail to meet up with the hiking loop around Portage Lake, or removing the short hiking trail connection between the loop near Schulze Lake and the equestrian trail. Having a short hiking trail segment dead-end on an equestrian trail will only allow and encourage unwanted crossover traffic between the two.

### 3) Shared hiking/equestrian trails in middle park

While the middle park trail revisions are only conceptual at this point, I think it would still be good to somehow describe the overall intent for the shared hiking/equestrian trails in this area. For example, I hope that part of the intent is to connect hiking trails in the east park (via the Pilot Knob underpass) with the Wheaton Pond trailhead and surrounding hiking trails. If that is indeed the case, I suggest explicitly stating this as one of the desired outcomes for a middle park re-design on Page 156, and perhaps depicting one possible route for such a shared hiking/equestrian trail connection in Figure 7-11 on Page 157 just to illustrate the concept.

### 4) Hiking trail connections north of West Trailhead

Figure 7-12 on Page 159 shows a hiking trail segment that runs north from the West Trailhead, reaching a dead end where it intersects the ski skating loop. Presumably, the intent is for this hiking trail segment to continue on in a westerly fashion to meet up with the hiking trail loop that circles the northwest portion of the west park. In any case, I suggest extending the trail segment heading north from the trailhead to connect with the hiking trail along the northern park boundary, resulting in a full outer hiking loop around the entirety of the west park.

### 5) West park hiking trail cost estimates and priority

The cost estimate tables on Pages 176-179 and the project priority tables on Pages 181-183 do not appear to include line items for refinements to the west park soft-surface hiking trails that are described on Page 158 and depicted in Figure 7-12 on Page 159. I suggest adding line items for these west park hiking trail refinements to both sets of tables.

Thank you for allowing me to share these comments and suggestions with you. If you have any questions about this input or would like to discuss any topics further, please feel free to contact me anytime.

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Haack, Elizabeth	2/20	I am a homeowner in Dakota County and a user of equestrian trails throughout the Twin Cities area and the state. Lebanon Hills is a wilderness treasure that is close to home and offers recreation for a wide range of users including equestrians. These types of trails are very limited and we can not afford to lose more of them. Bike paths are everywhere and bicycles are allowed on city streets, horses are not (nor is it safe). I buy horse trail passes at each park I ride at and help fund the maintenance of trails. I am happy to do this. Bicycle riders do not pay trail use fees, yet more and more paths are being paved for them. Please maintain the wilderness integrity of Lebanon Hills and the do not pave bike paths through it. Keep it safe for all to enjoy on foot, ski, horseback and water.
Haack, Steve	2/21	I was reading in the local paper about planned changes for the park. I prefer to keep the park the way it is and do not wish to see the park changed in any way. Also, seems like an unnecessary expenditure. Please refrain from any changes to Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Thank you!
Hafee, Terra		Phone Comment: I don't agree with paths on perimeter of park. There should be minima development, as little change as possible and no pavement through the middle of the park.
Hagman, Sue	2/21	The people have voiced their opinion--Forever Wild! Don't let the lure of Legacy Money and job security tear a hole in the wilderness. Let it be--Wild--not a conduit to other parks. The animals need a corridor, not high speed bikers and rollerbladers. Thank you for your consideration,

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Haler, Cindy		Phone Comment: I do not want paved trail with in the park and I represent 90% of the public.
Hall, Mary	2/5	<p>Lebanon Hills is such a special place, and I'm sure that's why so many of us park users are responding so passionately to the plan. A summary of my response to the plan: I think for the most part, it is a fairly sound plan. I especially appreciate the natural resource recommendations, particularly the focus on buckthorn removal, and restoration and improvement of lakes and wetlands. As one who hikes and runs in the park with some frequency, it is an obvious need.</p> <p>The weakness of the plan is in the premise that Lebanon Hills needs to provide even more types of recreational activities. Why? The BWCAW does not need to have playground facilities, every state park does not have camping, etc. Lebanon Hills already has a beach, mountain bike trails, a visitors center, picnicking, a playground, a campground etc. And this plan includes upgrades for them. There are many other paved trails in the county for biking. This park has something unique. Don't degrade it just to try to make it be everything to everyone. Your own data show a greater increase in visits to Lebanon Hills than other county parks, yet it is a less developed park. What does that tell you? Please listen to the people. We have a gem. Once an area is paved, it is no longer "Forever Wild."</p>
Halterman, Don	2/16	Lebanon Hills is a wonderful place to hike, Ski and snowshoe, undisturbed of bicycles and skate/skateboarders. The revised plan to move the single paved trail to the outer edge could only be improved with its removal altogether. Dakota County has ample paved trails as is, thanks.
Handke, Dan	2/23	Dakota county has done an outstanding job of developing LHRP. Thank you for your work to date. I'm opposed to large scale paved trails in LHRP, based on 1. the cost (initial and recurring, and your plans don't explain where that money comes from) and 2. Based on how this project degrades the current wilderness remote experience available today at LHRP.
Hannon, Erin	2/26	I am writing to let you know I am NOT in favor of the proposal of putting paved paths through Lebanon Hills. It is one of the only places around here I can run as I cannot run on pavement. I have been enjoying the natural trails of Lebanon for MANY years and am concerned about the natural feel of the environment should you go through with y our proposal of paving paths throughout the park. I realize some un-paved paths may be retained with your proposal. But I strongly disagree with ANY paved paths. It is unnessessary. If you are stating it will bring <i>more</i> people, you are incorrect. It might bring <i>different</i> people, but you will lose people that currently enjoy their nature runs/walks at this park. Your money is better spend elsewhere.
Hanschen, Walt		Phone Comment: Keep the park as it is now.
Hansell, Chelsea	2/24	I would like to politely request that Lebanon Hills remain preserved in all its beauty. It offers a rare opportunity to step into nature inside a suburban area. There is already an abundance of developed parks in this state, and Lebanon Hills gives people the uncommon chance to find nature close to home. It's a rare and beautiful part of the southern suburbs. Please vote to keep it this way
Hansen, Becky		Phone Comment: Please revise the Lebanon Hills Regional Park Development Plan. I prefer the original and current use of Lebanon Hills Regional Park with low impact recreation.
Hanson, Jim and Mary	2/21	We are huge fans of Lebanon Hills. What makes it so special is the natural setting. We enjoy hiking, skiing and just listening to the quiet sounds of nature. We are not in favor of a paved trail being added. While we understand not all people can access the park because of its rugged nature that is exactly what makes it unique. There are plenty of developed parks with access for all within the metro parks system. Please don't spoil

## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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our little piece of the great outdoors that we have at Lebanon Hills.

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Hanssen, Becky	2/11	I do not support this plan. I have been trekking in this park for over twenty years. It is a wonderful natural park. We took our grandkids there, ages two and three, and they loved the nature and thoroughly enjoyed the natural trails. So much to see and hills to climb. We go often. Do not make this park, even a section of it, like the lakes in Mpls. I am an avid outdoors person and detest asphalt trails. These trails are hard, difficult to maintain and not natural. I have had physical challenges over the years, but I believe that an asphalt trail is not for this park. I expect in 30 years, when I might be using a walker, to be able to feel and see the natural essence of the trail. I want my grandkids to know the roughness and wildness of the trail, too. Take a look out west, Colorado, Montana, Washington..they do not pave their wildernesses.
Harder, Kathleen	2/18	My family and I cross-country ski on Lebanon Hill's trails each winter (if the snow depth is sufficient). We have come to love the quiet, secluded, peaceful feel of the ski trails located in this beautiful park, just a few minutes from the city where we live. Please do not erode/destroy the park by adding paved trails, etc. There are many other parks in the area where people drawn to these amenities can go. There are not, however, many parks where those of us who crave the "untouched" feel can go. My family cannot afford to buy a cabin in the north so Lebanon Hills fills that void. Please leave Lebanon Hills as is.
Hassett, Marguerite	2/20	Count me among those opposed to the path through Lebanon Hills. Thank you,
Hassett, Peg	2/20	Please vote against building the path through Lebanon Hills. Thank you.
Hassing, Jeff	2/25	Lebanon Hills park is an oasis in a sea of development. That is precisely why it is such a popular park. Building a paved trail through the middle of it would be like driving a stake through its heart. The idea makes me sick. Removing trees and adding more pavement and more buildings does not make better parks. The park does not need more trails. The area does not need more bike trails. There are already plenty of bike trails and sidewalks in northern Dakota county. If you want to provide better access to the disabled, provide a better wheel chair, or a horse, don't impair the beauty of the destination. Please don't pave my park.
Hatlen, Mike	2/16	Lebanon Hills is a wonderful park/trail system, undisturbed of bicycles and skate/skateboarders. The revised plan to move the single paved trail to the outer edge could only be improved with its removal altogether. Dakota County has ample paved trails as is, thx!!!
Hatten, Sydney	2/24	Lebanon Hills and its unpaved trails allow for a truly unique experience in Dakota County and the Twin Cities. The experience deep into the park near O'Brien Lake where the sound of cars and the city disappears is unparalleled. The miles and miles of existing trails allow for a variety of sports- hiking, trail running, horseback riding and cross country skiing within nature, not on the paved trails of Egan. Egan and surrounding areas in Dakota County currently have ample paved sidewalks and bike paths throughout the region. As a "high speed" cyclist myself, I am able to make use of the paths when appropriate. However, the roads surrounding Lebanon Hills Park have ample shoulder space to allow for high speed cycling, in addition to sidewalks for slower speed bikes and pedestrians. A connection through the center of the park is not needed. Please do not move forward with the plans to pave Lebanon Hills.

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Haugen, Linda and Marty	2/20	My husband and I vote no to the plan for changing Lebanon Hills Regional Park. It is a treasured resource for the state of Minnesota, Dakota County, and all people who want to conserve wild places where natural resources can flourish.
Heath, Wendy	2/25	As a resident of Eagan for over 20 years, I strongly oppose the new master plan for Lebanon Hills. This park remains one of the few in the twin cities metro area that truly feels like wilderness. The vast majority of Eagan and Apple Valley parks are both wheelchair and bike accessible and I feel it is very important to keep this area as close to its natural state as possible
Hedlund, Laura	2/24	<p>In 2001, I chaired the citizen group to create the current master plan for Lebanon Hills. We created shared community vision. Respected environmental organizations including the local Audubon chapter and the Eagan Core Greenway as well as hundreds of citizens have voiced concerns regarding the county's current plan to "develop" and pave Lebanon Hills Regional Park. It is obvious that Dakota County lacks community consensus. Few Dakota residents understand that paying to maintain and repaved the Greenway will result in a doubling of the current park budget.</p> <p>The community is polarized. One side claims a handful of "neighbors" selfishly wants to keep the park to their selves. The other side sees the plan as costing taxpayers \$28 million while causing ecological damage, altering the character of the park and creating future tax liabilities. The citizens group wants to keep the park affordable today and tomorrow.</p> <p>One of the drivers behind the proposal to pave the park is Met Council policy which distributes operations and maintenance funds. Dakota County's share of these funds is only 2.2%; Minneapolis is 33% and St Paul is 20%. Minneapolis includes Chains of Lakes and St Paul includes Como Zoo. Met Council does not count visits to the Minnesota Zoo. Visits to Lebanon Hills have doubled in the past decade and the park receives 100,000 more visitors every year than Washington County's most visited regional park.</p> <p>Under Met Council's current formulas, Dakota County does not get a fair share of funding. Some believe that a 200 mile paved "Greenway" will bring more dollars to Dakota County from the Met Council. Spending millions to "leverage" more tax dollars is not a bargain for local, state or federal taxpayers. Also, Met Council policies are adapting to changing needs. Reaching underserved communities is the top priority of Met Council. Engagement requires more than trails. It takes innovative programs and people. Were any people of color involved in creating, or reviewing, this development plan? Listening is key to reaching new park users.</p> <p>The county is now working on a three million dollar zoo bridge, \$28 million trail through Lebanon Hills, a \$10.9 million trail in Spring Lake Park, a \$12.7 million Mendota Lebanon Greenway plus they are working on the River to River trail, a Mississippi River Greenway, Vermillion River Corridor, North Creek Greenway and Lake Marion-South Creek. To put these numbers in context, the total 2015 annual park operating budget is \$3.2 million.</p> <p>Dakota County has been embarking on this ambitious 200 mile Greenway while the park department has seen its budget cut and staff reduced. The current approved plan calls for significant spending on restoration which has yet to be done. The county blames the recession for not spending money to restore the park.</p> <p>The annual cost of maintaining this "Greenway" is likely shock Dakota County taxpayers. Based on the public record, the estimated annual cost for operations/maintenance of the six Greenways is \$1,123,100. The estimated annual set aside for replacement is \$2,303,700. Dakota County will be spending \$3,426,800 per year to maintain and replace the "Greenway." This is more money than the county currently spends on the entire park department! Dakota County would benefit by learning how other governments are struggling to maintain aging asphalt trails. Some planned trails are blocks away from the asphalt sidewalks so common in Dakota County.</p> <p>"Greenway" trails have a high ecological cost. What is happening to Spring Lake Park is heartbreaking. The county is bulldozing thousands of</p>

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trees, ripping out forest land and will soon blasts ancient cliffs. The environmental cost to Lebanon Hills is extremely high. Numerous environmental groups, typically strong supporters of parks, are offering feedback to the county. I encourage every commissioner to visit Spring Lake Park before voting to damage Lebanon Hills.

It might be nice to have bike routes leading to Lebanon Hills Regional Park however, look around. There are houses, businesses, churches, even an occasional old barn on the land now. Will the County have to use eminent domain like they did in 2014 in Spring Lake Park or as they are doing now for road construction to residents in Inver Grove Heights? The county says it is highly unlikely and they would wait decades for willing sellers. Yet about 1/3 of land required for the Greenway is now in private hands. The county has not shared which particular parcels of private land will be needed to execute their 200 mile asphalt plan. Few private landowners want their property to become a bike superhighway. The County says its main goal is to create connected spaces. Clearly to achieve this objective, the first step is to secure the path which goes TO the park and not the one which goes THROUGH the park.

One of the admirable goals of park planners is to increase the appeal of Lebanon Hills for people who are not currently using the park. Being in nature is vital to well-being. However being on asphalt next to buckthorn does not offer restorative benefits. It is not the Lebanon Hills' fault that some people do not visit. Every day in the newspaper and in our own lives, we read and see the consequences of deep pain. There is no better place than a walk in the woods to heal the soul.

We need to protect wilderness space to reduce our epidemic of depression and anxiety. Cutting edge scientific research is now discovering that the human biosphere benefits from interacting with the biosphere in the soil. We may not get these benefits when we are on asphalt. Also being in rich diverse landscapes may offer our biosphere "nutrients" that non diverse areas do not offer. The feel of Amazon rain forest is accessible to be who can afford to travel. The closest many of metro residents can get to this nature-inspired feeling is our oak forest. Hundreds of different kinds of birds can make a home from a healthy oak forest. Only four species can live in buckthorn dessert.

Is there any way to create a shared vision now? The philosophies and principles of permaculture offer us a roadmap. When you have a problem, make the problem the solution. Because of the controversy, we have opportunities which would not have been present had no conflict occurred. Lebanon Hills is part of our commons. Assigning blame for the problem of buckthorn and other environmental issues does little to restore our local oak forests. Committed citizens and responsive government can do together what we cannot do alone. We need a shared vision.

Go slowly and take the time to listen to feedback is a key concept in permaculture because taking the time to observe saves time in the long run. My permaculture teacher joke about buying 400 trees only to discover she did not have the resources to plant them all. According to permaculture principles, it is often most useful to do the hardest part of a project first. The county could focus on securing the land to bring trails TO the park before ripping out hills & trees to cut a trail THROUGH the park. Understanding limits is important in permaculture. Adding \$3,426,800 every year to the budget to pay for maintenance of a "greenway" may exceed limits.

Dakota County needs to take a breath. We are not on a race to compete with the City of Minneapolis. We are in process of learning to thrive. Certainly, some of the Greenways help us thrive. My family has deeply benefited from many of trails. Maybe, the 200 mile Greenway is a good idea and something we can afford to build and maintain. Using the principles of permaculture, the county would focus, observe and listen. For more information about permaculture, listen to joyful conversation we had about power, privilege and permaculture here: <http://am950ktnf.podbean.com/e/food-freedom-radio-february-21st-2015>

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Heitzman,  
David

2/18

I am very opposed the plan to add more paved surfaces to Lebanon Hills Regional Park. My friends and I are avid hikers and would like to see the park left in its current state.

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Henjum, Jodie	2/18	<p>I have been following the development/non-development news and views, and realize that the time has come to state my opinion. I am a resident of Eagan and Dakota County. I moved here in 1996, when Eagan was still in development. In 1996, there were vistas of open land at the end of nearly every street, and over every rise. I found the natural beauty of the surrounding areas breathtaking, and so different from my home in the Los Angeles South Bay Area. It was a different kind of natural beauty, no ocean views, but wide expanses of natural beauty.</p> <p>I lived in California for over twenty-five years. I know how urban sprawl, development, and the use of chemicals can ruin the environment. We all know this. What we don't all realize is the length of time that it takes for a natural habitat to restore, once it has been destroyed by man.</p> <p>I was lucky enough to see how nature had a chance to rebuild after the banning of DDT in 1972, and the emissions controls put into place in the early 1970's. First, I noticed the mountains that surrounded the Los Angeles basin. This may seem obvious, but in the early 70's, smog banked the LA basin, and the mountain ranges were not visible from afar. Then I noticed brown pelicans return to the ocean cliff areas of Los Angeles County. Then the mollusks began to return in the tide pools. Finally, after decades, the sea otters began to return, though still rare. The sea lions and harbor seals have returned in larger abundance. I am told, that, more than forty years later, abalone are finally beginning to be spotted along the shores.</p> <p>These examples may seem extreme, but even small changes by man can result in huge impacts on our naturalized areas. When the changes are for the good, nature responds favorably. When changes are not so good, nature responds by habitat dying out, creatures moving away, and beauty fading from our vistas.</p> <p>I have a friend who has moved to Saint Paul this past year from Alaska. She has loved hiking, running and cross-country skiing on the naturalized trails of Lebanon Hills Park. She finds that the natural setting, the undeveloped beauty of the park, reminds her of Alaska. Even though a large regional park, Lebanon Hills is a very small area of natural beauty in a much more developed urban environment. It is a park we should take great pride in, and one that we should do our very best, as protectors of our land, to keep as undeveloped as possible.</p> <p>Please do not pass the proposed master plan. We are known as a state of lakes, huge parks, and beautiful natural preserves. But as our urban areas develop and grow beyond their boundaries, natural beauty moves farther and farther away from us. We have it in our power, you have it in your power, to preserve the Lebanon Hills Regional park, with all of its natural beauty ,for generations to come. It is natural to want to develop. It is easy to fall into the mindset of, "If they have developed their parks, we should, too." Also easy to think, "We can do an even better job." The more difficult choice is the active choice to do nothing - to leave this beautiful, natural space just as it is. It would be kinder to our environment - kinder to choose a path of non-development. Please choose that path.</p>
Henry, Devin	2/23	<p>I just finished reading about the plans to put a paved trail directly through Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I must say I am very concerned and upset by this prospect. I have lived in Eagan for 20 years and Lebanon Hills has been a very important part of my life. To be able to drive, walk or bike down to the park and then retreat into the wilderness has been so very stress-relieving and mentally important to me. My whole family and many of my friends also feel this way about the park. If the uninterrupted, natural beauty of Lebanon Hills is diminished I think so many people's lives will be adversely affected. Please, take this into account. I may only be one person, but I know I am not the only person that feels this way about this land! I think the idea of a large greenway connecting the cities is groundbreaking and exciting, but there has to be a way to create this greenway and still leave the green, undeveloped space Lebanon provides so many citizens. Thank you for taking the time to read this.</p>
Hentges, Carol	2/17	<p>I want to express my and my family's opinion that we DO NOT support the proposed plans for changing Lebanon Hill Park. We use the natural resources and beauty of the park very often and are not in favor of the changes that are being discussed.</p>

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Hermer, Laura	2/19	I am a regular runner at Lebanon Hills, and am writing to you in opposition to your plan for Lebanon. Please do not add any paved trails to Lebanon. People come to Lebanon from all over the Twin Cities Metro specifically because of Lebanon's natural, unpaved beauty. The Twin Cities Metro is full of parks with paved trails. Those who want to use paved trails have no shortage of options. Moreover, if you pave any further trails in Lebanon, it will not only diminish the utility of the park for most of those who presently use it, but it will also cost far more to maintain. Why make Lebanon into a clone of so many other parks in the metro, when it is a jewel as it presently is?
Hermes, Chuck	2/4	Lebanon Hillis is a gem as it is. Please do not disrupt this natural park.
Hermundson, Shannon	2/8	I have lived in Eagan, MN for over 20 years and my daughter and I frequently make use of the natural lands and trails in the Lebanon Hills park. I DO NOT support the proposed plan to develop the natural lands! Not only will doing so impact the wildlife, but it destroys the whole point of going out hiking and enjoying the natural lands as they are now not natural anymore. Please vote no to the development plans. The people who actually use these areas are against developing and destroying Lebanon Hills- VOTE NO! Thank you for your time.
Hermundson, Taylor	2/8	I am writing in regards to the Lebanon Hills development plans. I have been a resident of Eagan, MN for over 20 years, and my family and I frequent the Lebanon Hills park on nearly a daily basis, when weather permits. I DO NOT support the proposed plan to develop Lebanon Hills. The whole point of this park is for it to be natural. There are other, more "developed" parks around the area that those wishing for a more "developed" experience may go to. The proposed development plan will ruin the point of Lebanon Hills, and destroy an area that my family and I utilize very frequently. Please VOTE NO TO THE LEBANON HILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN. Thank you for your time and consideration.
Herne, Emily	2/23	I do not support this plan. Vote NO to this plan.
Herrgott, Chaia	2/24	I wanted to write and express my opposition to the proposed development plan of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I frequent many county parks throughout the metro area and have yet to find one as unique as Lebanon Hills. The dirt paths and extensive wooded acreage in the middle of the suburbs of Eagan and Apple Valley make it one of my favorite destinations. The only way to enjoy a park similar to Lebanon Hills is to travel many hours outside of the metro area. The uniqueness of Lebanon Hills comes from its preserved natural wilderness in the midst of a developed community. This park is truly a "diamond in the rough." Please consider keeping this park as the slogan suggests: "Forever Wild."
Hesse, Kathy	2/20	I'm writing to convey my concern and lack of support for the Lebanon Hills proposal and request your 'no' vote for this plan in Feb. 25th. Lebanon Hills is a unique park in Dakota County and in the east central part of the state. Additional amenities and linking to other trails is not a priority for this park. Love it as it is.
Hewitt, Jean	2/23	<p>I am asking and pleading to you to PLEASE vote NO to the 2015 plan. Please do NOT support this plan as it is currently written. Please take a step back and develop a committee to write a totally new plan and consider all options before committing to a plan. In my opinion the citizen panel was very controlled. The public was not informed of the members and we couldn't contact them to provide input. It didn't allow for any public comment during the meetings. This citizen panel seems like the county commissioners controlled it so much and limited any improvements it could make.</p> <p>Lebanon Hills is a wilderness park in the heart of the Twin Cities area. It is a mini Boundary Waters right here. Please promote and capitalize on this unique park. Please preserve this gem of a park. It is a proven fact that we need nature, especially with our busy and stressful lives. It is important to walk on dirt, to see and hear the wildlife and the peace and quiet of this park. Please do not ruin this part for this and future generations. PLEASE preserve this wilderness!!! Please do no or very little development. I would like to see the plan revised to have much less development and more in ecological management. Restore and enhance the parks natural environment. Work on invasive species (buckthorn,</p>

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garlic mustard, ragweed, white sweet clover), etc.

Please do NOT put in a paved connector trail in Lebanon Park. This will ruin the natural feel to this park and will create other problems. Once this is paved, there is no going back. Cutting down all of the trees needed for this trail is heart wrenching. Also, it will weaken the root system of the nearby trees. When trees are weakened they are more vulnerable to diseases. The cost to put in the paved trail is astronomical. Also there is a limited plan to cover the ongoing operation and maintenance, repair and replacement costs. It seems this is unfunded and has not been identified where this will come from. It is my fear that you will need/want to raise taxes or charge to use the park. This paved trail will require year round maintenance including snow removal and will bring in salt/chemicals/sand into the park and most likely will have a huge impact on the eco system of the park and could kill vegetation, affect the ponds/lakes in the park, affect the wildlife, etc.

Please find another way to do the Greenway and Connector trails with existing trails or develop trails outside of Lebanon Park. I understand that Cliff will be widened. Is there a way to include a bike path along Cliff as part of that project? Also other bike paths are being built. I would like to suggest to complete those paths. Accurately access the ongoing operation and maintenance costs per mile of trail. Also I oppose using legacy funds for development of the park All of the other parks in the county are paved. Please keep Lebanon undeveloped and the unique park that it is. Please do not make it like every other park. Too many parks are in need of repair. Please spend funds on maintaining what we already have. I also understand there are plans to light this connector trail. That is additional maintenance costs and electricity costs. We moved to this area because of the close proximity to this special park. It hurts my heart to even think of this park being forever paved and developed. There has been lots of opposition to this 2015 plan and especially the Connector Trail. It appears the county commissioners are not listening to the public and is planning to do whatever they want. It is very sad that the elected officials who are supposed to represent the people are not listening to them. It seems that they are so driven with the connector trail and that they don't seem to care what the public says. A concerned citizen and user of the park,

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Hewitt, Jim 2/23

Being an avid hunter, fisherman and outdoorsmen, I would like to see Lebanon Hills Park remain just as it is, the way God intended it to be. There are several parks in our community that have been built upon, paved over and "improved" by man, only to become just another park. Lebanon Hills Park is truly one of a kind and a true treasure for Dakota county, must we disturb this natural beauty to make it just another park? Or should we leave it alone, so people can enjoy natures beauty without man trying to "make it better". I ask those of you who will be making the decision to vote NO and leave a small piece of our community as God intended it to be.

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Heyer, Chris 2/18

I was very disappointed to hear that there are proposals to put paved trails inside the Lebanon hills park. I understand if paved trails lead up to the park, but PLEASE do not add paved trails within the park. There are so few areas within the metro left where you can feel like you are truly out in the wilderness, and paved trails would spoil that experience inside the park. Runner, Biker, Wilderness fan

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Hines, Michelle 2/23

I do not support this plan. Please vote NO to this plan. Dakota County Parks - please let's keep them Forever Wild!

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Hjellming, Sheryl 2/18

I would like to give you my option on the proposed changes to Lebanon Hills Park. I LOVE the park the way it is because I feel like I'm away from the hustle and bustle of the cities when I am there. I enjoy the feeling of stepping away from the crazy busyness of life and enjoying nature and the quiet that I find there. Please don't change that! I would be really sad to lose the beauty of the park as I know it.

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Hoaglund	2/25	Just a quick reminder that we love the trails as they are at Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I am an avid fan of the outdoors. As a employee of REI I love sending my customers out to the trails so they can be with nature. I'm a member of a local trail running group that motivates runners to get out, enjoy the woods, take care of the trails, and give back to their communities. I know we can continue to support care and safe use of our special places in Minnesota. Please pass this message along to the people helping to keep the park how it is. I really appreciate it.
Hockert, Carol	2/7	As a frequent user of Lebanon Hills trails and as a taxpayer in Dakota county, I oppose the plan to pave miles of trail. There are plenty of paved trails in the community and few natural trails. Please keep the ones we have.
Hodack, Greg		Phone Comment: Leave the park alone. There are enough trails. Please leave it as-is.
Hoekstra, Gerald	2/19	As a birder and nature lover I visit Lebanon Hills Park reserve frequently. Like many others, I value its relatively undeveloped character. I understand that the County Board is about to vote on a plan to further develop this park with paved trails. The Twin Cities area has plenty of highly developed parks. I urge you to protect the more wild nature of this park and vote to leave it as it is.
Hoffman, Ted and Jean	2/21	Please do not develop Lebanon Hills Regional Park with any more asphalt or concrete. Dakota County needs "wild" natural parklands set aside for wildlife and citizens. The existing jogging/walking/hiking/skiing/horse paths are wonderful and allow for a beautiful way to get back to nature. We already have a great mountain biking area near the zoo and a terrific biking trail at Highline. I believe we can allocate our tax money for better, more necessary needs. Say "No" to wasting millions on our local paradise.
Holthof Bauers, Pamela	2/22	As a lifelong resident of Dakota County, I am very saddened at the idea of the proposed expansion of Lebanon Hills. I have seen so much growth and development over the last 50 years in this beautiful area we live, with much natural beauty lost to progress and growth. Our park system is phenomenal with many different parks offering many varied amenities. Please vote no to the proposed plan to expand and modernize Lebanon Hills. The natural environment there is one of the very few aesthetically beautiful wilderness areas we have in the south metro. I choose to live in MN for many reasons, one of which is for the natural beauty of our state's wilderness and hope we can preserve that in Lebanon Hills. Thank you,
Hooper, Alan	2/18	I very strongly support the perspective of Maryanne Passe of Wilderness in the city regarding Lebanon Hills (see Mpls Trib.Feb. 18, 2015). Losing the wilderness element in Lebanon Hills would be tragic. Minnesotans are unique in their appreciation and knowledge of nature. Passing this ethic through generations requires natural environments within reach of the city youth. Please vote no on this plan.
Horvath, Frank and Lee Anne	2/24	Trail paving, while it means accessibility for a few, will surely degrade the character of our park. Please don't. Judging from similar mistakes in nearby parks, paving will significantly reduce the natural ambiance of Lebanon Hills. We specifically hike and recreate in this wonderful park because it's is "wild" and natural and do not want it ruined.
Hubb, Jennifer	2/18	Please consider retaining the natural space that today makes Lebanon Hills so inviting. We may see revenue forecasts and potential new activities as a way of changing the landscape for the better, but in fact that loses the natural wonderment that Eagan and surrounding communities thrive on. We are a natural community of Minnesotans, and don't need pavement to grant us healthy living. As a runner, it would be nice to have a new running path to throw my shoes upon, but trust me, there are plenty already in our community. Keep the dirt. Retain the wild. Make sure our community doesn't lose yet another piece of green for our children.

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Huber, Mark	2/19	Please leave Lebanon Hills alone, we want this park preserved as wilderness. We do not need our beloved Lebanon to become another over-improved park. There are already plenty of Dakota County improved and accessible parks as well as many other parks throughout the greater metropolitan area. We do not want paved pathways, mulituse routes through the park or any other infringement on this natural, protected area. We expect each Commissioner to protect our Park and our pocketbooks from economic exploitation and corruption. This will be our single greatest factor in our own voting decisions.
Huginin, Debra	2/24	PLEASE vote NO to the plan to demolish our Lebanon Regional Park. We have plenty of "access" to paved parks and will never be able to keep native areas once developed. Let me know if you have questions or comments. And may I re-state, I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PLAN!!
Hurka, Josie	2/25	I do NOT support the proposed trail that would go through Lebanon. I believe it is an awful idea, that would impact this natural space. It would need to be maintaned. We are so lucky to have this huge nature preserve in a large suburban area, and to put a paved trail in there would completely change it. Please consider strongly this is a bad idea. I promise not to vote for anyone who supports this decision.
Huyck, Avery	2/19	<p>My name is Avery Huyck, and I am a resident of Apple Valley, Minnesota. I have heard about the plan for new amenities for the Apple Valley and Eagan areas of the park. I would urge you to vote against this plan. There would be so much wilderness lost if that were to happen, lessening the strength of the mantra at Lebanon Hills: Forever wild. There is something so much different about walking on a path made of leaves, dirt, and tree roots rather than a paved trail.</p> <p>I truly hope this plan does not pass, I have spent many memorable times in the wilderness of Lebanon Hills, and to see any of it get demolished would be devastating. Thank you for your time,</p>
Iles, Chris	2/24	I just wanted to drop you a quick note regarding the Lebanon Hills Master Plan. As a life-long user of the park (I visit the park approx.. 30-50 days each year) I'd like to express my desire to keep the park as wild and undeveloped as possible. It is truly a wilderness oasis, which as you know, is an incredibly rare amenity in an urban center like ours. The low-impact recreation activities in the park offer a unique way to enjoy some natural beauty while getting some healthy exercise. I fear further development of the park would significantly degrade the natural experience, which is becoming more and more rare this day in age. Thank you for letting me express my opinion.
Imhoff, Mary	2/25	Again, I would like to voice my concern, and clearly state that <i>I do not support the current plan for the restoration of Lebanon Park</i> . Too much of this type of restoration will take away from the natural look and feel of Lebanon. This is a gem akin to the BWCA, and after you are finished with spending 14 million some dollars on awesome nature area, it will look and feel like all the other nature parks in the Twin City area -- very suburban with high impact trails and the leveling of hills and trees. I say we're back to the drawing board. Please, please, do not go ahead with this plan.
Ingram, Christie	2/21	I am a Dakota County resident who uses Lebanon Hills often. Please vote no to black top trails!
Ingram, Christie	2/21	I do not support paved trails. Please vote no.
Ireland, Carl W.	2/24	In step with a principle followed by Gifford Pinchot, Theodore Roosevelt's first Chief Forester for the U.S. Forest Service, of, "Doing the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run", the Draft: January 15, 2015 Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park, should not be implemented as drafted. I do not support the plan for the following reasons: The "Plan" started out on the wrong foot by not first determining

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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what Dakota County Citizens want in and for the Park, then went in the wrong direction by promoting a plan proposed by "consultants" who would benefit financially from the plan being implemented and attempting to force it onto County Citizens. The preponderance of responses from Citizens, which have been basically overlooked/ignored, have made it clear that it is unacceptable to many. The "Plan" suffers primarily from overdevelopment that threatens the primary purpose of and reason for the Park, to set it aside "as wild land for future generations". The highest priority park service per the County Residential Survey on page ii of the "Plan Summary" is "Protecting-restoring woods, prairies, lakes, ponds and wetlands". While the "Plan" states that is the top priority, the proposed new trail and other construction the majority of the Plan emphasizes raises questions of whether that stated priority is primarily "lip service" plus if the County Parks Budget is and will be adequate to provide the funds required for it? Citizen Panel Members have stated that repeated questions regarding funding were evaded or never fully answered.

The Five-Year 2015 - 19 Park Budget leaves trail maintenance and future replacement needs only partly funded. The article, "Aging Trails are leading to big bills", in the January 30 Star Tribune, stated that "Paved trails typically have a life span of 20 years before cracks, erosion and potholes require them to be completely rebuilt". Dakota County Park visitors will be far better served by reducing the quantity of new trail construction to help assure the quality what we now have will be maintained and possibly improved rather than being left with a less desirable and inviting park.

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Iverson,  
Adam

2/13

Please do not pave any more of Lebanon Hills. There is more than enough pavement in this world. Be strong enough to commit to a maintaining space with minimal human involvement. That is a much more valuable long-term investment than any paved paths can ever be. Seriously. Humans are wrecking the planet by "developing" it for convenience and a misguided set of aesthetics. Don't be those people. Be better than that. Be the people who recognize that leaving nature alone is beautiful. Be the people who choose to allocate public funding for projects that don't require repeated and costly maintenance. Do the right thing. Don't pave Lebanon Hills.

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Jaakola, Jenny	2/21	<p>I meant to send this picture along with my comments of an opossum that came out during a spring-like day on Dec. 28, 2013. I took this picture with my phone during a winter hike in the park about 1/4 mile from Schultz Lake. I've seen countless wildlife on my walks over the years, too much to list in this message. I want to add my comments before the board votes on the plan for Lebanon Hills in March. I am against adding more paved trails and further development of the park in general.</p> <p>My family has been enjoying Lebanon Hills regularly since 1993 when we moved to Eagan. We used to bring our children to swim at Schultz Beach when they were little. We still use the natural trails throughout the park year round as we are avid hikers and cross-country skiers. The park has always been a calming retreat to nature for us. I'm originally from northern Minnesota and my husband is from Finland. We have lived in Eagan for the past 20+ years and have been so grateful to have a resource like this so close to where we live that reminds us of the nature that we both grew up in. It is one reason we decided not to purchase a cabin and spend our weekends and vacations driving "up north" because we can easily "get away from it all" at Lebanon Hills within minutes from our home on a regular basis.</p> <p>We're very concerned about the plans for paved year- round paths throughout the park and more development. We have seen the park's popularity and use grow rapidly over the years. More paved trails will encourage much heavier use and turn a quiet, natural refuge into a busy, high traffic playground. There are plenty of other paved trails in parks and around lakes all over the twin cities for people that need that type of access. Once this typed of development is started, there is no going back, and where will it end? Let's not ruin one of the last natural gems left in the Twin Cities by paving it and adding all sorts of amenities. Please "modernize" as little as possible. Less is more.</p>	
Jackson, Val	2/22	<p>I do not support the Master plan, and I do not support spending \$14 million for proposed new development and the ongoing increased maintenance expenses which would be required from taxpayers. I am opposed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the 10'-wide connector trail through the park (high-speed bikes, strollers, wheelchairs, and hikers cannot "share" the same trail safely),</li> <li>• the use of Legacy Fund dollars for development, nor</li> <li>• the estimated total cost of \$28 million of the project</li> </ul> <p>Please leave Lebanon Hills "Forever Wild"! Please go back to the drawing board, create a plan which restores the park, eradicates the invasive species, and give Lebanon Hills the TLC it so desperately needs.</p>	
Jaenicke, Connie	2/12	<p>Please do anything to keep lebanon hills as is. It is a tres sure and worth the expense.</p>	
Janis, Gregory	2/23	<p>When viewed from the air, it is obvious that Lebanon Hills Park is a precious emerald surviving the relentless push of urban development. Nowhere else in the region can you see such large tracts of land unspoiled by development; unspoiled by concrete and pavement. I hope that Lebanon Hills Park can continue to remain in that precious state. I hope that Lebanon Hills remains a park that is "Forever Wild". Sadly, there is nothing wild about the proposed concrete paths, but the concrete would be <i>forever</i>.</p> <p>Fifteen years ago my family and I relocated to the twin cities. While we found the state park system to be excellent, but the close parks felt over</p>	

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developed. Later that year we discover the unspoiled setting of Lebanon Hills, which was reminiscent of the wild green trails of Appalachia. Most weekends and many summer nights were spent meandering the then unmarked trails. My children and their friends learned to appreciate the taste of real nature close to home. They learned the beauty of the trees and the land, but also the less easily grasped beauty of a bog, and the value of dead wood in a forest. Most uniquely, they and everyone else who has visited the park has been able to experience the solitude of a place not recently disturbed by man; the feel and smells of a nearly pristine woods. These are lessons that cannot be learned in an urban park of paved paths. Permanent trails would forever destroy the magic of Lebanon Hills Park.

I fail to understand how a group of people entrusted to protect the park would consider to lay concrete within its confines? The twin cities has ample hard-surface bike paths, including fabulous paths within Dakota County. What we lack in assessable unspoiled wilderness. I believe the park once had a charter disallowing building permanent structures within the confines of the park. That was the wisest of ideas; let the natural beauty of the park build stewards of the land out of casual visitors. I understand the desire to increase the utilization of the park, but scarring the park with concrete is not the answer. The paved parks of Minneapolis may have more visitors, but the value of Lebanon Hills Park is so much grander than visitor counts. Please keep Lebanon Hills Park *Forever Wild*, and keep the urbanized, concrete parks in Minneapolis. Thank you for your careful consideration,

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Jarvis, Alex	2/25	Please don't change Lebanon Hills. We have enough modernized parks in Minnesota already, and nature as nature is important for people to have access to. I realize you think you are doing the public a favor by making it more like other parks, but you are actually doing us all a huge dis-service by even considering the idea. I mean for one, you have inconvenienced all of the people who care about nature just by making us aware of your idea. Please learn to understand ecology and nature, rather than trying to make it what you want it to be.
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Jazlan, Josephina	2/24	I do not support this plan. Vote NO to this plan.
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Lebanon Hills Regional Park 2014 Master Plan Citizen Advisory Panel

Minority Report to Dakota County Board of Commissioners

In February 2014, the Dakota County Board of Commissioners recognized a need for additional public involvement on the draft Lebanon Hills Master Plan and update related to controversy over specific plan proposals, particularly the Connector Trail. The Citizen Advisory Panel was established as a result.

Part 1 - Composition

Jenkins, Holly Citizen Panel Member	1/13	<p>A) The Board-appointed panel could be perceived as unbalanced representation of citizens and park user groups, especially if intended to be representative of Dakota County residents.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appointed members included 15 men and five women.</li> <li>2. The Citizen Advisory Panel included six individuals with park planning affiliations predisposed to park development, including the Director of Anoka County Parks.</li> </ol> <p>B) Two members resigned early in the process and positions were not filled despite a large pool of candidates.</p>
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Part 2 - Proceedings

A) Paid consultants and staff were not there "as needed for technical assistance", but rather to ensure that panel members only consider select data that supported the 2013 draft plan and update conclusions.

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1. Data from national sources and Met Council which supported elements of the plan were presented. Data available from the same sources but less supportive of the plan was not presented.
  2. Comparison to other regional parks with regard to bikeways was frequently presented, indicating Dakota County was lagging. Comparisons with regard to marketing, programming, staffing and budgeting, which also lag in Dakota County, were not presented.
  3. A select portion of a Dakota County Park System Survey was presented showing paved trails in parks is a high priority of residents. A panel member requested the complete survey data, which showed that paved trails in parks are not as highly rated as portrayed by the consultant. Staff provided panel members with a revised and over-simplified version which did not tell the complete findings.
  4. Panel requested 2001 Master Plan implementation data. Staff provided skewed data by excluding Development spending, which was more than triple the spending for stewardship, giving the panel a false picture of the county's record.
- B) Information requested by panel members to make informed decisions was not provided. Most notable, a breakdown of budgets was never provided despite repeated requests.
1. Staff did not provide cost estimates for initial construction or annual maintenance of proposed new paved trails and additional planned infrastructure.
  2. Staff did not explain how the county will accommodate increased annual expenses incurred by implementation of the draft plan.
  3. Staff did not explain how the county would adequately fund pertinent park services such as staffing (including a volunteer coordinator), programming, marketing, outreach, stewardship while also adequately funding annual expenses for new development.
- C) Open discussion among panel members was suppressed and there was no opportunity for public input.
1. An inordinate amount of meeting time was consumed by consultants.
  2. Facilitator suppressed open discussions with comments such as:
    - a) "Are there any burning comments...?"
    - b) "And your point is...?"
    - c) "We'll get back to that another time..."
  3. Opinions from consultants were interjected.
    - a) "I wouldn't do that if I were you..." ended a panel suggestion for a moratorium to limit development.
    - b) "Trust us..." ended panel discussion on construction details.
  4. As defined by the operating guidelines, public comments or testimony was not allowed. Given the public interest on this issue, this may not have served in the best interest of county residents.
- D) Panel members received agendas and meeting materials without adequate time to prepare for meetings.
1. Panel request to receive materials at least one week prior to meetings for adequate time to review, consider and provide meaningful input for discussion, was not accommodated.
  2. Agendas, meeting notes, suggested reading and lengthy presentation material were typically made available two days prior to meetings: June 10 for June 12 meeting; June 23 for June 25 meeting; July 16 for July 17 meeting
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E) There was no opportunity for review of Final Report by the panel as a whole.

1. Draft versions were written by the facilitator and provided to panel members.
2. A 27-page draft final report was provided to panel members on Fri, 12/5, at 4:15pm, for review and comment at the final meeting on Mon., 12/8.
3. Further refinements and additions to the Report were made after the final panel meeting.
4. A 45-page Final Report was provided by staff to panel members on 12/31 (New Year's Eve) with request for comments due by noon the following Monday, 1/5/15.

Conclusion: The Citizen Advisory Panel was not established to participate in the process of updating the 2001 Master Plan. This is evident considering the 2001 Plan was only provided to panel members after repeated requests by concerned citizens. Rather, the Panel was created and proceedings controlled in a manner that would enable Dakota County to change the direction Lebanon Hills was heading, as proposed in the 2008 Parks Plan.

If the 2014 draft plan is intended to serve as an update to the 2001 plan, the following suggestions are offered as part of this minority report.

- ☐ Stronger levels of commitment, both financial and implementation, to catch up on the desperately needed ecological restoration of the park as clearly called for in the 2001 Master Plan and highly prioritized by Dakota County residents.
- ☐ Recreation areas and trails should be designed to provide the best opportunities to all visitors, including those not currently served by the park, without negating the intrinsic value of this park's natural resource base.
- ☐ Prioritize restoration and additional pertinent park services such as programming, marketing, and staffing (including a volunteer coordinator) before increasing the park's development footprint. Any additional infrastructure should serve to compliment, not conflict with, the high-quality nature-based recreation and education Lebanon Hills is valued for.

This will help to assure greater public support for the plan update and the best possible opportunities for all those coming to the park now and in the future in a fiscally sustainable manner. Respectfully submitted, Holly Jenkins, LHRP 2014 Citizen Advisory Panel Member, January 13, 2015

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At the January 13 Physical Development Committee meeting, Commissioner Schouweiler indicated that the planning staff has an abundance of other projects to focus on, and that enough time and money has been invested in the Lebanon Hills master plan update process. While this may be true, that does not mean the plan is ready to adopt.

Jenkins, Holly 2/27

Natural Resources -- The revised plan emphasizes restoration and preservation of the park's natural resources, but there is no true accountability toward implementation or funding to achieve short-term restoration and long-term preservation. I would support a master plan that includes language to assure accountability toward restoration and preservation of the ecological systems in this park. For your consideration -- in the Parks CIP, increase the allocation to natural resources for parks, separate from greenways; Parks and Trails Legacy Funds and additional grants could provide an additional source of funding for stewardship, programming and staffing; volunteer projects could be coordinated on an ongoing basis.

Accessibility -- I feel strongly that the revised plan is not the best option, and alternatives should be considered. I would support a plan that achieves accessibility by providing a comparable experience such as an ADA compliant *recreational* trail, pavement or preferably an environmentally friendly permeable surface, leading to an interior section of the park where all ages and abilities can benefit from a back-to-nature tranquil setting. Adaptable programs and rental equipment should also be considered.

Connector Trail -- The design standards meet criteria for a regional bike trail to accommodate bicycle speeds up to 20mph. The construction

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corridor, as noted in a presentation to the citizen panel, will be 30-80' wide. The construction required for a 6-mile, ADA compliant bikeway, kept free of snow/ice, will irreversibly change the landscape which this park was established to preserve. Safety concerns, recreation and natural resource conflicts, and ongoing funding constraints are among concerns I share with others regarding the revised plan.

Page 186 - "Lebanon Hills is located at the center of the county greenway network. *Inability to complete the paved, bike able trail through Lebanon Hills would undermine the quality of the greenway network concept...*" Very strongly disagree. Being at the center of the network is not a concern. Regional trails leading to the park offer great alternatives to bring people to Lebanon Hills. But "through" Lebanon Hills destroys the very experience which makes this a destination park. Bringing people to the park and then letting them explore and enjoy the unique opportunities within the park, truly provides something for everyone.

For these reasons and more, I do not support the 2015 revised plan and urge you not to adopt it. I again suggest that you capitalize on the passion people have for this park. Rather than change it, market Lebanon Hills' unique character and opportunities.

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### LEBANON HILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN - A Stakeholder's Appeal

As a member of the Stakeholder's Task Force for developing the 2001 Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park, I have carefully reviewed the process that we used for the development of the 2001 plan and the enforcement of that plan over more than a decade. I have also reviewed the process, the data, current comments and published letters presenting views of various park users, park staff, allied agencies and the Dakota County Commissioners for the current proposed development plan.

It is clear to me that the vision of the 2001 park master plan has not been enforced and has consistently moved toward more hard development versus a balanced plan emphasizing a focus on rehabilitation and maintenance of the natural environment. When we challenged the expenditure of funds while implementing the 2001 plan it was very evident that the funds spent for hard development far exceeded the funds spent for the natural environment; although the parks planning department method for recording such costs would show a closer balance. The process used for the 2001 plan consisted of a Task Force of park users and other allied partners that had a reasonable chance for open honest user input. It was not easy to provide that input through a County provided facilitator, but we insisted upon an open dialog that resulted in a plan that we all accepted and was strongly supported and adopted by the County Board. We had an excellent relationship with, and the support of, several board members throughout the process and they were very appreciative of our effort. As part of the plan we developed a section on enforcement, including following the "money spent" trail, but it was certainly not strong enough and very difficult to monitor effectively. The process for developing the current Development Plan is quite different from the Stakeholder input process used before. This has resulted in a plan far from the vision and spirit of the 2001 plan adopted by the Commissioners. We must remember that the overarching vision and spirit of the 2001 plan was to acknowledge that Lebanon Hills Park would be a unique natural park that is DIFFERENT THAN ALL OF THE OTHER REGIONAL PARKS in the system. This one park would provide a unique experience that no other park would provide. It was not planned to provide ALL of the amenities found in other parks, but would emphasize the natural environment and minimize hard development. I feel the process used for the current development plan was first based on various funding sources available, if the County would allow this park to become part of the Greenway system, become a hub for the intersection of hard surface trails, creating a wide (10' plus buffer ) trail bisecting the park, grading and removal of steep hills and trees, enhanced shelters and surrounding paving; the list goes on and on. I think the process then continued by gathering the data to support this new direction. As I and others reviewed the data it was clear that not all of the data was for this park alone, but included statistics from all of the County parks in general. The results of most of the data gathered over a long period, indicated over 80% of the respondents were against the development shown in the latest plan, against paved trails and for maintaining the unique natural environment of this park. The County then paused the process, and appointed a citizen committee to review the process and provide input. This committee was carefully selected, had a specific scope of work ( which did not include reviewing and validating the user data) and was tightly controlled by a County provided facilitator. The results were predictable: a few changes, but no fundamental change in the overall concept of a new vision for the park. I was encouraged by the 2001 process. I truly believed that the Task Force effort was worthwhile, had valid user input that resulted in an excellent

Jenkins,  
James E.

2/20

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		<p>plan for the future and that the County Board embraced. I feel this current process has simply been a “ follow the available funds” approach and abandon the great vision that we all had for the park. So, one more time, I appeal to the County Commissioners: DO NOT approve this development plan and return to the vision of the plan that you adopted and enthusiastically supported in 2001.</p>
Jenkins, Pastor Tom	2/9	<p>I would like to add my voice to those who would encourage the County Board of Commissioners to vote down the considered changes suggested by the updated Dakota County Parks Master Plan. I do not support this development and expenditure of County resources for this purpose.</p>
Jenkins, Stacey	2/24	<p>I am writing to voice my opposition to the revised draft plan for Lebanon Hills. I would be happy to see the Greenway come through our part of town, but don't want it to run right through the middle of the park. There has to be some other route the Greenway could take. Please take a further look at this project and find another route for the Greenway.</p>
		<p>Thank you for the reply to my initial email regarding the Revised Plan concerning Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I appreciate the feedback and acknowledgment of communication. I would like to make some additional comments for the public record.</p> <p>First of all, I would like to extend a public measure of gratitude for the public service of our Board of Commissioners. I trust that they have used the privilege of serving the taxpayers of Dakota County to help make our common life better for as many as possible. They are to be commended for their service. In particular, I want to offer my thanks to my particular precinct representative, Mr. Tom Egan. He has served the people of Eagan and Dakota County well.</p> <p>I have communicated with the Board over the last year regarding my personal and professional opinion regarding the initial proposal for development in Lebanon Hills, as well as my personal and professional opinion regarding the revision. These are the salient points of the last year's communication:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) It is an acceptable land use ethic to consider the interests of the local/regional ecology as the primary factor in deciding how land is to be used.</li><li>2) The impact upon the soil and water quality -- as well as the aesthetic value of a less disturbed environment -- far outweighs the desired goals of the Board's proposed developments. However noble the goals of increasing the variety of experiences and creating a comparable experience for users of all abilities and economic backgrounds might be, they may fall into the range of entertainment. They are not a necessity. In fact, comparable experiences may be found in other parks in the Regional Park System and in municipal parks in the area.</li><li>3) The overall cost of the proposal is not particularly palatable. Understanding that a considerable portion of the funding will be provided by Federal dollars -- along with Legacy Amendment Funds -- still does not serve to convince me that this is good stewardship of our collective wealth. Priorities in greater social services would be one particular area in which the tax payers might direct the efforts of the Board.</li><li>4) Lebanon Hills Regional Park offers a unique opportunity for the Board of Commissioners to make a bold statement about a different type of park experience in an urban area. It is an opportunity to say that though we have the ability to develop the land, we choose to leave it "Wild Forever" to honor beliefs that are longer lasting than our particular generation's legacy.</li></ol> <p>In response to my year-long correspondence with the Board, I have received the same information which is present in the Revised plan. In addition, I received some feedback from the Board which causes me to question whether or not the Board will truly consider the wishes of the tax payers on this particular issue. I understand that the Metropolitan Council manages the Regional Park system. I also understand that the Metropolitan Council has a particular vision for the development of the Greenway Trail System. With this vision and responsibility, the Metropolitan Council has placed the County Board of Commissioners in the position of moderator between the wishes of the people of Dakota County and the Metropolitan Council. The question at hand seems to be whether the County Board will heed the overwhelming negative</p>

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response of individual citizens and local organizations or heed the desires of the Metropolitan Council and its vision. With at least one member of the Board of Commissioners having served on the Metropolitan Council, will the Board be able to act objectively? It seems to me that there is a clear conflict of interest.

As I stated, I have been offering a personal and professional objection to both plans offered by our County Board. While the bulk of my communication with the Board has been positive, my continued questioning regarding this process and plan has also been met by behavior that was not acceptable. In emails from the Board, I was described as "confused, self-righteous, and irrational" for having a view that is different from the vision being offered by the Metropolitan Council and the Board of Commissioners. I have sent the transcript to Gail Plewacki to confirm this. Again, I question whether or not the Board will listen to the wishes of its taxpayers and constituents when an opposing view is labeled irrational. I continue to stand in opposition to this plan as revised and encourage the Board to reconsider and arrive at new conclusions.

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As an 80-visit per year patron of Lebanon Hills Regional Park and as your constituent (4920 Ashley Ln #224), I only became aware that major changes have been planned for this park very recently. While my political inclinations tend to be liberal and spendy, I'm of the opinion that most of the proposed improvements to this park do not represent best allocation of Dakota County's resources. Nor do I believe that the Planning Commission has set realistic goals regarding recreational parkland generally.

Jensen, David 2/23

The proposed connector trail through Lebanon Hills speaks to both issues. The purpose of the connector trail is to connect other trails planned to converge on LHRP, but anecdotally the progress in the development of the Greenway Collaborative appears to be stalled on several fronts. At 200 miles, requiring easements from a plenitude of uninterested private owners along 40 miles of its proposed routes, the Greenway Collaborative is breathtaking in its scope and complexity. Yesterday I spent a couple hours taking reconnaissance of the proposed route for the Mendota Heights - LHRP pathway and came to believe that the estimated cost of this portion of the Greenway is significantly less than half, perhaps less than a third, of its real expense, were it completed. That the Dodge Nature Center along the preferred route has flatly denied its cooperation doesn't set a positive precedent for other property owners along this single, short segment of the 200 mile enterprise.

The upshot is that none of the 3 or 4 trails to LHRP have actually been built; and that, failing their completion, the proposed connector trail within the park would constitute Dakota County's very own Bridge to Nowhere. In the meanwhile, there are any number of roadside multi-use trails that could be built. For example, there is at present no safe access to LHRP's main entrance for bicyclists along Cedar Avenue.

If you disagree with any of my assertions here I would be happy to hear from you. Absent any rebuttal you may wish to provide, I would urge you, as an elected official, to rein in the well-buffered Planning Commission. This is a group which needs to re-establish its credibility by planning and executing small scale projects which the entire community can view as enhancements without divisive controversy.

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Jensen, David 2/23

I am wholly opposed to all but the restorative aspect of the proposed master plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. There is no question that LHRP is largely ADA compliant. Whether this compliance extends to the Holland Lake fishing pier, or to an actual swim in Schultz Lake, I can't say. But from the main visitor center there is excellent wheelchair access to the unpaved trails which are the predominant feature of the park. People who prefer to navigate paved trails have plenty of options, both here in Dakota County and metro-wide. People who prefer to navigate unpaved trails do not have many options at all. It's incumbent on the conservators of LHRP not to submit to the pleas of special interests that this park needs to become something other than what it already is. The exponential growth of park traffic (61%) above population growth (11%) should inform the Planning Commission that it need not take any steps to enhance LHRP's popularity. Whether the park needs a paved connector trail is absurd: there are no external trails to connect.

In reviewing recreational facilities proposed by the Planning Commission generally, in LHRP and elsewhere, one can't help but be disappointed by a burgeoning gap, here in the 21st Century, between idealistic promise and haphazard execution. The overwhelming sense of dismay conveyed in page after page of citizens' comments regarding the LHRP master plan suggests that the very dynamics of county governance may become ripe

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for public scrutiny, should your Commission's reach continue to exceed its grasp.

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Johnson, Anne Marie 2/25

Mine was nothing fancy, but if you need some suggestions, here's what I wrote: I am writing to you today as a citizen of Egan that uses the Lebanon Hills park on a regular basis, and asking you to NOT to approve the proposed plan to pave over 6 miles of this park!

Our kids live in a world where paved access to parks is prevalent but the ability to wander, explore, and experience nature in its undisturbed state is exceedingly rare. According to the book "Last Child in the Woods", there is a staggering divide between children and the outdoors. Child advocacy expert Richard Louv directly links the lack of nature in the lives of today's wired generation—he calls it nature-deficit—to some of the most disturbing childhood trends, such as the rises in obesity, attention disorders, and depression. I can attest first hand to the benefits my children and I experience when we disconnect, and explore the wild, natural setting of Lebanon Hills.

PLEASE, do not forever destroy this natural environment. Once you pave it (10 feet wide for 6 miles) it will never be wild again.

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Johnson, Barry 2/6

I've been following the Lebanon Hills Planning effort since it was announced, and would like to offer up some final thoughts for the record as the Dakota County Board of Commissioners makes its decision.

- The idea of gaining public comment via Open Houses was a good one. The response to these Open Houses clearly showed overwhelming opposition to the plan. The staging of the events was, in my opinion poor. Based on the numerous table-top displays spread throughout the room, and the multiple subject matter experts, the concerned citizens attending never received a cohesive, consistent message about the park plan. Assuming good intentions, the staging of the meetings was designed to spur conversations with as many people as possible. There was, however, the suspicion that this was a tactic aimed at dispersing and muffling group response to a formal presentation from the county.
- The resulting Citizen Advisory Panel was another good idea. The structure, governance and objective of the panel fell far short. Instead of a "broad swath of community members" the panel members hand-selected by Commissioners came with extensive backgrounds about traditional park and rec development. In my estimation, their "world-view" is all about how to build more and bigger man-made elements into a park to "improve" it, vs. focusing on environmental stewardship. The governance was highly suspect, with a professional facilitator dictating what could and could not be discussed, and when. All of this inspired one panel member to file a "minority report" citing issues with the Panel report. Finally, the Commissioners clearly stated that they were not bound to accept or act on ANY input from the Citizen Panel. It's hard for me to assume good intentions on that last point. It seems like the Commissioners' position was "If the Panel recommends what we want to do to the park, we can state 'we asked citizens to speak and we are listening to them and taking action.' " If the Citizen Panel delivered recommendations counter to what the Commissioners wanted to do all along, they could reject ALL of the recommendations and plow forward, citizen input be damned.
- I am a bicyclist and a commuter. I support bike commuting. But running a bike path through the heart of the park strikes me as an incredible waste of money. for example, the new path planned near the Minnesota Zoo will run very close to existing paths along Johnny Cake and McAndrews. Existing roads bordering the park ALREADY have bike paths. I cannot imagine why dollars are being spent, and habitat destroyed on redundant public infrastructure. Worst of all, I strongly oppose Legacy funds being used for "bulldoze and build" construction projects.
- My understanding is that the bike path requires sightlines of 240 feet, which will result major habitat destruction as large swaths of trees and shrubs are clear cut at every turn of the trail.
- The grading required to make the path ADA-compliant will require a large amount of retaining walls be added to the park. Look at any of the large retaining walls (along McAndrew near Falcon Ridge Middle School, or along Diamond Path near the golf course) and you will see that those walls do not stand up well to Minnesota winters. I envision ongoing repair and maintenance costs.
- The year-round plowing and general upkeep of the construction you plan will require significant maintenance costs. Again, my understanding is that those costs have not been estimated with certainty. I assume at least some (or most) of those costs will fall to Dakota County taxpayers

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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(many of whom oppose this massive construction plan).

- My final point is the most important of all: Lebanon Hills Regional Park, ironically billed as "Forever Wild" is one of the last highly rustic, wilderness-like parks in the metro area. It should be preserved, cherished, maintained and protected as just that, a wilderness-like gem. Your construction plan will change the park forever, and eliminate much or all of its current charm. I urge you to think ahead; in the decades to come, your decision may be viewed as short-sighted, economically wasteful, and not driving the results you intend (I believe the new construction and bike path will NOT gain the levels of use you envision). OR, you could be viewed as visionaries who understood that wilderness-like experiences are rare and becoming rarer, and should be preserved. Not to overstate the idea, but President Theodore Roosevelt took the long view in establishing so many national parks that continue to provide unique experiences to citizens. Other leaders chose to develop and build, resulting in overly commercialized parks that seek to mimic crass theme parks found in abundance across the nation.

- Please re-think your position.

- Please take the least intrusive approach. Run commuter paths outside the park.

- Please minimize construction and concrete and put more funding in to environmental stewardship.

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Johnson,  
Birgit

2/18

Please preserve Lebanon Hills as is for the future. We need all the natural places we have and should not take away more green open spaces.

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Johnson,  
Craig R.

2/20

Having read about the potential plans for adding paved trails to Lebanon Hills I am writing to offer my opinion as a resident of Dakota County. I have long considered Lebanon Hills a jewel of the local park system and visit regularly with my young daughter. Its pristine condition offers a respite from urban life and a chance for people of all ages to experience nature in its undisturbed splendor. We marvel at the abundant variety of wildlife and the comfort they seem to have within the parks' boundaries. I worry about the disturbance that they would be subject to during the construction period. I also worry about their comfort thereafter.

I implore you to let Lebanon Hills keep its unique identity among the parks system. This identity is so much more valuable than paved trails. Sometimes it is difficult to refrain from taking action when we see the opportunity for progress but, in this case, let us trust nature to continue to guide and inspire us without interference. Allowing Lebanon Hills to remain pristine is in the best interest of current and future generations who will find it ever more difficult to travel to and experience nature in its truest state. Thank you for your service and your consideration of my comments.

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Johnson,  
David

2/18

I am opposed to any paving of trails in and around Lebanon Hills. I use the extensive paved trail system of the twin Cities as I bike and roller blade. There are spectacular paved trails such as along the Mississippi down by Lily Dale to Downtown Minneapolis that go through woods There is only one good natural park for hiking and cross country skiing in the Twin Cities. Lebanon Hills. Please do not Change it!!

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Johnson,  
Heather and  
Norbert

2/18

We are frequent users of your existing trail systems (especially the cross country ski trails) and we are also bike trail users. We hope these existing trails for skiing and hiking remain "as-is" in their natural state without being compromised by bicycle highways. The Lebanon Hills is a special park because of its natural mixed forests, prairies, ponds and eskers and untouched by Development....please maintain this unique site by locating the new bike routes to the exterior boundaries of the park.

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Johnson,  
Michelle

2/23

My family often hikes in Lebanon Hills and live in Eagan. We are horrified at the idea of destroying the wilderness feel of this great park! The trails that are there are great and keep the feel of the park the way it should be. We do NOT want it to feel like a city park! Please don't put in the asphalt trails!

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Johnson, Rick	2/19	<p>Our family has lived in the vicinity of Lebanon Hills Park for the last 23 years. During that time we have enjoyed it and have been very amazed at all of the improvements made over that time. We do miss the days when we could walk down to the lake and float all day on an air mattress or inner tube. But, we also enjoy snowshoeing, skiing and hiking as well. Please give as much consideration to retaining as much of the wilderness value of the park as you can. I think everyone should have access for sure.</p> <p>But, paved paths will also bring motorized vehicles into areas that were not available previously and will further disrupt the natural peace of the park. Please be careful to be good custodians of that important facet of our park.</p>
Johnson, Sally and Jim	2/20	<p>We are devoted horse owners who use the horse trails at Lebanon Park during the months of May thru October. We love the park for the quiet nature trails which is a perfect place for day rides. I am opposed to the development plans which would increase the multi-use traffic on the trails. The horse community would like the park to stay quiet &amp; bike-free so the horses &amp; hikers can enjoy the wilderness atmosphere in an inner urban park. Please vote down the development plan coming in March 2015. Thank you for your support for the quiet nature park,</p>
Johnson, Scott	2/4	<p>So why should we bother to protest to our government when this is their public comment before the vote or comment period?: <a href="http://www.startribune.com/local/south/290697031.html?page=all&amp;prepage=2&amp;c=y#continue">http://www.startribune.com/local/south/290697031.html?page=all&amp;prepage=2&amp;c=y#continue</a></p> <p>Physical Development Director Steven Mielke said. "We certainly welcome and want this to be a broad-based input from the public, and we would want people to send their comments — for or against." Mielke said county staff anticipate the board will vote to move forward with the plan when they revisit it in March.</p> <p>Over 90% of the public, that has commented in the past two years, has said "NO" to this entire project. Why do you continue to push it through? This is the height of government employee and elected official arrogance over the citizens who pay the bills.</p>
Johnson, Tod	2/24	<p>Please vote against a paved trail through Lebanon Hills, there are many reasons I do not support this, I'm sure you've heard them all. The citizens of Dakota county are overwhelmingly against these so called improvements and failure to listen to the voters and taxpayers of the County would show how out of touch the Planning Commission is with the citizens you represent. If this passes I will note the names of the supporters of this and it will be reflected in my votes in the future and I will encourage others to do the same.</p>
Jones, Rafe	2/24	<p>I'm writing to register that I *do not support* the revision to the Lebanon Hills master plan. I am strongly opposed to the proposed paved trail through the park -- we have plenty of paved bike trails in the immediate vicinity, but only one Lebanon Hills, with its wild feel. Once a trail is paved, it cannot be unpaved. And even worse, its very high maintenance costs must be paid, further straining a budget which is already apparently not sufficient to address basic natural preservation needs, such as addressing the rampant buckthorn problem in much of the park. The idea that the trail would be plowed in winter is particularly terrible, as it would interrupt ski routes, involve salting and heavy machinery in the park, and be very little used for recreation.</p> <p>I also very much oppose the emphasis on development over natural stewardship in the revised plan. Dakota county should recognize that it has a rare jewel in Lebanon Hills, and work to enhance and advertize its unique character. Instead, this revised master plan proposes to undermine what makes the park special, while adding little new to the recreational options available to county residents.</p>
Jorgenson, Darren	2/22	<p>As regular horse riders, I do not support the draft plan. Please vote no.</p>
Juutilainen, Jane	2/16	<p>I do NOT support the Lebanon Hills paved trail plan. I strongly believe it will ruin the natural environment of the park.</p>

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Kaatz, Larry and Kathryn	2/18	Please, please do not add "amenities" to this park. We enjoy it more how it is than we would with additional features added.
Kachian, Ben	2/8	I am a local resident and a regular visitor of Lebanon Hills Regional Park, an area of wilderness that I have become immensely grateful for over the years. Its proximity to my home provides a perfect getaway from the hustle and bustle of daily life. I do not support the plan to plow, pave, and develop any additional areas of this beautiful parkland. I believe that any efforts to expand on the already existing (and excellent) infrastructure of Lebanon Hills Regional Park are expensive, both financially and aesthetically. I am an undergraduate student at the University of St. Thomas, and I come to this park in search of momentary escape from the rigors of my modern lifestyle as a student, soccer coach, and everyday citizen. The partitioning of this land for the additional expansion and development of walkway systems, parking lots, and buildings not only encroaches on the habitats of all natural inhabitants of this ecosystem, but also detracts from the natural beauty of this park. Thank you for your time and consideration
Kachian, Maya	2/16	In response to the \$13.7 million budget to pave Lebanon Hills Regional, I, a life-long citizen of Eagan, protest on behalf of Lebanon's natural beauty. While the motives are admirable (I am not one to restrict the handicapped and bicyclists of an enjoyable Sunday outing), I am concerned with the ever-growing urbanization of one of Eagan's last unpaved parks. Many parks and recreational spaces in Eagan provide the control of pavement, such as Thomas Lake Park. Furthermore, Lebanon Hills is a largely enjoyed natural space, with thick forestry and lake views to make visitors feel privately submersed in nature's beauty. Paving this park would take away the experience, and cost time, money, and energy for the people of Eagan
Kambeitz, Heather	2/21	Please, please, please...leave Lebanon Hills unchanged. Why would you change something that is perfect??? My family and I learned about this beautiful place after we bought a trailer in 2006. We wanted somewhere close to home for the weekends. It is our favorite place...so close to home yet the peace & serenity feels like a great escape. We have spent many hours in the woods...listening to the owls, seeing deer, or just hiking up & down hills for some much needed exercise. There are many places one may walk on a paved path so why create another one. Let nature be as nature is intended to be. We as people do not need to take over every single piece of nature and put our prints all over it. The money to be used could best be spent elsewhere. Please consider my request!!
Kambeitz, Kaylene	2/23	I noticed the article in the newspaper about the plans to tear down the wildlife area over by Lebanon Hills. As both a wilderness enthusiast and wildlife lover I found this news very upsetting. My family and I have camped at Lebanon Hills campground for many years and find the Lebanon Hills area a great rustic getaway that's still conveniently close to home. One of my favorite parts about the area though, is all of the beautiful creatures that live in the area. By tearing down the trees and brush you're destroy the homes of millions of innocent creatures, and by doing this you are possibly killing them all together. Please respect the true wishes of the community and lives of the animals by changing your mind and preserving our community's wilderness. Thank you for your time.
Kambeitz, Tony	2/23	Please leave Lebanon Hills the way it is. My family enjoys the campground and the trails that are already there, the money could be put to better use.
Kamenar, Michele	2/22	I do not support this plan. I don't think it's the right thing for the park, and I don't think it's the right thing to do for regional parks in Minnesota in general. Please vote NO to this plan. Thank you,

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Kanuit, Mary	2/9	<p>I would like to take this opportunity to comment on the bike trail at Lebanon Hills Regional park!!! For starters this is the most wasteful use of taxpayer dollars I have seen in quite some time. The huge cost of this fiasco is unbelievable, and not just in monetary value either!! I know for a fact that some of the cost of this is transportation dollars. Why is it not being used for REAL transportation??? We have faulty roads, sidewalks, potholes, and the list of community projects that need attention goes on and on. Then there is the HUGE loss of habitat and NATURAL surroundings that we will never be able to get back once it's gone!!! This is so wrong it just makes me sick!!! To think that a few County Officials can override what it's citizen's have clearly opposed is well just undemocratic!!!! This is a total misuse of power!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!</p> <p>Then there's the cost of maintaining this Bike Path. 32,000.00 approx. to maintain this! Who's paying for that ?? Well we all know who's paying, the citizen's of Dakota County, the same citizen's who are opposing this Bike Trail!!! I DO NOT CONSENT TO BE TAXED FOR SOMETHING I OPPOSE AND THAT 90-95% oppose according to past comments. This is absolutely the worst idea I have EVER heard of since I've lived in EAGAN, which is 20 yrs. I have supported my Community in all aspects of development and projects over the years , but this one is unfathomable in ALL RESPECTS! You should all be ashamed of yourselves!!!! Oh and one more thing. The percent in your official Pie Chart does nothing to address the stewardship of this beautiful natural park. That alone is a travesty. If this goes through I believe you will have a fight on your hands!!!! Again, I DO NOT CONSENT TO THIS BIKE TRAIL!!!!!!!!!!!!</p>
Kanwischer, Alexander	2/25	<p>I am at the park almost daily (winters too). I ride the MTB course, hike trails and XC Ski @ Lebanon Hills. Putting a paved path through the park would destroy the character of the land. Not to mention the costs of maintaining a non-native path. I think this idea lacks foresight and instead we should follow the dakota county parks phrase "Forever WILD". Warm Regards,</p>
Katzman, Meg	2/8	<p>I am writing to voice my opposition to the \$13.7 million development plan in Lebanon Hills. I have lived in Eagan since 2001 but I have been hiking in Lebanon Hills since late 1980. I would travel from Minneapolis to Eagan two days a week to hike in the park, often with my dog at the time. In fact, having enjoyed the beautiful system of parks for many years, I made the decision to move to Eagan and I live in the Oakbrooke neighborhood. I have always been impressed with the wisdom and beauty of the city planning in Eagan and the diversity of parks with clear separation for various activities.</p> <p>To say I do not support the development plan for the area of Lebanon Hills off of Cliff Road would be a huge understatement. The serenity, wildlife and natural feeling of the park is just exquisite. Adding any paved trails or providing a Greenway for biking would be detrimental for the future enjoyment of the park. The city has done a great job creating the mountain bike trails at the section of the park off of Johnny Cake Road and there are plenty of paved areas for biking already in the city. There is in fact a beautiful bike path from Eagan all the way to downtown St. Paul and I have done that route myself on many occasions. Lebanon Hills is the only location in Eagan to enjoy hiking or skiing with the feeling of northern Minnesota and not be sharing the paths with bicycles. The miles and miles of trails are beautifully designed, offer a great work-out on the hills and it is rare to have a place like this where you can feel as if you have gotten away from all the noise and hub-bub of the city. Although bikes are not motorized they are fast moving and cause wildlife to scatter. Additionally as a former horse owner, I can attest to the fact that horses and bikes do not go well together. This is an accident waiting to happen.</p> <p>Lastly, I can't support the allocation of \$13.7 million dollars to this project. As an Eagan tax payer, I simply do not want my taxes to keep increasing, especially for a project that is not needed, necessary nor is it an enhancement to this beautiful park system. I would be happy to make myself available at any open meetings to share my opinion and answer any questions you might like to ask. I don't know how often people will take the time to call or write an email, but the people I know you use this park on a regular basis have all expressed concern about the plan you are proposing.</p>

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Kaul, Andrew	2/23	As a resident of Dakota county and visitor to Lebanon Hills park, I do not support the current plan that includes adding paved trails to the park. Changes to the park should keep the fundamental goal of retaining its natural environment instead of removing wilderness and diminishing wildlife habitats.
Kaul, Jennifer	2/25	<p>Lebanon Hills Regional Park is one of the few places in the area where residents and visitors alike can immerse themselves in nature and escape the distractions of everyday life. It is a place to reflect, a place to find peace away from the ringing phones, flashing billboards, and traffic noise that our world has become. It is a place for children to experience what the world once was, a small plot of land where animals can safely live, and a unique place to learn about the environment firsthand. Please consider this when you decide its fate.</p> <p>Consider the number of parks that already lend themselves to the people requesting the planned changes. Consider the number of people desperate to keep Lebanon Hills Regional Park as it is because, without it, there would be nowhere quite like it to go. Consider the future development this decision could spur, the snowball effect that could turn what is now a wild and beautiful place into a depressingly sparse perimeter of trees around a playground or athletic field. Have the wisdom to recognize a place that is at its best and find the strength to resist the temptation to develop it. I appreciate your time and wish you luck with your decision.</p>
Kergis, Jean		Phone Comment: I am concerned with Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan. I use the park often and please keep it the way it is. There are paved trails nearby at Thomas Lake Park. Please remove the buckthorn.
Kerr, Tom	2/16	<p>I do not support this plan, vote no to this plan. I find it disappointing that the County has chosen a plan that would create additional paved trails, lighted trails and additional disturbance to the park in direct contradiction of the NR Management Plan Goal which is found on page xi and states "...to develop comprehensive and strategic approaches to reverse the downward trend in the quality of Lebanon Hills Natural resources and achieve a sustainable landscape quality." Additional development does not achieve this goal in fact it is in direct contradiction to this goal.</p> <p>I am also disappointed by the low quality of the wildlife section of this plan. I have provided detailed comments in the past about this section. The wildlife section has absolutely no supporting information or studies that would substantiate the anecdotal claims made about animal population size or the writer's guesses as to why they perceive that certain species may or may not be found in the park.</p> <p>Since much of the proposed development in the park will impact wildlife species, it seems that your efforts at describing wildlife in the park should be much more accurate so that the reader can understand the impact of the development on wildlife. An incredible amount of time, effort and money was put forward in describing the recreational aspects of this plan but no where near this time or expertise was used to write the wildlife section. I am also concerned about the rapid escalation in future operations and maintenance costs in this park associated with the proposed developments. I am afraid "Forever Wild" in Lebanon Hills will be no more.</p>
Kessler, Bruce	2/25	<p>! As a frequent visitor and user of <i>Lebanon Hills Regional Park</i> I want to express that I do not support the proposed Lebanon Hills Master Plan being updated by Dakota County. I urge you to not vote in favor of this master plan or recommend it, because it is not a master plan, but a plan that is short sighted and disregards the unique nature of this very special wilderness area!! This proposed plan is a far cry from what is needed to protect and preserve the uniqueness of this park. Spending millions of dollars does not restore and enhance the unique natural beauty of <i>Lebanon Hills Regional Park</i>. In fact, the revised improvements of the plan, though noble to provide access for all types of users, degrades the parks integrity. In my opinion, this park needs minimal and less invasive types of development. !!! Let's see the money allocated for healthier and smarter ways to manage the unique natural ecological diversity within the park such as trail maintenance and the parks natural resources while planning for the removal of invasive species. The plan appears to not go, at all far enough, to respect the past guidelines of the parks past master plan(s) by allowing minimal development, and if so to do only what is needed for the integrity of this unique natural wilderness environment. In this case, less is better.!! In closing, I hope that this present attempt at trying to develop this beautiful unique park called:</p>

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*Lebanon Hills Regional Park* does not pass, because once natural systems are impacted it is almost impossible to reverse the detrimental affects. Please allow the wilderness of this park to live on, create alliances with supporters of the park while preventing the park from becoming another paved motorized example of other urban parks in the metro area by going the way of the inability to see for future generations that: *"In Wilderness is The Preservation of the World – Henry David Thoreau."* ! ! I thank you and the earth thanks you for protecting and preserving *Lebanon Hills Regional Park* - a true gem of Minnesota.!

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Please add my comment to your deliberations on the future development of Lebanon Hills Regional (East) Park. As a Dakota County resident since 1972 and a user of the park systems and a taxpayer in the county for all these years, I feel qualified to give you at least MY/OUR input on the subject.

I personally have been a heavy user of the eastern park section of LHR and can tell you stories of things that I've encountered in there that would both delight you (I hope) or scare you. I would love to be able to share them with you verbally.

Kettelkamp,  
Al 2/24

I have spent hundreds and hundreds (and maybe even thousands!) of hours walking, running and skiing in this park. Lebanon Hills Regional east park is a TREASURE unmatched anywhere else in the metro area. (IMHO)

A major part of the magic of it is the remoteness of it and the feeling of tranquility and alone-ness one can feel in there. It is wonderful place for getting out and "clearing your mind". Many, many, many of us feel that way.

If any "improvements" that you do to it and that you feel that you must do to it, please realize that as you do it (authorize it), you are altering one of the very last pristine, untouched and priceless pieces of our county and those many qualities of this particular park can never be recaptured here again ever! Please understand what your choices are. Thank you.

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I do NOT support the current plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I use this park on a very regular basis. There is nothing I love more than sitting in the middle of the park on my horse and I hear nothing but nature. It is like I am in the north wood in the middle of the suburbs. I utilize this park to ride my horse regularly (1-3 times per week during the summer season and I have been an annual horse pass holder ever since I turned 18). Not only do I ride, but also I hike with my dog, snowshoe, use the beach to swim, kayak/canoe and bike. I always use the correct trails and follow all rules.

Kieser, Sarah 2/22

I understand why some people want the connector trail, but using asphalt and flattening/destroying a huge amount of land is NOT "forever wild." I have seen a family with a daughter in an electric wheel chair using hiking trails, so the park is not completely "inaccessible." We already have some paved trails. Beyond that, I do not see national parks paving huge asphalt trails through the middle of their parks.

I also attended the School of Environment Studies in Apple Valley. The school utilizes the park to its fullest extent and encourages the use of the park in a respectful manner. I have so many wonderful memories there and I believe that this plan will hinder the learning experience of the students that love the park. As a member of the community and a very avid user of the park, I respectfully say I very much disagree with this plan.

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Kilgore, Amy 2/23

Please do not approve the Lebanon Hills plan! This park is a much needed escape from the city and is the perfect place to get back to nature. It's simplicity is part of the draw. Developing this area further will not only take away from the beauty of nature it will also have a severe impact on the wildlife and disrupt the ecosystem dividing habitat. It should be left the way it is!

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Kilgore,  
Shelley 2/19

I've been watching the development of this new proposal and have not been excited or happy of the plans presented. Lebanon Hills has been a treasure to many of us who enjoy the outdoors who can't get to the mountains or more remote environmental settings. My husband and I have hiked many trails in the mountains when we have time to get away. Living in the Midwest has been wonderful but has limited our time to the more remote areas we love. Lebanon Hills has been a dream come true for us. We are able to enjoy the natural environment without the

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craziness of people , bikes, or motorized chairs. There are many parks/trails in the surrounding areas, many with paved trails, which I have used myself, when I want a more groomed trail to walk. I have seen many people on these trails, totally enjoying them. They have no desire to the more primitive trails. PLEASE save what natural beauty we have. The animals also deserve a place that is natural to them. Paved trails and increase of people are not natural. We have taken up much of their living space already. We soon will be driving the animals out like we have in other areas. Not only will the animals benefit from keeping the space as is but so will children and families. Lebanon Hills is a fantastic place for children to learn, discover and explore the natural resources God has given us all. I believe paved trails, increase of people and activities could interfere with their learning experience. Again, please think again how this proposal could affect everything around us. Let's keep what we have. Where else are we, the animals, and those who really do enjoy the more natural settings to go?

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King, Mimi  
and John

2/24

We were there last summer and enjoyed the natural feel of the area. We live near Lake Harriet and Minnehaha creek. Do not add bathrooms, paved paths, park benches, boat launches. Save the money and preserve the beauty. They wanted to modernize Minnehaha Creek and those that use it said NO! We agree.

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Klein, Brett

2/19

My name is Brett Klein. I am a resident of Eagan. I recently heard about the proposed development plan for Lebanon Hills Park. I feel very obligated to voice my opinion, these plans should not be carried out. Lebanon Hills is one of the most undeveloped parks in the area. That is what I and so many others love about it. I feel that the land should be left as it is. Nothing more needs to be added. We should be protecting this land, not runing it with unneeded developments.

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Klein, Krystal

2/23

I want to weight in on the planned development for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. The park as it exists now is incredible. I enjoy cross country skiing, hiking, swimming and stopping by the visitor center. I once rented a canoe and canoed across the park. I was so excited to be able to "portage" so close to home. The charm of the park is it's natural beauty. I hope that the commission will reconsider the plan to build a path though the park. Let's keep it natural for future generations to enjoy. There is already plenty of opportunity for recreation- and plenty of thru-bike paths in the metro area. Thanks for hearing me,

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Kleven, Rick  
and Patty

2/18

We respectfully want to voice our opposition to any development of Lebanon Hills that would involve paving or otherwise further disturbing its natural state. We are blessed with many fine wilderness and natural areas in this county (thanks for all you do on that). However, we need to keep this unique land in its largely natural state. Thanks for your consideration.

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Kline, Athena

2/23

I do not support this plan. Vote NO to this plan

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Klug, Chuck

2/21

Just say NO to the proposed Dakota county plan for Lebanon Hills! Three generations of our family enjoys the park for its "forever wild" experience. Our family is spread across the country, and one of the first places we go when family visits is Lebanon Hills, regardless of the season, to play, learn, enjoy the peace and tranquility of nature, and create memories. We visit the park for its unspoiled nature...this is the park's greatest asset. Under the proposed plan, we would not visit Lebanon Hills in the future as it would no longer be an exceptional and unique place. Also, as empty nesters, one of the reasons we remain in Eagan is access to a large nature reserve close to home – a place to get away from it all in a major metropolitan area, despite the fact that our jobs are north of the river. If Lebanon Hills changes, it would be a reason not to visit, and one less reason to stay in this great community. Please, please reconsider the plan and listen to the concerns of tax paying citizens.

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Kluznik, Michael	2/18	<p>I've lived in Dakota County for 40 years, but last summer was the first time I visited Lebanon Hills Regional Park. The reason I went there was to do some hiking on a regular basis in order to condition myself for a September hiking trip to Ireland that was sponsored by the REI Outdoor Stores. I started hiking at Lebanon Hills last July and continued hiking it through early September. I really didn't know much about Lebanon Hills Regional Park before I started visiting it, but I was deeply impressed with it as an "urban wilderness." It reminds me a great deal of the BWCA in northern Minnesota.</p> <p>Over the years, I have spent a great deal of time canoeing and camping in the BWCA. Having that sort of solitude and wilderness experience available just a few miles from my home truly amazes me. Just as the BWCA prohibits motorized vehicles in many areas, Lebanon Hills should limit any kind of development and paved trail construction that would allow for bicycle, wheelchair and infant strollers. I'm an avid bicyclist and appreciate the many bike trails in the metro area and in greater Minnesota. Even though I enjoy biking, I do not want to see a paved trail go through Lebanon Hills.</p> <p>As someone who spent a career working in special education, I'm very aware of the challenges that face the physically disabled. That said, there are many other parks in the metro area that afford opportunities to the physically disabled. I think Lebanon Hills should retain its natural character as much as possible. I don't agree with the notion of constructing a paved a trail through the park. Thank you.</p>
Knauth, Kathy	2/20	<p>Please leave Lebanon Hills Park wild. There are many parks throughout the Twin Cities that have the kind of recreational opportunities that you are proposing for this beautiful park, but there are very few wild areas left in the area for those of us who want a truly wild experience. Recently an area of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge became less wild making it even more important that Lebanon Hills remain wild. Thank you for giving careful consideration to the opinions of those of who prefer a truly wild experience.</p>
Knowles, Sarah	2/25	<p>I wish to submit some comments regarding the proposed development in Lebanon Hills Regional Park. First, I'd like to tell you a bit about my connection with the park. I am a 27 year old Dakota County resident and have been for the vast majority of my life. Dakota County is a great place to live, and for me, the number one reason I love this County is because of Lebanon Hills and the fantastic amount of green space it provides. During high school I would spend hours at the park doing my homework or going on hikes with friends. As a 2006 graduate of the School of Environmental Studies, we utilized Lebanon Hills for several of our outdoor educational and survival activities. The "remoteness" of this park in a suburb of the Twin Cities is just astounding. It was because of this that Lebanon Hills became my home away from home - a place to get away from the stresses of life, spend some quality time with friends and family, and get a killer workout on the miles of natural trails. Ultimately, it grew to hold a very special place in my heart.</p> <p>When I didn't live in Dakota County, I lived in states far from Minnesota. I spent some time in Florida and Louisiana for my career but I learned very quickly that those weren't the right places for me. And although I sought out public parks in those areas to relieve stress and get back to nature, none came close to what Lebanon Hills has to offer. Any of the numerous parks I found were very well developed having only paved sidewalks, groomed lawns, and professional landscaping. These parks didn't allow me to "get away" from the city or suburb at all.</p> <p>After I moved back home to Dakota County I held a seasonal winter position as a front desk and rental equipment worker at the Lebanon Hills Visitor Center. That year we had very minimal snow and weren't able to support the numerous visitors wanting to cross-country ski and snowshoe. However, many quickly decided to take advantage of the situation and hike, run or Geo-cache in the park, myself included. A few years later, I am now a professional student in the Veterinary Medicine program at the University of Minnesota and still live in Dakota County. Never before has the ability to drive five minutes from my house to reach the "remote" Lebanon Hills Regional Park and go for a stress relieving hike or trail run been so crucial to my well being.</p> <p>Now that you know a bit more about me and why I believe this park to be so priceless, I'd like to tell you some of my concerns regarding the proposed development. First, I don't really see the necessity behind adding a wide, paved bike path through the entire park. The paved</p>

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sidewalks that were added a few years ago were a great idea - a way for those with strollers, walkers, wheelchairs, etc. to enjoy the main area of the park including two bodies of water, the beach, and the visitor center. It also doesn't seem as if a trail a few miles long cutting through the park would be used by many of these same park visitors, nor does it seem safe.

Second, when I was a County employee at Lebanon Hills it was against park rules to bike in the park. If a paved bike path were to be put into the park I feel many bikers would likely take their bikes off the paved path and onto the natural trails. This would not only cause more maintenance necessities for the natural trails but it would be a major safety concern for hikers, runners and the bikers themselves.

Third, I can't even imagine how much it will cost County tax payers to maintain the new paved path, especially if it is to be cleared, sanded or salted for use in winter. And, if this path is going to be used in the winter I can't imagine it won't interfere with cross-country ski and snowshoe trails which would not bode well for that recreational equipment or the paved path itself.

Finally, Lebanon Hills is known for being a piece of "remote" nature in the backyard of the Twin Cities. When I worked at the Visitor Center I met several people who traveled from all over the state to enjoy the fantastic ski trails and variety of terrain to train for recreational events. And I know of several families and individuals who use the park frequently to get away from day to day stressors. There are so many other parks around the Twin Cities with paved paths in the woods. So little natural trails, woods and grassland can be found in public parks anymore, why conform Lebanon Hills to fit the new mold when it already fills its own niche?

I have always been so impressed with Dakota County and Lebanon Hills Regional Park in all the efforts put forth to maintain safe, natural trails, promote forest and grassland ecology, and to make the Visitor Center as environmentally friendly as possible. I do not support the proposed development and paved path as they do not support these ideals and will ultimately diminish the park for what it is currently used for by so many people. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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- Natural Resources: Since 2001, Dakota County has not committed adequate funding for successful restoration in Lebanon Hills. The revised plan will allow this trend to continue.
  - Connector Trail: Revised plan emphasizes recreational use, but design criteria did not change: 6-miles, minimum 10-ft. wide asphalt; free of snow/ice; wide construction clearance; grading to 5% requiring cut/fill and structural support; site lines for bicycle speeds up to 20mph.
  - New Development: \$13.7 million estimated total. Commissioner have not stated how they will fund annual maintenance expense increases at Lebanon Hills while also adequately funding pertinent park services including stewardship, staffing, marketing and programming.

Knutson,  
Linda

2/22

For reasons stated above and for following reasons, I do not support the plan you have created for Lebanon Hills development: As it is, the trails in the summer are not mowed often enough, trees and debris that fall during storms is not cleared for weeks out sometimes on the trails, some of the bridges are so twisted and in need of repair that people won't walk over them (I actually witnessed this first hand this past summer), there is still great need for muddy sections of trails to be addressed, invasive plants are started to intrude (purple strife now in the ponds!). There is much need to work on these things and preserve what we have rather than going on to create more that will need upkeep. The money for the trail could be better utilized on maintenance and upkeep. We don't need to tear down more trees and take away more space for the animals. We need to preserve and respect their natural habitat. There are plenty of parks that have paved trail access for wheelchairs and strollers and bikes. Even at that, I rarely see those folks utilizing the trails. If you put bikers who fly by at fast speeds on the same trails with strollers and wheelchairs going at slow speeds, you are creating a setting for accidents. Keep our park natural - no more asphalt!!

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Koehler,  
Larry, Cindy

2/9

The public has spoken. We do not want a paved trail through Lebanon Hills park. PLEASE LISTEN TO US!

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Koerner, Caroline	2/21	<p>I want my family to have access to the wilderness, to immerse ourselves in nature, free from major intersections with speeding bicycles and pavement. Egan already has an extensive network of paved paths, including the highline trail. Serious cyclists can use the roadway. Please keep Lebanon Hills wild as your logo promises: "Forever Wild"! It is a gem uniquely, exquisitely undeveloped</p>
		<p>I once was a resident of Dakota Cty, but I'm still a user of this unique park. I have to say the Master plan, &amp; the committee panels reports are impressive and seem to cover every facet imaginable but some holes are apparent.</p> <p>Costs are identified in hard lined dollars. But what I and one committee member mentions on Appendix A is the question, "where does this money come from?". In my review of the docs, I did not find this answer. I imagine it is tax dollars. 4.8 million is a substantial amount of money to not explain where it is coming from.</p> <p>My main concern is the displacement of wildlife in the immediate and long-term of installing a corridor trail. Any kind of human interference to nature is just that...interference. "Forever Wild", seems like an oxymoron now. See this recent New York Times editorial, "<a href="#">Leaving only footprints? Think again</a>" by Christopher Solomon. A park is a public place that is enjoyed by all humans, but the critters that live there deserve it first and foremost.</p> <p>I do agree that parks need to be accessible to those with disabilities, but is it mandated that we place 6 miles of pavement to accomplish this? And using the rationale that Dakota Cty parks are 'behind' in this number is unwarranted because in reality this park is ahead in 'natural trails', so does this mean that other parks need to align their parks to have more 'natural trails'. Who sets this quotas?</p> <p>And the Greenway Corridor link system long term purpose needs to be explained. We are foolish to think that bikers won't speed to cut thru the park. I think it's ridiculous to think that long range bikers are longing for all (many) parks to be connected. The roadways are just too congested for bikers to ride safely these days and I've seen a decline in road biking probably due to this fact. I can't phantom that connecting a series of parks without navigating busy roads being feasible. As a parent, I didn't allow my daughter to ride on busy roads to get to the local park. In fact the plan is hoping that 'fast bikers' use other roads that are more suitable for speed. It seems that we aren't addressing the 'real' needs of road bikers.</p> <p>It's interesting to note that the Mountain Biking area has a parking lot attached to it because I'd guess 90% of bikers are placing their bike on car bike rack and commuting to this much loved area. It is not plausible to mountain bike from Bloomington for example and then do the course. And besides that, folks have a time limit to spend on an outing. So, it seems that with the proposed corridor we are catering to not just ADA folks, but road bikers that may or may not desire such a trail.</p> <p>Show me a survey that today's youth (future corridor riders) are riding bikes in large numbers and desire and would use such a trail. I realize the proposed corridor is not just for bikers, but for walkers too. I've been a walker for years, and I'd take a nature trail over hard surface any day. I know those that prefer hard surface and I respect their need but you are not going to see thousands of daily users walking from one end to the other and back. Again, most people have a time limit for outdoor activities. What is the average amount of time spent by a hiker in Lebanon currently? The 3 mile loops are more popular, hence the success of Lake Calhoun, etc and their path systems.</p> <p>If it were up to vote, I'd say, leave Lebanon Hills as it is, Forever Wild. We should honor it. Basic improvements are needed of course. If ADA is warranted and/or threatened, then blaze a 1- 2 mile loop and call it good.</p> <p>To quote Christopher Solomon's article, "The challenge is to find a nuanced balance between enjoying nature and protecting it, recognizing that recreation does not necessarily complement conservation or preservation."</p>

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Korsmo-Kennon, Peggy	2/22	<p>I've use finished reading the revised development report and I want to extend my thanks to everyone involved for their thoughtful work evaluating the initial plan and alternatives.</p> <p>I'm a frequent user of the park, at least twice a week year round, and more often in the summer. I hike, kayak, ski, snowshoe, take classes and participate in special programs. To keep this short, here's my comment: My greatest concern is the connector trail. I know I will use it when it's created-I actually am looking forward to it--but I see no reason for it to cut through the center of the park. It seems that the advisor group, to a great extent, agreed. Looping it north or south would be my preference in the east park area.</p> <p>The only other comment/suggestion is to allow kayaks and canoes on McDonough. Thanks again for your good work!</p>
Kotula, Irene	2/25	<p>Please, please do not ruin the uniqueness of Lebanon Hills. Coming from northern Minnesota in the 1970s, it was so nice to find an area that was quiet and felt like wilderness without paved paths and having to dodge bikes and skaters. My inner city friends enjoy coming out here for this reason also. There are plenty of areas like that already. It would be a HUGE mistake!</p>
Kotzenmacher, Jerry	2/18	<p>As a year round user of the park, please keep the park in a natural state, limit paved sidewalks. High speed bikers and children running along the trail do not mix.</p>
Koutnik, Michael	2/16	<p>I want to go on record as opposing the Lebanon Hills Regional Park plan as currently drafted. I was initially conflicted about this plan. I am a frequent trail user. I bike on paved trails. I hike, bird, snowshoe and occasionally cross-country ski on trails. I walked and enjoyed one of the LHRP X-C trails today. So I am not anti-trail by any means. But I cannot support the revised Lebanon Hills plan, for one reason: it will change the character of the park in a fundamental way.</p> <p>I hear staff and elected officials saying LHRP won't be a "hub." Yet, the revised "trail" is still being characterized as a "connector." If the paved trail is implemented as envisioned, LHRP will be transformed from a destination to merely a pleasant place for people to pass through. It will change the focus of the park from restoring and sustaining the natural resources of the park for the enjoyment of present and future generations, to facilitating the experience of those passing through the park. That change will drive future budgets (which are increasingly stretched) even further away from natural resource recovery and sustainability to facility development and maintenance. That fundamental change in the purpose and intent of the park is being missed in the protracted and sometimes tense discussion of the plan.</p> <p>Also, is this plan sustainable? How many miles of paved trail will we put down before we realize we can't maintain them all? According to the Star Tribune, the County is already facing a \$600 Million roads funding gap. How soon will the County find itself cutting maintenance on all those extra miles of trails? How soon will they become a liability rather than an asset? Bottom line, the plan still needs more work. The paved trail through the park needs to be removed. I would support a loop trail, or even a spur trail that would get wheelchair users deeper into the park (only to a length that would be practically used). Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
Kramer, Steve	2/12	<p>I am writing to you with regards to the new Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. As a long time resident of Eagan and a regular user of Lebanon Hills Regional Park, I am firmly against the paving of any trails within the park boundaries. I am wholeheartedly against a paved loop around any of the lakes within the park.</p> <p>As a graduate of the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Management, I am educated in and embrace the idea of a multiple use approach to natural resources. But I feel we already offer multiple use options for the majority of Lebanon Hills visitors. Swimming, Canoeing, Skiing, Hiking, Bird Watching, Mushroom picking, site seeing, biking, fishing, horseback riding, interpretive courses. The list goes on and on. Lebanon Hills offers something that very few parks within the city limits can ever dream to offer. The large</p>

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expanse of undeveloped land including multiple lakes is something that can only be dreamed of in most cities in this country. We have something very special. We have a wilderness type setting within a city. Why ruin that with a paved trail? Who are we trying to satisfy with a paved trail? There are plenty of paved trail opportunities within Eagan. There are not any other expansive wilderness type opportunities within Eagan. We already have an incredible multiple use area within Lebanon Hills. Let's not try to fix what isn't broken.

The costs to this project are huge. We didn't ask for these costs. There are the economic costs of this project. I would venture to guess if the citizens of Dakota County knew the long term costs of building and maintaining a paved trail in Lebanon Hills, then they would likely not be in favor of this project.

But there are also the environmental impacts of this project. The swath of land that needs to be graded to create a paved trail is great. The disruption of soil in that grading process will undoubtedly introduce non-native species. The fragmentation of the park with a paved trail will undoubtedly effect the wilderness feel of the park. If the citizens of Dakota County understood the environmental impact of this paved trail, then they would likely not be in favor of this project.

The people of Eagan do want better access to parks and trails, and more protection of the County's best resources. But I don't think the people of Eagan want a paved trail through the pristine park or a loop around any of the lakes within the park. If a paved trail is so important, then why not leave the paved trail along the exterior perimeter of the park?

Sigurd Olson is well known author who was instrumental saving our Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness from development. He had a special place called Listening Point which he wrote about in the book of the same title. "Each time I have gone there I have found something new which has opened up great realms of thought and interest. For me it has been a point of discovery and, like all such places of departure, has assumed meaning far beyond the ordinary". Everybody needs a Listening Point. My Listening Point is in Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Away from development and pavement and machinery. I leave you with these Joni Mitchell lyrics Don't it always seem to go That you don't know what you've got Till it's gone They paved paradise And put up a parking lot

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Kraus, Dean	2/12	I do not support the plan to invest \$13.7 million in new development and increased maintenance for the long term. Let the park stay wild! I have not seen the benefits compared to the one time costs and ongoing costs. There are plenty of other paved paths in Eagan.
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Kraus, Janell	2/10	I do not support the plan to invest \$13.7 million in new development and increased maintenance for the long term. Let the park stay wild!
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Kraus, Paul	2/19	I am writing to express that I <u>do not support</u> the 2015 Master Plan. After reviewing the plan I feel that the proposal sadly lacks in clearly defining the process for improving the park. My family and I moved to Apple Valley in 2003 and quickly found Lebanon Hills to be an exceptional recreation area. We visit the park frequently throughout the year to enjoy communing with nature, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, dog walking, bicycling at the Mountain Bike trails and occasionally canoeing and kayaking. During our outings in the park we recognize that the park is an ecological disaster. The invasive plant species are taking over the native flora and the basic infrastructure is in dire need of repair. For example, the A-frame on Portage lake and the (corkscrew) bridge on Bridge pond. The trail system is eroding due to poor water drainage. Comparing the trails in the east section of the park with the mountain bike trails clearly shows what proper design and maintenance of existing trails can do to keep the trails in excellent condition – even with the high traffic loads experienced on the mountain bike trails.
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I have read the plan in its entirety and feel that the commission is ignoring the spirit of the 2001 Master plan completely. Comments are made throughout the 2015 plan regarding ecological stewardship. Similar plans exist in the earlier documents. However, efforts at invasive species remediation and maintaining the current trail system do not exist. Designs to construct a paved trail through the park are contrary to the parks slogan of Forever Wild. There are no paved trails in wilderness. People need to commune with the natural environment through direct contact with nature, not on pavement with vast clear-cut sight lines. While I agree that people with disabilities that are unable to experience the oneness

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with nature that can only be experienced in a natural setting the development of the proposed greenway through the park will cause additional ecological damage to an already fragile park.

The lakes are in abysmal condition. One can practically walk across Jensen Lake in the summer. I have attempted to Kayak from Jensen Lake to Schulze Lake through the portage system and literally got stuck in the weeds growing in the lakes. I was not paddling my way along but rather pushing myself over and through the weeds.

Therefore, I ask you, as our elected officials, to make your legacy one of improving the natural environment of Lebanon Hills Regional Park and not one of burdening the parks budget with additional infrastructure that will not be properly maintained and will, additionally, destroy the balance of nature in the park. Please, keep Lebanon Hills Regional Park really Forever Wild and vote NO on the 2015 Master Plan.

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Kraus,  
Theresa

2/18

I ask Why? Why would you take away the natural beauty of a park within the Twin Cities Metro area? You would be changing the beauty of a place that connects with nature – quiet feet on unpaved trails. That connection is priceless. If you take it away, *it will be something else also lost to our next generation*. My family has spent countless hours in Lebanon Hills – from hiking, skiing, biking to snowshoeing. Every time we go it's a different experience that we treasure. Paved trails would always be the same – paved trails. Our next generation is losing touch with nature. Something so quiet and beautiful that is within easy reach – nothing else like it within the area. Please keep it that way. It might be their only connection that they experience with nature. So, again I ask Why? Is development really that important to the Council? Why? What's motivating your agenda? Mine would be to preserve Lebanon Hills – Forever Wild.

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Krecklau,  
Mike

2/18

I grew up with this park in my back yard. I spent every day of my summer vacation roaming it's boundaries. I bought my home in Eagan in part because of this park. Now I'm disabled and can no longer use it. That being said, I don't feel the park should lose it's wild feeling just to enable people like me to continue to use it. There are plenty of other parks that can provide me with the experience I am looking for that I can still handle physically. Why would you take this opportunity away from others who wish to enjoy the wilderness this park provides? Not every thing needs to be accessible to everyone all the time. Once you make this change you will forever lose this unique experience and future generations will come and go without ever knowing what it is like to have such a wild setting. Please don't make the changes. I don't need them and neither do others.

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Kreger, Jules

2/25

I am deeply saddened and upset to learn that Dakota County intends to destroy one of the last remaining vestiges of a truly "natural" regional park. Growing up in Apple Valley, Lebanon Hills was a place to bike, hike, snow shoe, and cross country ski. As a student at the School of Environmental Studies it served as a perfect place to experience hands-on learning. We have many parks in the twin cities with paved paths and man-made amenities to accommodate those who may not otherwise have the ability to experience the park. Please help to preserve this beautiful, unique land. There is nothing else like it in the twin cities. Your expansion would come at such a great cost, monetarily and otherwise. We are running out of places to go that are untouched by humans. It is important for children in the cities to grow up understanding how a natural environment looks, feels, and behaves.

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Kruckenber,  
Jen

2/22

I'm 55 years old. I grew up in Eagan from age two years till college. Many joyful days were spent in the Lebanon Hills area, including fun-filled afternoons on Holland lake on an air mattress as a teen. I lived in downtown Minneapolis during my college years at the U of M. But later I married, and came to reside in Inver Grove Hts. Since we lived in the Southwest quadrant of IGHts. our girls went to school at Eagan High School. Many delightful walks were taken in Lebanon Hills. As well as many swims at Schultz Beach. My vote is to keep the place wild and as natural as possible. Not all regional parks have to be "enhanced" That is the beauty and the charm of this place. No high speeding bicyclists whizzing past you, instead hear the birds calling and the crunch of leaves under your feet. Feeling the earth instead of pavement is truly remarkable. I remember that some new pavement went in, and I was always tempted to leave the paved path and create a new one through the bramble. The BWCA doesn't have cell towers, as yet. People are encouraged to leave it all behind. In Lebanon Hills, one can search for

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		<p>morel mushrooms or go for a swim without a life guard on duty, but still tackle a double black diamond on cross country skis. No, for me and my family, not every regional park has to have every amenity. Not every regional park has to be stamped from the same "cookie cutter" approach. Some (at least one or two) should just allow us to enjoy the free winding nature trail, that washes out with a heavy rain. The solitude of saying "Hi" or "Good morning" to a fellow hiker. That is what sets Lebanon Hills apart from the other regional parks. If I want to share my experience with bicyclists, I can go elsewhere. Or head over to the nearby rough mountain bike area which I have enjoyed in the past, but I'm clearly getting too old to enjoy this rocky, rollercoaster (unpaved) trail!</p>
Kubesh, Tyler	2/23	I do not support this plan. Vote NO to this plan.
Kuehl, Rhonda	2/20	I say PAVE IT. One paved trail will not spoil the park and it will allow wheelchair users to enjoy it. It is a wonderful park.
Kuhlmann, Kris H	2/25	We have enough paved areas. Please keep it green!
Kummer, Jean	2/22	<p>2) CONNECTOR TRAIL</p> <p>"Inability to complete the paved, bikeable trail through Lebanon Hills would undermine the quality of the greenway network concept..." ~ 2015 revised plan (p. 186) and 2013 draft development plan (p. 171) · Connector Trail was re-aligned to the county's proposed "Modified 2001 Corridor" and the segment through the west end of park, previously labeled for future consideration, was removed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Revised plan emphasizes recreational use, but design criteria did not change. (pp. 163, 168-170) · 6-miles; multi-use; 10' wide asphalt; snow removal and ice control except at intersections with ski trails.</li> <li>· Wide construction clearance; grading terrain to 5% slope requiring cut/fill and structural support. I disagree with the connector trail plan NO Asphalt please.</li> </ul>
Kunz, Emily	2/24	<p>Board Members, I absolutely agree with the below.....Please do not develop Lebanon Hills! It is a beautiful, natural area, and home to much wildlife that would likely not stay/come back if you change their home.</p> <p>I write to you today asking for you to listen with open minds and open hearts. I grew up with Lebanon Hills literally in my line of sight. Although my family and I have long called the city of Minneapolis home, it is a unique place worth saving. Lebanon Hills as it stands today is a wilderness gem in the heart of a metropolitan area lucky enough to boast exceptional green spaces that can make the rest of our nation jealous. It is a wonderful thing to allow access to nature via paved paths, groomed ski and tubing locations, etc, however, there is not a shortage of those amenities throughout nearby cities. There IS a limited supply of natural setting wilderness beauty, please allow this awesome location to be preserved and enjoyed by my young daughters as well as generations to come. (Rachel Ulfers)</p>
Kunz, Melonae	2/23	Please leave the park as it is. It is one of the only "wilderness" areas in the twin cities. We have many places to bike and ride without upsetting this area. You can not undo it once it is developed. Please DON"T.
LaBore, Jean	2/21	I am writing to you once again to beg you not to approve the plans for paving new trails in and through Lebanon Hills.

## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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I am writing you today to express my concern and opposition to the proposed revision of the 2015 Master Plan and ask you to reconsider your support as well.

First, to the issue of the connector trail. All discussion I have been present at publicly, as well as have seen in public forums and media have promoted this addition ad nauseum. As an avid biker both on road and off, I do not see a need for this and believe the inclusion has been, and continues to be wrongheaded. Furthermore, the burdens this would put on the county in the form of maintenance costs are not fiscally responsible in the long term, not to mention such a trail would be redundant to existing trail networks in the city of Eagan that establish the same point-to-point connection. To continue down this path is not in keeping with the stated desires of residents of Dakota County as no evidence has been presented to support that. Access is valuable and admirable for all users, but it should be proportionate, and reflect the true desires of the public as well as being responsible development. The overwhelming respondents in the Leisure Trends survey you cite also note walking in a natural area or large parks at a rate of 78% as an interest, yet the "natural" area is a large part of the assumption in their answer based on the questions. How can you infer that a paved trail is the way to get more people active - the county cannot keep adequate staffing to provide programmatic opportunities within the park!

Laing, Erik 2/17

On the issue of natural resources preservation, The County has yet to demonstrate that it has acted in accordance with the 2001 Master Plan with regards to preservation and restoration. Look around - Emerald Ash Borer is on the south end of the park, water quality is abysmal in some sections of the park, and invasives are present such as Buckthorn. No one can expect the park to be in a bubble protected from the issues everyone outside of the park is facing, but there is considerable value to the community in the form of a public space that is kept wild. This should be of chief concern more than further development in the park. We live in a world where the young have an undeniable nature deficit, and this will not be improved with further sanitation. Let the trails stay dirt; spend a fraction of the improvement dollars on marketing what makes Lebanon Hills so unique. One need look no further than social media to see what people value about Lebanon Hills - be it Facebook, Instagram or another medium: smiling faces, natural spaces and the seasons in all of their glory. Trails covered in leaves or snow, and the space coming alive in every place possible. Let's not minimize this, let's embrace it, value it and protect it for future generations to enjoy!

I urge you not to support the unchecked development in the park - it is cutting off our nose to spite our face, and it is not responsible to shoulder the cost of trail improvements with the required upkeep, maintenance an liability. If, as commissioners you choose to go against this, I would suggest your next steps are to rebrand the parks of Dakota Co. to something not including the word "wild."

I moved to Eagan in 2009 from Minneapolis, having been a resident of 612 nearly all of my life. I turn people to our beautiful park regularly; we have paddled the lakes, skied the trails, biked the singletrack, run and hike every square inch of trail in that time, and watched sunrises/sunsets from various parts of the park on foot or as part of the special deer hunt. I am biased; I believe there are far too few natural spaces left in the metro, and we owe it to future generations to make the priority protection before development. Your motivation may well be to get more people in the park, and I appreciate that; but when the park is developed to a point where it is no different than those in the Three Rivers District or Lake Elmo, then it will cease to be unique. Market the park, value it for what it is, and visitors will see that genuine experience as a plus. There are plenty of people in the millennial generation that would engage in marketing the park for you too, if you only thought to try.

Lamberty,  
Virginia 2/23

I have been a resident of Dakota county since 1995, living in both Apple Valley and Eagan. In the midst of our concrete world, Lebanon Hills offers easy access to the South suburban families and others to enjoy a more true experience of nature than is available in most places. Not everything has to be built up, commercialized, made accessible for everyone, or for that matter, convenient - there is a value in leaving nature at it's purest for all the experience. We already have covered patios for picnicking, playground equipment, snack stands at the beach and the little museum. It's enough, maybe more than enough.

Please don't ruin one of the last natural parks left. I took my children there when they were younger, my boys as Boy Scouts hiked around the lakes, learned about plants, trees, animals, etc. There are plenty of other parks that offer concrete walks, and all kinds of other amenities -

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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		Lebanon Hills is beautiful and provides a special place to be experienced by all who want real nature. Just let it be.
Lamers, Nancy	2/22	Please protect and maintain Lebanon Hills Regional Park's wilderness state with no or minimal man-made impact/changes to the space. Please do not cut trees, grade and pave a path through, in, or at the edge of the Lebanon Hill Regional Park. It is important to preserve that ecosystem. Please do not ruin the opportunity to enjoy a truly wilderness experience so close to home, in the metro area. I am concerned first that we maintain wilderness areas where they exist. I am also concerned that there is no planned budget to maintain the park after it has been damaged with the proposed blacktop/paved trails. There are many other opportunities in the Metro area for individuals to use paved/blacktopped trails in parks. There's a paved trail through Eagan's Thomas Lake Park.
Lane, Bob	2/10	<p>I spent time at the Wescott Library Saturday reading the 2015 Proposed Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Early in the summary I saw the following statistic that makes me question why we are even considering making drastic changes to this park. Visitation to all Dakota County parks was up 61% between 2001 and 2011. However, visitation to Lebanon Hills was up 103% during that same time period. Why would we even consider changing the nature of a park that had a 69% greater growth in visits than all other parks in Dakota County.</p> <p>My wife and I use to walk almost nightly, in the warm months, at Thomas Lake Park on those nice paved trails. Almost once a week, if not more, we were surprised by one or more bicyclers flying by us without any warning of " on your left or on your right". We got tired of always having to be on guard so we just started walking at Lebanon Hills. It was so much more beautiful and peaceful there.</p> <p>Please do not put 6 miles of paved trails through this beautiful place. Please do not spend those millions of dollars to destroy the natural beauty of this park that was named a " Wilderness in the City".</p> <p>I agree that some additional narrow paved paths could be constructed around some of the lakes to give additional access to disabled people, that buck thorn needs to be addressed, and that the signage is getting old and often hard to read, but I do not agree that we need a connector paved trail destroying a 6 mile path through this park. There is a East-West bike trail about a mile North of the park under the power line right of way that accommodates the speed bikers. There are many parks around that have playground equipment for the smaller kids and lots of sports fields for the older ones. Lebanon Hills is unique and once it is destroyed it will never be the same.</p> <p>The visitation statistic shows that the people of Dakota County, and beyond, have already voted on where they prefer to go. The previous Master Plan, that was built with a great deal of real stake holder participation, did a good job. Please don't change that and screw up this gem for my grandchildren and great grandchildren.</p>
Larson, Carl	2/21	I use Lebanon Hills park extensively throughout the year for hiking and skiing. This plan will ruin the "wilderness feel" of the park. I do not support this plan. Please vote NO to this plan.
Larson, Patricia	2/24	<p>In response to the proposed \$13.7 million Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park, I would like to submit my comments as follows: I have lived in Apple Valley for 20 years and have seen countless "improvements" to our city. While some of these are a great convenience, others have taken away from the lifestyle that I initially enjoyed. Increased multi-housing complexes, stop lights at every corner, too much traffic, etc. That being said, it is a pleasure to take a few hours every week and hike the peaceful trails at Lebanon Hills. And, I realize I am not the only taxpayer that enjoys this tranquility.</p> <p>A letter to the editor ("Sun ThisWeek") from Nate Reitz, Lakeville Dakota County Planning Commission Member, stated that perhaps Christie Soderberg (and I am assuming Dakota county taxpayers) aren't asking the right question with regard to Lebanon Hills. My question to the Commission is "Why aren't we embracing the gem that we have?" I have read countless travel books, magazines, brochures, etc. for Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona. And, for some reason, they all seem to embrace AND promote the forever wild in their states! In fact, I</p>

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have never read anything where they apologize for a particular hiking trail not being able to accommodate everyone. Why does the Commission feel the need to damage our beautiful acreage by bringing in the commercial equipment to take down more trees, overdevelop and remove the refuge for any "wild" animals that are still left? Can anyone ever leave preserved nature alone? Must we always think more trails, more pavement, more buildings, more access, etc. The existing trails at certain points are already only a few feet from another trail - how much can you carve up a few thousand acres? Sometimes, LESS IS MORE!

I hope the Commission makes the Dakota county citizens proud and either (1) turns down this dog-eared funding; and/or (2) uses the funding for purchasing some additional land that can be used similarly. We need more preserved land; not ruin the existing land we have. NOTE: I recently read the U More land is available for purchase!

I also hope that whatever elected officials that are responsible for making this decision, including selecting commission members, are prepared not to be re-elected due to eagerness to work on a project that is unwarranted and will ruin what is left of actual preserved nature for our future generations to enjoy. We are not in a competition to see how many miles of paved trails we can subject to a relatively small parcel of land.

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Leatherman,  
Brenda 2/24

The attached editorial written by Maryann Passe describes my concerns about the future of Lebanon Hills Park. Over the past 30 years there have been significant developments in the park, such as the visitor center, swimming beach, playground and shelter at Jensen Lake, the group camp facility, and mountain-bike course to enhance the park experience for different groups of visitors. Each of these developments was made while preserving the wild and natural area within the core of the park. As Maryann states, Lebanon Hills provides a unique wilderness experience in the Twin City area.

Another concern about adding paved trails in the park wilderness areas is the ongoing maintenance that will be required. The current trail system needs new signage, bridge work, and basic maintenance that has been deferred. Blacktop trails are subject to heaving and cracking, and will require consistent maintenance to ensure a safe surface. Keeping the trails clear and ice free will also be challenging, given Minnesota winters. Will funds always be available for this? In the past when the County had budget constraints, park maintenance was one of the first items to be cut. The attached picture shows a trail in need of repair; a common site wherever there are black top trails. Please reevaluate any changes to the master plan for Lebanon Hills Park and assure that the park will be "forever wild."



LeBlanc,  
Scott 2/24

I have been fortunate to live enough to live near the great resource that is Lebanon Hills. It's a gem and a treat. Last Fall, I took my 2 year old son there 4 times in two weeks alone to see the amazing colors. I use that area to rejuvenate my soul and teach my son about nature and the simple pleasure of hearing the wind rustle leaves.

I have also lived next to Bush Lake Park in Bloomington. It's a good park. Without the hills and the over-maintained trails left me with a feeling that it was a city park. A good enough place for a post-work walk...but nothing inspiration.

I spend my free time hiking remote mountains-knowing that of the possible millions of people that saw it this, year, I'm one of a few hundred that climbed it. I love the solitude felt sitting on the rocky shores of Lake Superior. I shovel my driveway at 10:00 o'clock half way through a heavy snowfall for the ability to experience something real. Lebanon Hills, even with the planes overhead, elicits the same feelings. Bush Lake

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has never made me feel that way.

Improving parking lots and removing buckthorn has merit. Building paved trails won't destroy everything that is special about the commitment the people of the region has to this special area. But adding roads...through the park...will destroy one of the reasons why this place draws me back so often.

I have once visited a cave in [Australia](#). It's once special main attraction, the Cathedral Cave, known for its acoustics just felt plain off due to bad planning and forcing a merger of accessibility and nature.

The master plan should include some sections of the park that allows for all visitors. Areas away from parking lots and visitor centers should not be one of them. Bikes should be allow around the park. They don't need a path through it.

Lastly remember, if you do nothing now, we can change our minds in 5 or 10 years. But if you decide to act, then we will likely regret, almost immediately. And we will not be able to reserve that decision. Thank you for your concern,

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LeBlanc,  
Susan

2/24

My name is Susan LeBlanc and I have been a resident in Eagan for 5 1/2 years. One of the prime reasons my family and I decided to move here was due to the abundance of trees and parks. Lebanon Hills is only about a mile from our house, and is our favorite place within the entire Twin Cities metro to be outdoors.

The reason for this is simple: you can walk only 5 minute into this park, and feel that you are totally removed from the hustle and bustle of the busy city life. I love that this park as very few "developed" areas. It is what brings me back time and time again. Now that I have a young son, I also enjoy bringing him to help him discover the joy of the outdoors and nature.

I am very concerned about the current plans that will be voted on soon that would detract from this experience. Please don't vote on a plan that will add more distractions to the wild beauty of this park. All of the proposed changes can be currently enjoyed at other parks around the metro. Why not leave this one relatively untouched? This is why people love this park.

I know many other community members who feel the same way I do--including friends who travel from northern suburbs in the metro just to enjoy Lebanon Hills Regional Park in it's wild beauty. I hope that you hear our voices.

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Lee, Justin

2/25

I am opposed to the construction of paved trails within Lebanon Hills. Having lived in Eagan and used the existing trails at lebanon hills my whole life, I can say with certainty that I there is no need for paved trails within the park borders. The park is completely surrounded by asphalt trails already, and there are many more asphalt trails all over our community.

Lebanon has been a bastion of nature and beauty within our growing and crowded community. If people want paved trails, plenty already exist. Adding trails and removing space is not necessary and should be avoided at all costs. Speaking of costs, why spend our community's limited funds on trails that damage and remove green space? Not building new asphalt trails is free, and does not damage or remove our limited and shrinking green spaces. No new asphalt within Lebanon Hills!!

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Lee, Tof

2/24

My name is Tof Lee. I've lived in Eagan most of my life. I went to Eagan High School and graduated from the School of Environmental Studies in 2002. Now my wife and I have 3 kids. We love hiking and camping along the North Shore during the summer, but throughout the year Lebanon Hills is our favorite place for connecting with nature.

It is where I go to hike, connect with nature, and dialogue with silence. It is a sacred space. I'm concerned that the Lebanon Hills I know will no longer be recognizable. Please preserve the park, not just for my sake, but my kids. They love Lebanon Hills almost as much as I do. We identify different trees, birds, and animal tracks all year long. I walk the trails nearly every Sunday afternoon. Dakota County Board, please vote to preserve and protect the natural resources of Lebanon Hills by voting down the proposal to build through Lebanon Hills Regional Park.

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Lenz, Jon and Hillary	2/26	<p>I'm writing on behalf of my wife and I. We are new residents to the Eagan community, with close proximity to the far west portion of Lebanon Hills, and we vehemently oppose changing the landscape of Lebanon Hills as part of the new proposed plan.</p> <p>The undisturbed, "wild" appeal of this part was a major factor in our decision to move to Eagan. Further, it is an area where we visit more than once per week. It is amazing how even in familiar terrain, we can find something natural and new to appreciate (trees, wildlife, an owl hooting, etc), or just escape city life for a few hours, being largely undisturbed by others. In one week this fall, we mountain biked, hiked, went for two trail runs, and had a picnic--all entering and exploring different areas of the park.</p> <p>The proposed plan to introduce paved multi-use trails into Lebanon is a far cry from it's competitive advantage over other parks in the area. The most compelling and distinctive trait of this massive park area is it's largely undisturbed state, something which cannot be undone once altered. Resources should be focused on retaining this natural element, restoring and preserving the parks existing architecture--not on overhauling a pristine wilderness escape, unrivaled in the Twin Cities. Please, do not vote to change the landscape of Lebanon Hills Regional Park.</p>
Lewellan, Gail	2/24	<p>As a resident of Dakota County and a frequent visitor to our natural areas, I was stunned to see the plans for a wide, paved trail corridor directly through the heart of Lebanon Hills. I do not support this plan. We are blessed to live in and manage a county that has carefully preserved elements of the land and water in their natural condition, and that proclaims "Forever Wild" on our letterhead. Many communities have playgrounds, and we have our share of those as well. Let us not trade a signature wild place for another playground. Existing trails can be enhanced to provide safe trail use opportunities without destroying the natural character of Lebanon Hills. Paved trails can be placed parallel to existing roads or trails without bisecting the natural area. Please rethink this plan and put funds into a plan more in keeping with the wild character of this special place.</p>
Linde, Paulette	2/18	<p>I am writing to ask that you please respect and protect Lebanon Hills Regional Park's unique sense of wilderness. As you know, it is one of a kind, and we should preserve it.</p>
Linder, Jeff	2/18	<p>I have just finished reading most of the public comments on your plan to "improve" Lebanon Hills Regional Park. It seems that there is overwhelming support for just leaving the park in it's current state and using available funds to make improvements that actually enhance the park's wild and natural setting for current and future users of the park. Your plan to pave trails through the park would have a permanent negative effect on the very thing that makes Lebanon Hills so special in the Twin Cities and why so many people love it and use it. There are myriad numbers of places where folks can participate in the type of recreation that you are proposing as necessary, but not any other similar metro parks that still feel like it is untouched by the "progress" of poorly conceived and misdirected plans such as your current proposal. Please reconsider and leave the park in its wild state where folks can hike a natural path through a natural landscape and see more birds and wildlife than other people. Implementing your plan will destroy the very thing that makes Lebanon Hills unique and treasured by so many in Eagan, Apple Valley and throughout the entire metro area.</p>
Link, Milissa	2/25	<p>Please do not grade and pave segments of the Lebanon Hills regional park system. This is one of the most beautiful and pristine nature areas, providing habitat for birds and wildlife, in the entire metro area. I implore you to vote NO!</p>
Locke, Tom	2/25	<p>Lebanon Hills, or any park for that matter, is a place for people that can handle unpaved trails. If you pave the trails you will not be making a more convenient experience you will be making less of an experience. Seeing your foot print in the mud and tripping over roots are parts of hiking everyone enjoys. The more man made aspects you put in there, the less wild aspects there will be. Hikers want to feel apart from the daily rabble of their lives when they enter the woods, not be reminded that mankind has ripped through here to. Plus we all spend way to much time walking and driving on pavement so lets give ourselves a break please. If you have money to spend on the park use it for programs for kids. Kids need to be reminded of how much nature kicks ass.</p>

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Lofgren, Jeff	2/19	<p>My name is Jeffrey Lofgren. I am an Apple Valley resident and am a frequent user of the vast Lebanon Hills Regional Park System. Why would you want to destroy a mini-BWCA within our community in favor of a homogenized play ground?</p> <p>I am concerned that the construction of connector trails requiring widening and paving of the natural soft paths, removal of trees and bushes, scraping away hills and undulations to facilitate a flatter paved trail, all conspire to turn a unique local suburban wilderness into an all to common city park, thankfully of which there are many already; not so for true wilderness escapes with a North Woods feel located within our community.</p> <p>Not only will the remote character be forever changed, but the removal of trees, bushes and the addition of hardscape will promote additional runoff to further pollute the lakes, ponds and wetlands which are already of poor water quality.</p> <p>There are already extensive paved bike trails connecting vast swaths of Eagan, Apple Valley and Dakota county. Within Lebanon Hills Regional Park there is an existing top tier mountain biking facility. There are ample city managed parks, county parks and adjoining park districts that contain picnic areas, play areas, and paved trails to get there. What there isn't is a vast wilderness with a wide variety of wildlife, supported by wetlands and forest cover and minimal urban intrusion; except for the current Lebanon Hills Regional Park.</p> <p>I enjoy hiking up and down hills on uninterrupted remote trails, looking for wildlife, kayaking on the lakes and ponds, snow shoeing and cross country skiing on snow broken only by other snow shoes and ski's and only hearing forest sounds; all close by without a large driving commitment to get there. This is an absolutely unique jewel for any metropolitan area.</p> <p>What I don't want is to have to hike, snow shoe and cross country ski on flattened, wide blacktop roads with less trees and bushes, more impaired wetlands and ponds and bikes racing past. If I wanted this I would go to Lake Harriet. I would much rather have a horse trot past on a dirt path, than be run over by a speeding bike on a blacktop road.</p> <p>Everything doesn't always have to be homogenized into a "something-for-everyone" playground. Leave well enough alone. Sometimes less is more. Spend the money on removing buckthorn, planting trees, cleaning up the water, maintaining what we have and adding to it. Take a hint from The Nature Conservancy and BWCA. Protect the limited remaining natural environment.</p>
Loftus, John	2/19	<p>I'm writing to you today as an Apple Valley native, who was an avid distance and trail runner, who loves Lebanon Hills for it's unique characteristics that make it an oasis of natural parks in the rapidly developing and urbanizing environment in the south suburbs. I recognize that you all have to have long-term plans for how the city will grow. I realize that it's a natural process that things are going to develop and urbanize overtime as the twin cities continues to grow. However, I think you're making both a moral and a pragmatic mistake in considering to further develop the Lebanon Hills park area. I beg you to think long-term, farther long-term than you might be. Developing Lebanon hills park might make it more popular right now, but only in the sense that you'll just be getting more people to go there. But is that really the goal? The more to develops the more it will lose its unique characteristics that make people want to go there in the first place. Lebanon Hills is well known all around the twin cities. It's a destination for folks who are clamoring for an experience in nature that can't be had elsewhere in the cities. If you turn Lebanon Hills into just another regular park, it's eventually going to lose its magic and what people love about it. Dakota Country can continue to benefit from the tourism of people coming to visit the park, but that won't continue if the park loses what's attractive about it. Furthermore, Lebanon Hills is important for the local ecology and environmental health which helps make the rest of Apple Valley and Eagan beautiful. Dakota county can continue to urbanize, and it should, but I beg you to think long-term and consider that in 20 or 30 years, if Lebanon hills is just a regular park that's all it will be, but if we keep it how it is now, it will be something really special that people will come from all over to visit, and Dakota county can be a leader in green suburban landscapes in the Twin Cities. Lebanon Hills is really a beautiful place, and one of the few areas near the cities where people can experience nature as it should be experienced. Part of the reason why I study biology at the University of Minnesota is my experiences growing up in Lebanon Hills and seeing all of the untampered-with natural beauty there. Please don't fall into this trap of thinking about things in the short term or in pure numbers of people who use the park every day, or how much revenue it is</p>

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		bringing into the government. Think long term, think about the characteristics of Dakota County and Apple Valley/Eagan. Keep Lebanon Hills the way it is. Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing your decision on this plan.
Lowrey, Johanna	2/24	Lebanon Hills has remained a landmark in the Twin Cities because it is an escape from every other park that looks the exact same. I am a runner, like many others that enjoy feeling like that are in a semi-natural landscape. I plead that you do not pave it!! Thank you,
Luckraft, Haley	2/22	<p>I read the article in the Star Tribune regarding the possibility of paving the trails at Lebanon Hills. I, along with family and friends, are strongly opposed to this as we enjoy the natural wilderness of the trails at Lebanon Hills. To take away the natural look and feel of these trails would be a disservice to everyone. There are enough paved trails throughout the twin cities for people to take advantage of. There are very few natural trails in such a beautiful wooded park. We enjoy these immensely as they are and do not want them destroyed by concrete.</p> <p>There is no reason to spend the time and money defacing these magnificent trails. I hope that you will make the right choice in leaving these trails in their natural state and spend our tax dollars where it is needed. Stay true to our slogan of "Forever Wild". Leave the trails as they are for our children, their children and children for years to come to enjoy.</p>
		<p>Forever Wild...that is quickly changing with the current plans for two of Dakota County's most natural parks - Spring Lake Park Reserve and Lebanon Hills Regional Park The Lebanon Hills Master Plan states the goal is to "Strategically protect and improve the park's ecological resources" at the top of the list. This should appease the Board's constituents, but in reality, they have not committed an adequate budget to successfully implement this goal. Conflicting with this stated goal is the county's priority to develop and add pavement within these parks, effectively degrading the ecological resources and natural sustainability in addition to fragmenting wildlife habitat.</p> <p>"Strengthening partnerships to deliver effective and efficient services", another master plan goal, should include a rework of the plan. Enhance the natural characteristics and eliminate the destruction of huge construction projects. Limiting tree removal and demolition of the the natural habitat that these parks have. The total amount of spending could be GREATLY reduced and these valuable parks could be preserved for now and future generations.</p> <p>2013 Master Plan Goals</p> <p>Strategically protect and improve the park's ecological resources</p> <p>Complete existing visitor use areas, while maintaining the park's natural character</p> <p>Fill gaps in basic, popular park activities, such as picnicking, bicycling and walking</p> <p>Design the park connector trail and regional greenway connections</p> <p>Strengthen partnerships to deliver effective and efficient service</p> <p>From a resident living near Spring Lake Park Reserve - 2/10/2015 <i>You will cry when you see what they are doing. We have crews of criminals going up and down our driveway tearing down fence and the heavy equipment is cutting down every tree it can and the noise is scaring the wildlife. No more peace and quiet. Maybe you should include a photo as well. It made my wife cry. Timing is everything.</i></p> <p><i>No wonder the people in Lebanon Hills are concerned about what they might do to their beautiful park. All one has to do is come over to Spring Lake Park and see. The county, in the name of "Forever Wild" is tearing a path as wide as a four lane super highway through the woods so they can build a bike trail. Shame on the county and the county commissioners who not only are allowing this tragedy to take place, they ordered it! When the citizens of Nininger Township surrounding the park violently objected to the trail as proposed, the county in its infinite wisdom, would not allow another public meeting like that to take place. The staff and commissioner in attendance looked like fools. I wonder if the county board</i></p>
Lueth, Patricia	2/10	

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*will listen to the citizens around Lebanon Hills Park. Probably not, because they will do what they want, and they want to appease bikers. True environmentalists would cry when they look at the extremely wide clear cut paths through the woods. Goodbye deer. Goodbye eagles. Goodbye wild. Hello pavement. Hello snow plows. Goodbye peace and quiet. Hello noise and development. Thanks to our county government.*

PLEASE HELP MAKE A POSITIVE CHANGE TO THESE PLANS! IT IS NOT TOO LATE.

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Another email from me...I would like you all to see the start of the construction at Spring Lake Park Reserve. Please see attached photos. 40+ feet wide tree removal for a bike trail 10-12 feet wide with 2 foot buffer on each side. This looks like a roadway going through the woods. The "Reserve" should be taken out of the name of this park. And the "Forever Wild" should be removed as the Dakota County slogan. This is really sad to see. I would invite you to see and hear for yourself the sounds and sights of this project. Thank you for your time

Lueth,  
Patricia

2/12



Lueth,  
Patricia

2/13

I have seen and heard some interesting and conflicting information at the past Open House meetings for both parks. Supposed public input was a "check the box" action that hardly scratched the surface for the people that were in attendance for Spring Lake Park Reserve. I feel the lack of communication and lack of public involvement and public support is wrong from our elected official to continue THEIR plans. And now the bulldozer's have arrived and begun! There is not much thought or funding resources put into "natural resource protection" that Steve Sullivan talks about when a huge swath of trees and wildlife is plowed down in such a manner that the supposed 2% of the park that the trail will consume will be so greatly effected. The damage caused by these bike ways (paved highway type connector trail is NOT SAFE for walkers, hikers, elderly or people with disabilities) will cause the natural experience to be GONE FOREVER - NOT FOREVER WILD as Dakota County officials claim! 40-60 foot tree clearance at some locations for a bike trail is not recreational - that is a bike highway.

The "amazing amount of planning and work that went into the layout and design phase" Steve Sullivan mentions was greatly lacking in public communication and awareness and public involvement. Spring Lake Open Houses were so disorganized and hostile, all public input was ignored no further meetings planned because of the public disagreeing with the process and trying to understand who needs or wants these trails. This is NOT SUPPORTED BY THE MAJORITY!

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Lueth, Patricia	2/15	<p>To any of you that can and will respond to this email - I continue this effort because I feel that communication in this project plan is #1 and has been lacking greatly. I obviously have many concerns and am very passionate about the development plans for Spring Lake Park and Lebanon Hills. PLEASE someone answer this one question... How are the plans for Spring Lake Park Reserve able to go forward? The public comments that were requested by the Commissioner's and Park staff, and are posted on the Dakota County website, are so unanimously against the plan as a whole. The public was asked to comment but who is listening to the responses and how without public support can this continue?</p> <p>I am afraid the efforts of the public (which is a bigger group showing interest and opposition) for Lebanon Hills will also be ignored. You are asking for public opinion, and give the public opportunity to be heard - but who is REALLY LISTENING? Hopeful for better responses and communication</p>
Lueth, Patricia	2/20	<p>This past Monday I sent this email and received ZERO responses to this ONE QUESTION! VERY DISAPPOINTING. My countless past emails have also been, for the most part ignored. Can anyone help?</p>
Lueth, Patricia	2/6	<p>I do <i>NOT</i> support the current "Greenway" bike trail plan proposed for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. The lack of communication, lack of transparency on funding, lack of accountability for natural resources, and lack of public support / public need, are the <i>MANY</i> reasons I do <i>NOT</i> support this plan! I along with many others that have commented and emailed at past planning meetings also do <i>NOT</i> support other trail plans within Dakota County but the trees are beginning to be bulldozed. There was not fair process for public involvement or support for plans made in Spring Lake Park Reserve. The amount of money that has and will be spent for the preparation, development and maintenance for the trails in these parks could be reduced significantly and natural resources could be better saved and maintained in the planning process. Citizen input and planning could be done in a more cost effective and nature sensitive process. This is all very sad to see happening in our community for something that is not a need!</p>
Lueth, Patricia	2/9	<p>I have lost count on how many letters, emails, meetings, comment cards, open comment period letters, news article opinion / responses I have written in the past 2 + years regarding the Greenway Bike Trail Plans for Dakota County including Spring Lake Park Reserve and Lebanon Hills Regional Park. The responses I have received (or lack of) have <i>NOT</i> given me much faith in the planning process, meaningful public involvement, communications or over all feeling that this is <i>SO WRONG!</i></p> <p>I feel like myself and <i>MANY</i> of the citizens that have <i>NOT</i> supported these plans have been ignored. Today the bulldozers are beginning the tree removal for these trails at Spring Lake Park Reserve. <i>MY</i> horse lives near a house that is being torn down after eminent domain, the trail is going to be just outside the pasture. The blasting of the bluffs will begin soon to build two outlook bridges costing over a million dollars each! The affect on wildlife and the animals that are used to the quiet serene of this park is about to change significantly.</p> <p>There has not been public support for <i>ANY</i> of the trail plans. In fact the documented public comments on the Dakota County website from all past open houses and meetings show overwhelming that the public citizens <i>DO NOT SUPPORT ANY OF THESE PLANS!</i> The Lebanon citizen panel was only formed after negative publicity. The Spring Lake Park reserve meetings and negative comments and input were ignored.</p> <p>The cost in dollars and natural resource loss could be greatly reduced if more time and thought was given to cost and resource savings. The trails could be constructed mostly near current roads and trails that exist and need maintenance already. The current funding sources that have been made public, which are being used for these trails are not what these funds were intended for and does not cover the costs entirely. A Legacy Fund that was voted on by citizens for the purpose of Natural Resources not development. Also, Transportation Funds being used on a recreational project. Both are questionable funding sources. I do <i>NOT</i> support the plans for either park. My hope is that the right person to make</p>

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a change in this process can HELP to make this right. Not a happy Eagan Resident

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Lundstrom, Ann 2/24  
I am writing to ask you to please keep the Lebanon park wild. I live just north of Northfield but come to Lebanon park with my family and friends to ride horse and mountain bike. We love this park. It is so beautiful and peaceful. It is a treasure that many people enjoy. I am never there without seeing many others enjoying the trails as well. There are many other parks with many amenities, but not many wild parks left for us to enjoy here in Dakota County. Please keep it wild.

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Lutman, Sarah 2/18  
I'm writing to express my opposition to plans to further develop Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Our family visits the park weekly -- and has, for many years -- to seek and find the solace of nature amidst our urban landscape. We are a family without a lake home or cabin, and whose work schedules and family budget mean that heading "up north" to find quiet in the woods is rarely a possibility. Lebanon Hills is our respite. I hope you will reject the plan to make changes in the park's trails and amenities, changes that will make Lebanon more like other parks and less distinctive within our regional menu of urban amenities. Not every park should or must be alike in its offerings. Having different parks, attractive to different audiences, and for different purposes, is the right decision in our multi-channel world. Lebanon Hills is the best "peace and quiet" channel we have in the region.  
And so a large, relatively undeveloped land parcel like Lebanon Hills is a regional treasure. Please, please don't turn it into another "playground" like every other park. Many thanks for your consideration. You are making a decision that will affect not only our family but all future generations.

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Lymburner, Jennifer 2/9  
I am writing to express support on behalf of my family for the updated master plan for Lebanon Hills. We were hiking through the park yesterday and ran through the park this evening thinking how great it would be to have a paved trail.  
The benefits we appreciate most about the new master plan include:  
1. New paved trails around the lake and through the park - encouraging those with more limited mobility, parents with strollers, and elderly who need a more level walking surface to get out, be active and experience the beauty of the park.  
2. Year-round use - for more ways to get out in the winter and enjoy the park.  
3. Beach enhancements - to make the already excellent beach experience that much better.  
I have confidence that the Planning Committee and Commissioners will make the right decision which is to go forward with the new master plan. It saddens me to see a very vocal group ([wildlebanonhills.org](http://wildlebanonhills.org)) putting flyers on people's cars at the trail heads that are very negative in tone, and even use scare tactics and "facts" that are not put into perspective with the park and plans as a whole.  
Thank you for all of your thoughtful planning, utilization of county residents in the panel review, and for the carefully revisions to the master plan. We are excited to see the improvements to our favorite park!

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Lyon, Kim 2/25  
I'm hesitant to even take the time to write this email. Sadly, I feel that a decision has been made about this Master plan long ago and all of the requests for feedback are obligatory, but not really being considered. I hope I'm wrong!  
I oppose the plan to put in a connector trail. I don't feel like this park would benefit from being like EVERY other park. I think the beauty of Lebanon is it's natural quality. If people want to ride bikes in a park, there are plenty of others to choose from. I am a bike rider with young children and we like to bike as a family. I've never wished for a paved bike trail within the park. We love the mountain bike trails and can find paved bike trails throughout Eagan (Thomas Lake Park, Highline trail, and Blackhawk Park).  
I'm also EXTREMELY concerned about maintenance costs for this trail. I don't think it's appropriate to spend tons of money on a trail the majority

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of people do not want. Money is money no matter where it comes from. But as a taxpayer, I don't support funding the maintenance and up keep of this trail. Plowing it in the winter???? How many people do you see using all of the currently plowed trails we already have? And then to build a bridge over ski trail crossings or leave ski trail crossings unplowed? This sounds ridiculous!

I do understand the need to be ADA compliant and do support a trail around McDonough Lake - this area is already developed. I also support making access to the Holland Lake pier ADA compliant.

There is much that needs to be done in the park as it is: Buckthorn, fixing the bridge over Beaver Pond, trail maintenance around Jensen Lake, and doing something with the old west parking lot. Adding more maintenance to a list that hasn't been taken care of for years seems irresponsible. If you've read this far, thank you for your time. Please listen to the public and users of the park!

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I'll keep my feedback short but I think moving away from the "forever wild" is a mistake for Dakota county. There is a unique beauty to the park that should be celebrated and the lack of a paved connector trail through the park should not be a priority. The number of park users has grown and that should also be celebrate. We have amazing mountain bike trails, Great programing. Lots to enhance without the need to become a copy of the other parks in the twin cities.

I am a frequent user of the park and have notice the inability for the park to maintain the current trail system so I have real concern about adding trails that would require additional funding to support. For example: the wood bridge near Beaver Pond is a mess. It is missing safety rails and it is an accident waiting to happen but the park has not addressed it. Instead we are focusing on new trails.

Lyon, Scott 2/24

After reading through the plan, I agree with the comments summarized by the "Paved Trail Opponents" March 14, 2013. I agree to small loops like the one around McDonough lake or the access point to Holland lake would be a compromise to improve access to all residence. It could also be a chance to study the number of new users and the impact on maintenance budgets. I also love to bike but don't think I need to commute through the park. I would much rather focus on working to connect trails adjacent to roads.

I'm also concerned about the new paved trails connection with cross country ski trails. I think "Conflicts between plowed paved trails and ski trails can be reduced by not plowing ski trail intersections in winter, or by separating paved and ski trails with bridges to allow for uninterrupted skiing." Would the bikers then pick up their bikes and lift them over the trail or hikers jump over the snow? I think you would want to keep these trails separate.

When you have a survey in your own report that highlights the majority of people don't think paved trails should be a priority it feels like this group has its own agenda. Like it knows better than the people who use the park or the group that set the "forever wild" vision in the first place. It is still not too late to say no.

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Lyons, David 2/19

I want to chime in on this topic. Please do not pave over Lebanon Hills park! There is so little left in the Twin Cities that is wild. This park is a gem and I drive 10 miles to visit it for that reason. There are TONS of paved and accessible for disabled etc... trails in the area. This park is a unique gem so think carefully! Once it's changed it'll lose its character and these changes are irreversible.

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Lysne, Edric 2/25

Like me, other hikers, skiers, birders and nature lovers enjoy the wild feel of Lebanon Hills wooded winding trails, and as the Lebanon Hills proposal is laid out currently they are all about to change in a major way. The connector trail - 6-miles, minimum 10-ft. wide asphalt; free of snow/ice; wide construction clearance; grading to 5% requiring cut/fill and structural support; site lines for bicycle speeds up to 20mph- is UNACCEPTABLE to maintain the rare wild character of the Park. This paved greenway is proposed to be built through the heart of the best wild, most rolling terrain. It's a big deal because the grading and raising that will occur will take out many natural trails that are there now. I do NOT support this plan. Please vote NO to this plan. Thank you

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Maas, Nastacia	2/25	This area is one of the few remaining parks that people can actually enjoy the outdoors in. A lot of people enjoy hiking, mountain biking and enjoy the scenery without having all the amenities. There are plenty of other parks for that. Future generations won't have the idea of what nature is really all about without a paved sidewalk...I hope that you consider everyone's concern and not just a developers idea. Thank you very much!
MacGillis, Pierre	2/18	I am writing to you in regards to the proposed master plan of Lebanon Hills. I ask that you consider keeping as much of the park as unpaved and wild as possible. I am a frequent visitor to Lebanon Hills and deeply feel that in coming decades, its wild character will be appreciated as something special, stunning, and important for the metro dweller.
Machler, Brandon	2/17	I just wanted to email to state my view on keeping the Lebanon Hills park similar to what it is today. The Twin Cities is a wonderful place with many parks and built trails. But we have so few "natural" environments where people can truly get away from the city and the unnatural elements that come with the parks in the city. Paved trails are great, but nothing compares to natural getaways. The birds, the animals, even the trails themselves are what I enjoy. Let bicyclists enjoy what they already have. Please do not go through with the changes you're intending on doing. Thanks.
Magnuson, Aaron	2/24	I grew up in Rosemount, and have many great memories of walking the trails of Lebanon Hills regional park. Please keep Lebanon wild
Maher, Patty		Phone Comment: I like Lebanon Hills Regional Park just as it is.
Mahowald, Paul	2/18	Don't detract from the beauty of Lebanon Park with your planned trail. If you have money to waste, give yourselves a raise, but please leave the Park alone.
Maiers, Dan	2/23	<p>We've lived in Eagan near Lebanon Hills Park for the last 22 years. Our family has spent many days riding our bikes on the streets and trails in Dakota County. We've also spent many days in this beautiful park. We are vehemently opposed to adding paved trails throughout the park. Paved trails in Lebanon Hills Park will detract from the natural setting. I believe that the park should not be developed further. It is a rare gem which will be lost forever with paving trails &amp; continues development. I appreciate the natural, peaceful, and passive areas of the park. I ask that you do not add paved trails &amp; limit further development.</p> <p>Passive parks have much lower maintenance &amp; upkeep costs. Our limited &amp; precious tax dollars should be directed toward maintaining &amp; repairing the current infrastructure. The County should be considering adding bicycle trails along County Road 32, Cliff Road. This is a route that desperately needs a bicycle lane. I no longer ride much of it since it has very little in the way of a bicycle trail along it. It is a natural east/west route.</p>
Maleck, A.	2/24	<p>The proposed plan to greatly modify the existing landscape &amp; infrastructure at Lebanon Hills would be a tremendous loss to the people of Dakota county, and any who frequent Lebanon Hills. The sense of wilderness that one experiences at Lebanon Hills is exceptional, especially as there is such a loss of it in the suburbs. Paving the paths, and fundamentally modifying the park would destroy what makes Lebanon such a treasure.</p> <p>As you strive for growth and/or change to the park, don't ruin the things that make it so unique and valued by the community.</p> <p>I implore the council to find a different solution. One that adds to the things that make Lebanon great, instead of detracting from it. As council members, you are responsible to make sure you do not wreck something so special to so many. Thank you for your time.</p>

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Malloy, Mike	2/25	<p>I have been visiting Lebanon Hills Park since the late 1970's and always enjoyed its Natural Environment. Why would you want to Destroy this with a paved road (trail). Why would you want to Destroy Healthy Oak Tree's, Ash Tree's, Elm Tree's, etc. Why would you want to Spend our Tax Dollars on the Annual Maintenance Expense that this will cost. This plan makes no sense and I can only ask why ? This will be a good question when all County Commissioners are up for re-election. (Why did you spend our Tax Dollars to Kill Healthy Tree's in a Natural Environment ?)</p>
Mandell, Paul	2/21	<p>As someone who served on the true Citizens Panel that helped develop the original Lebanon Hills Park Master Plan in 2001, I wish to thank you for refocusing your efforts on this jewel of our park system after fourteen years. That said, I have to admit that, with the exception of improvements in and around the east entry and Visitors Center, as well as several important storm water improvements in and around the park, I believe that the County has not shown anything resembling a serious commitment to implementation of the most important majority of recommendations found in that 2001 Plan. I have been very distressed over the piecemeal, largely under-funded efforts toward restoration and preservation within the Park, clearly coming up far shy of the level of commitment and dedicated efforts called for in the 2001 Plan. I find it hard to believe that any would think that the County is winning the battle with invasive species, in particular, buckthorn; and would question the County's failed attempts at employing best practices or, for that matter, true investment in anything resembling an effective volunteer program.</p> <p>However, all that pales in comparison to the severe disagreement I take with the County's new Draft 2015 Lebanon Hills Master Plan, referred to as an "update" to the 2001 Master Plan. I question whether this new effort, first drafted in 2013, is actually an update to the 2001 Plan or more a Plan for Implementation of the 2008 Parks and Greenways Plan. The revised draft plan fails in many of the same areas as did the 2013 Plan. That Plan generated a great deal of negative criticism during the first public comment period, and this Plan, revised ever so little, fails again in that it is still so heavy on the development end and so light in the area of commitment or any measureable metrics for the restoration of the park or of the quality and health of the Park. The Plan appears to have one goal-to use the park to provide something for virtually everybody, which in the end, may succeed only in offering nothing for anybody.</p> <p>In the opening pages, there are numerous very appropriate references to the Park's assets, as " an urban natural retreat, although the quality of its natural resources is diminishing"; with a need to "ensure that the Lebanon Hills Plan supports the parks' mission and vision, its natural qualities protected for future generations", and "building from the 2001 Master Plan..." .</p> <p>There is appreciation for all these proper acknowledgements, as well as the main thread found in most of the public comments to the 2013 Plan called for strengthened efforts toward restoration of the park's environs. So too, the 2014 Citizens panel, which in many other areas, failed to meet expectations for a serious examination of the Plan but which in one of their better moments, called for stronger efforts focused on restoration and protection of the park's natural elements and a redoubling of support for volunteer efforts in that area as well.</p> <p>Until such time that the County Board approves a regular, line-item annual dedication of appropriate funds for the maintenance, restoration, and protection of the natural elements of the Park, along with some set of metrics by which to measure progress in this most important aspect of the park, I oppose any construction of the paved "connector trail" found in the plan.</p> <p>I can support the one paved, loop trail around McDonough, additional picnic facilities to handle the daily use in and around the Visitors' Center, possibly one additional mixed-use trail accessible to all (but not paved) to an additional water body or other special feature in order to provide comparable experience, and limited enhancements around Jensen Lake Area, the Southeast Equestrian Trailhead, Holland Lake (excluding any additional paved trail), the West Trailhead, and smaller than planned improvements near the campgrounds as well as Camp Sacajawea.</p> <p>I object strenuously to any implementation of the aforementioned "connector trail" until several measures are met. These include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- completion of all other greenways planned to connect to the park trailheads,</li><li>- complete design of the "connector trail" to recreational, limited speed (7 m.p.h. max.), scenic alignment to offer pleasant and more natural</li></ul>

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experiences of the park features,

- routed to require the minimum of grading and tree removal, and without the specified 150 ft. clear sightlines found in the plan and called for in order to qualify for federal dollars,
- a trail, if built, would be signed to prohibit high speed bike or in-line skaters,
- far more success in restoration of the woodlands and other areas, as well as greater progress in elimination of buckthorn- in order to make the park more appealing and guarantee that as more visitors come to enjoy the park, the quality and health of the park will be evident, stable, and vastly improved,
- the Plan must specify with a clear commitment that while the interest is in providing year-round enjoyment, that can ONLY mean plowing of paved trails in the winter and under NO circumstances will the County introduce salt or sand if plowing is found inadequate, in which case, plowing should be discontinued rather than resorting to the introduction of sand or chemicals.

Only under these conditions would I find a paved “connector trail” acceptable at all, and at the very least, it should be removed from the list for either Priority I or II and placed in that list for “Long-Range timeline, and, should the time come that the County is ready to proceed with construction of the “connector trail”, it’s alignment and design should be put forth for public review and further comment period.

If the County Board is not prepared to acknowledge that the biggest problem with the Plan is their intention to make the Park a “hub” for a greenway system that may never be completed, let alone funded, as seen in the majority of the public comment in 2014 and likely again this year; and thus break apart that part of the 2015 Lebanon Hills Park Master Plan, along with a reduced scale of development in the Park Plan, then I feel there is no other recourse that to put it very simply. In that case, I OPPOSE THE 2015 MASTER PLAN AND URGE YOU TO VOTE NO.

Respectfully submitted,

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Manthey,  
David

2/22

Whatever are you thinking? The planners who shaped Dakota County left that beautiful just as it was for a reason. They realized many years ago that people and animals needed a space to go to reflect and enjoy nature! In many ways, those planners were well ahead of their time. We need to honor their foresight and God's creation. Not destroy it for gains. Using legacy funds, I am sure, would be illegal. That is not what voters wanted when the authorization was passed.

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Markle, Amy

2/24

As an outdoor enthusiast and resident of Dakota County I am very concerned about the Proposed Development Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Please consider the following concerns in this important decision:

- 1.The Proposed Plan conflicts with The 2001 Master Plan. The master plan should serve as a guiding document regarding future decisions for the regional park “places emphasis on the ecological values of the park...showing due restraint in the expansion of the “development footprint” was consciously considered throughout the planning process.” What is the point of having a Master Plan if the vision and values established for this rare natural area are not respected?
  - 2.The Proposed Plan would be expensive to annually maintain. Paved trails need constant maintenance. There are over 200 miles of existing paved county trails that can be enjoyed many of which are just miles from Lebanon Hills (such as the Big Rivers Bike Trail). The approved 2013 Mendota-Lebanon Hills Greenway Plan costs \$34,898/ paved mile to maintain. It would be safe to assume similar figures for the 2 proposed greenways in the plan. Also, almost the entire regional park is surrounded by existing paved trails on major roads such as Johnny Cake Ridge Road and Pilot Knob Road.
  - 3.The Proposed Plan would create 2 Greenway trails that bisect the park and as a result will create habitat fragmentation. The Environmental Institute of Houston, Texas, states that habitat fragmentation is among the most serious of threats to biological diversity, as determined by a
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consensus of conservation biologists. "Fragmentation" has been defined as the division of natural habitat into progressively smaller patches of smaller total area isolated from each other by a matrix of habitats unlike the original. The effects of habitat fragmentation--faunal collapse, invasion of exotics, alteration/disruption of ecosystem processes--result from habitat loss and insularization, both of which contribute to a decline in biological diversity. One of the many things I enjoy about recreating in Lebanon Hills is the opportunity to observe animals such as owls, warblers, waterfowl, turkeys, deer and coyotes. As a park Naturalist that has worked in city, state and national parks, I know from experience that habitat fragmentation upsets the natural processes and is very hard to restore. Developing 10' wide paved trails through the park would have irreplaceable consequences in regards to wildlife. The Minnesota DNR has said, "Lebanon Hills is a significant natural resource in Dakota County because it is the last remaining large habitat of this type in northern Dakota County. It is elevated in importance each time development takes place in the surrounding area and the rest of the county."

4. A paved trail would change the aesthetics of the park. I specifically go to Lebanon Hills to bird watch and hike with my dog because I know I can spend hours in the quiet of nature on natural surfaces and not see and hear bikes whizzing by. It is not feasible to enjoy large natural areas frequently due to their distance from home such as many of Minnesota's State Parks, National Forests and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. As a citizen of Dakota County and tax-payer it makes me so proud and pleased to know I have Lebanon Hills just minutes away to enjoy. I am able to de-stress from the stresses of everyday life and do activities I enjoy. I believe that not every county park needs to satisfy every activity. I enjoy biking on paved trails, but firmly believe paving trails through this rare urban green space is not a wise decision.
5. The Proposed Plan takes restoration of current parklands and invasive species control into "future consideration". As a Naturalist I have identified both forest and aquatic invasive species throughout the park. To maintain the health and integrity of this unique greenspace I believe restoration and addressing invasive species should be a higher priority.

Please take my concerns into consideration when deciding to adopt the Proposed Plan to Lebanon Hills Regional Park and keep this park "FOREVER WILD".

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I am not from Dakota County I live in Hamburg which is on the west side of Carver County and the border of Sibley, and Mcleod. Even though I am out in the country we have no large wilderness areas in which I can enjoy my sport of trail running. I spend a lot of time every weekend driving to either Lebanon Hills, or Murphy Hanrehan Park Reserve as these are really the last 2 wilderness areas in the metro area. I probably do not make a difference in the business owner's bottom line in Dakota County, but I tend to think that I and others like me do contribute a little bit to the local economy. When I have to drive over an hour to spend the day somewhere, I usually plan any shopping forays for the day around my trip.

Martinson,  
Mark

2/25

To think that putting a paved path in the middle of Lebanon Hills will not change the aesthetics of the park is wrong. I can relate a trip I had to Kentucky in December and an experience with their "Parklands" trail system. When I got there I thought "This is great it looks just like Lebanon Hills with bigger hills!" I was soon very disappointed as I tried many different dirt paths and they all would go only a half a mile or so before turning back onto pavement. I finally settled on a 1.55 mile path that went up and over a hill and did monotonous repetition on that hill. I asked another trail runner where to go and he told me that this was it, "It's all we have" was his reply. I right away thought of the proposed plan for Lebanon Hills, and it solidified my view of what happens when you dry to pave paradise. A perfectly good trail system was ruined by putting pavement down the center. If this were to happen I would have to stop going to Lebanon Hills. I and most of my other friends that use the park would have to find somewhere else to play, and like me would drive an hour or two a day in order to enjoy ourselves. I would be more than willing to pay a user fee, and volunteer for maintenance duties to keep the park as is.

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Masengarb, John	2/10	<p>I wanted to say some things about two of our county parks. I visited the new Whitetail Woods park this fall after it's big opening. I was quite pleased with it and think that it was a good thing to create another county park in the middle of Dakota county.</p> <p>I visited the Lebanon Hills park just last month. From what I've read in recent local papers, in letters to the editors and a guest editorial, the issue of the "mega trail" through the heart of the park has not been decided in my favor. I want to again urge you, especially considering the county parks' motto, to keep the park as wild as possible and keep the proposed wide, paved trail out of its interior. Please listen to the citizens who have participated in coming up with the 2001 Master Plan. Please don't create panels or committees that serve as public palliatives rather than genuine means to engage the citizens and to truly seek their input and guidance.</p>
Masera, Shannon	2/24	<p>I grew up in this area and recently returned after 13 years in Florida with my family. I love this area with all my heart and want my children to grow up with the natural beauty that is Lebanon Hills. Future generations depend on us to make decisions that will impact them positively. We do not need more asphalt, parking lots, and building. What we need is nature, pure and simple. Please let the people's voice be heard. I vote no to the new plan.</p>
Matthews, Jeff	2/18	<p>Please keep Lebanon Hills as natural as possible. Please minimize paved trails. I understand the need to make sure the park is accessible for all. But please make sure the park maintains its natural, undeveloped traits.</p>
Mayer, Mike	2/19	<p>I am writing to encourage you to not proceed with the proposed plan for Lebanon Hills. You have done many wonderful things to make portions of the park accessible....and you have done so without spoiling or interfering the peaceful and serene setting. The trails should not have paved paths intersecting. To do so will wreck an absolutely wonderful and irreplaceable natural resource. It is a quiet and calming setting. There is nothing that compares to the wilderness feel and atmosphere. Please do not destroy such a fantastic asset. I fully understand that there are always competing interests at stake but....once you spoil the place....it can't be corrected. Thank you for your time and attention.</p>
McCay, Michael	2/22	<p>I do not support the proposed development in Lebanon Hills regional park. I go Lebanon for the wilderness and undeveloped aspects of the interior. Keep Dakota County parks wild!</p>
McCormick, Susan		<p>Phone Comment: I am an equestrian at Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I do not like pavement. Keep the park wild.</p>
McKenzie, Preston, Jennifer, Taylor, Bailey, and Abigail	2/7	<p>My family and I have read the new revised master plan for Lebanon hills Regional Park with great interest, as we are regular users of the park. The comments in this email come after careful consideration of the plan, and its near-term and its long-term potential impacts on the quality of life in Eagan and Dakota County. While the new plan is a significant improvement over the previous proposal, the addition of six miles of paved trails, including portions that intersect existing cross country ski trails, is disappointing. As is the inclusion of potential future paved loops around the lake as a part of the plan's description.</p> <p>We fully recognize that it is a delicate balance between keeping a city park "natural" and providing access to all citizens. However, When a park tries to be everything, its ends up to be nothing. Adding six miles of paved trails clearly changes the trajectory of Lebanon Hills. As Dakota County's population continues to grow, the pressure to further pave the park will do likewise. The recent loss of the Parkview Golf Course as a buffer, and the addition of 100 houses adjacent to the park on the former Parkview property is a clear example of the pressure that Lebanon Hills will continue to face. The plan document highlights that 38,000 Dakota County residents have "some form of disability" without distinguishing whether or not disabilities require paved trails. I found statistic this misleading and deceptive.</p> <p>Eagan Lakeville and Apple Valley are well paved. There are a number of beautiful county parks that have paved trails throughout. The city is</p>

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lined with sidewalks as well. What Eagan lacks is a true natural area, cross country ski trails, and equestrian facilities. A comprehensive paved access plan for the County is commendable, but adding six miles of sidewalk to the County's largest and most used natural area is not. Please consider the large number of residents who moved to Dakota County, and who remain here, in part due to the access to natural areas, ski trails and some measure of wilderness in the neighborhood. If the vision for Lebanon Hills is to be a natural oasis in an increasingly urban area, the pavement will wait. If the vision is to begin the process of converting Lebanon Hills into a paved walking trail, then the planned connector trail begins that process.

Aside from the connector trail, my family and I found the plan well thought out and clear, (including the paved trails to fishing facilities). The real misalignment is around the vision of the park as a natural area, or as an extension of Eagan's sidewalks. Best of luck in the final decision. I will watch, and vote, with interest. Feel free to contact me at this e-mail address, or at home

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McMahon, Joe 2/18 I approve your revised Lebanon Hills plan as a citizen of Eagan. Therefore, you may now proceed with implementation without further delay. Good work.

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McMillen, Daniel 2/23 You're making a big mistake by changing Lebanon Hills Regional. It's a place of rare beauty here in the twin cities and the last place near by we can truly experience nature. My family used to spend countless days at Thompson Lake in West St Paul until it was demolished like you're planning on doing to Lebanon Hills. Please don't make this another place we used to visit.

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Meister, Erin 2/21 I run on the beautiful, secluded trails of Lebanon Hills park, and also live near the green way in Minneapolis. I know how commuter bikers ride, and they do not preserve a calm, peaceful atmosphere. There are plenty of developed parks, and very little left for true cross country hiking, running and birding. There needs to be some place we care enough to preserve. Thank you for your consideration.

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Mele, Mary 2/18 I have been a resident of Eagan, Mn since 1985. Over this period of 35 years there has been a lot of development. Most of these developments have improved the quality of life in Eagan with added shopping, and entertainment venues. The proposed development of Lebanon Hills is not something that I support. Lebanon Hills park offers a wide range of activities for residents. There are walking paths, playgrounds, pavilions, lakes for canoeing, kayaking, swimming, and fishing. There are trails for biking, hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snow shoeing. All of this in a beautiful wilderness setting. The proposed changes would make permanent changes to the natural setting changing this park forever. We do not need another "cookie cutter super sized" park in the metro area. We have several of those already in existence. It takes more courage to take the trail less traveled. I ask that the planning department and Dakota County Board members weigh very carefully making any improvements in this natural wilderness setting.

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Mellet, Audrey 2/18 A year ago a head on car crash left me with a brain injury. With balance compromised bike riding last summer was out. I remember my first hike with my college girls after my accident. We walked through the trails quietly laughing. I sang old trail songs as we walked along. We've walked there many times before but this time was different. A thankfulness and feeling blessed listening to the leaves and the birds and the water. Its a place of healing for some and nature in its original state has that power. I loved casual biking and bike trails are easy to find. We need to maintain a quiet place a place where one can find healing, recovery. A place where you don't have to turn around to watch for bikers. A place where its OK to hike slow while singing, "A Knap Sack on Your Back," makes college girls giggle because their glad their mom is still here. A place where we can for a moment forget the busyness and sadness of life in our own back yard.

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Mencel, Terry	2/21	<p>I'm writing to encourage opening pedestrian trail access points in neighborhoods that are adjacent to Lebanon Hills Regional Park. For example: Currently, the eastern half of the park, south of Lexington Avenue, is primarily accessible by vehicle. There are no open pedestrian trail access points other than the trail access where Dodd Road terminates as a cul-de-sac one mile south of Cliff Road. This lack of pedestrian access greatly restricts people from fully appreciating the natural beauty of this fabulous regional park and the abundance of hiking trails within it.</p> <p>As a neighbor, user and supporter of the park, I request that you open new pedestrian trail access points, especially the still undeveloped but designated access point off Shelerud Drive, in the next phase of the revised development plan for the park. Let's encourage hiking and park use, not prohibit it.</p>
Messing, Igor and family	2/7	<p>My entire family strongly opposes proposed changes to our favorite park. This construction will ruin its charm and wilderness forever. If you are really interested to do something good to the park, then why you won't direct your attention and funds to the fact that the park's only swimming lake, Schultz lake, is obviously dying, and spend your efforts there? And, btw, the nature of the lake was destroyed by the previous construction: parking expansion, new entrance - ever since the lake lost no less than 30% of its water and just keeps dying. And now you want to do the same to entire park? Your argument about ADA compliance is not exactly correct, as there is already exists all year concrete road, conveniently located around visitor center, which remains underused. Then why would need another massive road, if already existing one is barely used? Again, if you are looking to invest in the park, there are plenty of other areas that require attention, like fallen trees all over, or rotting wooden coverage around Jensen lake. People from all over the metro area come to this park all year around to enjoy its wilderness, and now you want to ruin it forever? WE DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PLAN AND VOTE NO!!!</p>
Metcalf, Jason		<p>I am an Eagan resident, I live at 4350 Metcalf Dr. I would like to comment that any development on the Lebanon Hills would be a mistake. Please leave the park's natural beauty continue to shine. Eagan already has enough biking space.</p>
Meyer, David	2/24	<p>I do not support the current plan for Lebanon Hills. The Idea of paving over such a natural beauty seems completely out of character for a park such as this.</p> <p>Over the next few years, Cliff Road will warrant expansion to four lanes. It's already in the planning stages. That expansion should include a bike trail on at least one side of the road. Eureka! The time for planning the roadway expansion, plus the actual construction time gives the county commissioners and staff time to reconsider their plan, and plenty of time to restore Lebanon Hills to its original beauty, by improving its current trails and removing all invasive species, particularly buckthorn, that have flourished because the county has failed to find the maintenance money and the labor to perform this critically necessary work. Then the county may come to the same conclusion most of us have, and they won't pave over this natural beauty. Counting on you scrapping this plan,</p>
Meyer, Veronica	2/23	<p>Please leave Lebanon Hills alone. Leave the original plans in place &amp; preserve the "wilderness" feeling that it gives off. So many other parks that had the same intent, have changed so drastically, that they no longer feel like "nature", but instead a busy, bustling "Central Park" type feeling. If someone wants tubing hills, let them go to Buck Hill. If someone wants paved trails for biking, let them use one of the MANY paved routes/biking trails already in place. Want to go golfing? Great! Go to a golf course. Amenities that people are looking for DO exist in other areas, drive there. It's that simple.</p> <p>Now, lets look at another point of view: So many say budgets are tight, we keep raising property taxes for school levies, etc... If you develop this area, what kind of price tag are is this going to have? What about future maintenance? What is your "projected" annual budget for maintaining these new paved trails? The message I am getting is it is more important to pave some trails in a park that is supposed to be a "preserve" than to give additional monies to schools, or other programs that put food on the table for families that are struggling.</p> <p>Secondly, I am a horse owner. I use these trails quite frequently in the spring, summer, &amp; fall - from the first day the trails are open until the</p>

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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last. It is literally only 6 miles from me & it is so convenient to use after work for a quick ride to gather my thoughts, or perfect for a day spent with fellow equestrians to take our time, have a picnic, & share great company! I cannot tell you how many people I have run into on the trails (even though pedestrians are not supposed to be on the equestrian trails) enjoy seeing the horses. If little ones are involved, I will dismount & allow them to pet my horse - you should see the looks on their faces!!! It is almost magical! I even had one little boy (about 4-5 years old) ask me if I was a cowgirl... That made my day.

So along with horse ownership & using the trails at Lebanon, we equestrians are REQUIRED to pay a fee to use these trails. It is a very reasonable fee (both on a per-time basis as well as the cost of the annual pass); I've never heard anyone complain about having to pay it - we understand there is maintenance involved with the trails. We appreciate to no end how park officials responded to the trail washouts last year from all of the rain! They were so quick to remedy the situation so we (along with "bi-peds"), could get back on the trails. We (equestrians) are so grateful to have this amenity so close to home. Do you have any idea how many boarding stables there are in the immediate area? Well, I can't tell you either (at least 8), but I can assure you there are HUNDREDS of horse owners within a 10-15 mile radius of the park. Think about how much revenue will be lost...

I know a while back there was a petition going around for those who are "against" the new plans. Please hear our voices. Please leave Lebanon alone to the wonder it is now...

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Mikolajczak,  
Cindy 2/23

Soon you all will be voting on the revised Lebanon Hills Park Development Plan. We in Dakota County are fortunate to have a pristine, natural park in our midst, Lebanon Hills Park. There are many other parks in the Twin Cities area and in our state which have undergone transformations to provide accessibility in the form of paved paths. That is terrific. However, I do not think it is in the best interest of nature for all parks to undergo such transformations. We have an opportunity to keep a park in its natural state which will set Dakota County apart in an awesome way. For the future generations of Dakota County, let's proudly show them that we considered other options and choose to respect nature. I ask you to please Lebanon Hills Park as it is.

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Mikolajczyk,  
Dave 2/19

My name is Dave Mikolajczyk, and I've frequently visited Lebanon Hills for hikes, cross country skiing, and kayaking over the years. I have heard of the plans to add paved trails to the park, and I don't think this should happen. As a native of Apple Valley and the Twin Cities metro area, I appreciate that Lebanon Hills is a natural park with natural trails. Please, leave Lebanon Hills Regional Park as it is.

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Mikolajczyk,  
Ed

Please leave the park as it is. I find it very ironic that the motto for the Dakota county parks is "forever wild" and yet the plan is to "pave paradise". My family and many friends enjoy the "wilderness in the city" that is the Lebanon Hills Nature Center. Please don't fix that which is not broken.

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Milesko,  
Irwin J. 2/15

This is a horrible idea!!! A shorter paved trail would be a big expense to put in, maintain, add nothing, but rather take away from the natural landscape that is so precious in an urban environment. Every time you put in another sign or pave something, you diminish the very reason for having the park or green space in the first place. Love the hiking trails exactly as they are. Leave it alone, the money could be better spent elsewhere.

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Miller,  
Paulette 2/25

Please leave Lebanon Hills 'wild'.

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Miller, Todd	2/25	<p>Please don't change the park, it is one of the only wild parks left. It's like the Joni Mitchell song, Pave Paradise and Put Up A parking Lot. If people want paved trails let them walk around the park on the paths there. As a Scout Leader I need places like this for my scouts. What will happen when all the wild parks are gone and we have to travel outside the metro. That takes money from you that we would have spent in the area and the fact that we do a service project plus pick up trash at all the parks we visit. I am asking the board to reconsider this as we will start going to other county parks with the group.</p>
Moore, Roberta	2/25	<p>I just needed to take a minute and express my concern for the revised plan for Lebanon Hills. I do not in anyway understand how placing a 10 foot wide path through the center of the park is a benefit. It will disrupt the natural beauty and create an urban flavor. This will not attract more visitors it will instead cause the park to loose it's current patronage. Maybe that's what you want.</p> <p>I am very disappointed that the commissioners did not take pubic feedback seriously and have instead chosen to dismiss that input in favor of spending a boat load of money. It tells me much about your character. The plan that you are supporting lacks long range vision both financially and ecologically. If this plan goes through it will take away nature at it's finest for future generations.</p> <p>I am very disappointed in this board of commissioners. There are other options which would create accessibility and also complete the desired bike trail without destroying the park. I am also appalled at the plans for Spring Lake Park Reserve. I do not understand why nature is seen as something to be blasted, plowed under, paved and sterilized. If that is your objective than you do not understand nature and should not hold your current positions.</p>
Morgan, John	2/18	<p>I would like to weigh in on the Lebanon Hills proposal. While I disagree with taking a pristine natural area and turning it into more of what we already have tons of in the area, my real concern is why, as a representative body, you have chosen to disregard the overwhelming majority, 90+%, of those who pay your salaries, who do not want these changes made. Please explain how you can claim to know better than 90% of those you represent, and how you justify ignoring their wishes</p>
Morgan, Molly	2/24	<p>I grew up walking in Lebanon Hills on trails and swimming in Schultze Lake beach. Now that I am grown I enjoy the outdoors for so much more - a respite from city life, greenery to enjoy our four seasons in, and a welcome labyrinth of trails to run on. Please do not develop Lebanon Hills park. We love it just the way it is. Thank you for your time,</p>
Morgenstern, Daniel	2/20	<p>Hello, my name is Daniel Morgenstern. I am writing to try and convince you that the level of development within Lebanon Hills is perfect at the moment. It is my belief that any further development would actually harm rather than add to the reserve's appeal.</p> <p>I am a former resident of Apple Valley and if nothing drastically changes I will likely find myself living there in the future. I attended the School of Environmental Studies which as you are aware is located near some of the Lebanon Hills reserve land. All this is to say that I have over the last 8 years had a chance to enjoy the reserve as it is.</p> <p>Now I will not pretend to know all the facts or understand all aspects of the issue but I did feel that some of the younger people affected by this change such as myself should weigh in. I am 20 and have as I said before enjoyed over 8 years with Lebanon Hills as a pristine getaway. Over the years I would walk the trails with my family but part of the joy of walking the trails was that at times we could venture off of them.</p> <p>We would climb though the dense vegetation to get to the point where the trail disappeared behind us. That was where the true adventures began because that was where nature actually met us. You see we didn't go on the hike to enjoy the nice trails, in fact our favorite trail is around Jensen Lake where the trails fluctuate between paved and dirt and in many places become challenging to walk.</p> <p>As I went through the School of Environmental Studies the large areas of uninterrupted nature were a invaluable educational resource. The large are of woods allowed nature to thrive and carry out its regular processes in an observable form that I and my fellow students deeply appreciated.</p>

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		<p>If more trails were to be added this would interrupt the study of the students learning during the development and would detract from future education possibilities.</p> <p>The bottom line is that Lebanon Hills at the moment is as much an experience as it is a physical place. The proposed developments will take away from that experience and thus I believe that it would be a tremendous error to support further artificial features. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
Moss, Mark and Family	2/25	<p>Our family does not support the wide paved path through Lebanon Hills Regional Park as described in the Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park, Draft of January 2015. The proposed benefits of this project do not outweigh the mission of preserving this natural resource. We have lived in Eagan for many years and hike the park often. We think it is important to keep the balance of accessibility and preservation in favor of less development.</p>
Motl, Tom	2/19	<p>I have since 1989 been a frequent user of Lebanon Hills Regional Park and am very much against the current plan to modernize the park. I only ask that each one of you hike the dirt trail to the east side of Jensen lake and be witness to the fact that you cannot hear traffic noise in that section of the park. To me and I'm sure to others this alone speaks loudly to the uniqueness of this park. It truly does feel like wilderness. What a jewel smack in the middle of a huge sprawling suburb! I have over the years watched the outer boundaries of the park disappear to development and with great sadness watched a road and RV park be built in the section between Pilot Knob and Johnny Cake. The ideal habitat that the Northern Shrike enjoyed in that area for years was ruined and those birds disappeared. I ask that this money be spent on upgrades that truly would add to beauty of this park. Those upgrades would include removal of all non-native species such as Buckthorn, Canary Grass, Hybrid Cat Tails etc. Plus nothing has been done with the Blue Bird boxes for years. Most are un-usable. Also set aside money to maintain these projects for years to come. I am sure there are many other users of the park who would totally agree with this assessment simply because it just makes sense to preserve and upgrade, in a green way, what little is left.</p>
Moynihan, Tim	2/25	<p>I voted for the Legacy Amendment, as did many other residents of our County. That was not a difficult decision. Like so many others, I wanted the tradition of protecting / preserving our treasures to continue. You have before you a very difficult decision, amidst a sea of difficult decisions. The irony of which is that you are contemplating using Legacy Amendment funds to destroy a Wilderness Legacy within our Community. I urge you NOT to let this happen. Yes, our Lebanon Park is in need of funding. Funding to preserve the character of Wilderness that is getting harder to find. Please do not build a super highway into our park. Please get this decision right. What is proposed cannot be undone.</p>
Natalia		<p>Phone Comment: I am a professor at the University of Minnesota and used the park for the past 15 years. Don't destroy Lebanon Hills Regional Park. It is special. Putting a paved trail in the heart of the park is bad.</p>
Neil, Sally		<p>Phone Comment: I encourage the County not to add paved trails.</p>
Nelson, Matthew	2/24	<p>Please leave Lebanon Hills as is.</p>
Nelson, Scott	2/19	<p>I do not support this plan. I do not support any further development or spending on Lebanon Hills. Please leave the park alone.</p>
Nelson, Tony Citizen Panel	2/22	<p>I wish to thank you for the opportunity to be involved in this as a member of the planning commission and as a member of the Citizens panel. I felt, as did the majority of the members of both panels, that we were given the opportunity to discuss ALL issues in the park. The discussions, with the help of the county staff were frank, open and comprehensive in scope. We were not led by the hand by the staff as has been charged,</p>

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Chair		<p>but free to discuss the issues and to make alterations to the 2013 plan in all aspects and we made a number, including the no-build option on the connector trail in the west section of the park. We reduced the development in the Jensen Lake area and eliminated the paved trail around Holland Lake. We also moved the connector trail to virtually follow the route recommended in the 2001 plan along the very edge of the park in the eastern section, to keep from crossing the many soft &amp; ski trails there. That way the connector users will get a taste of the park while respecting the wilder nature of the park in the middle and its many users. The county has spent several years with many opportunities for citizen involvement including the citizen volunteers on the planning commission and the later citizens panel, all of whom are enthusiastic users themselves except one. That one is Todd, a man confined to a wheelchair but who excitedly stated in our first panel meeting that he can't wait to get into the park for the first time, once the connector trail is built.</p> <p>It is now time for the Board to decide, up or down, to do the restoration plans as stated in the 2013 plan and as the citizens panel recommended, as priority number one? Do we add capabilities to handle the increased numbers of visitors? And does Todd get to see the wonders of Lebanon Hills and the seniors I saw getting off a bus in the parking lot for the visitors center, get to do more than to walk in a circle around the parking lot because the soft trails are too unstable for them to walk on. We need to make this a park for all the citizens of the county.</p>
Nguyen, Natalia	2/19	<p>I found out about the plan to develop more of Lebanon Hills through <a href="#">this Star Tribune article</a>. I agree with the author's argument, basically that Lebanon Hills is unique because of its wilderness feel and that there's no need to add in more amenities and paved trails when there are already so many other parks in the county that have both.</p> <p>Although I'm now a college student at the U, I have fond memories of wandering around Lebanon Hills and taking photos of the wildlife there when I went to Eagan High School. I really feel in making the park more developed, we'll lose the sense of natural nature that people really love about Lebanon Hills. Please vote against this plan.</p>
Nichols, Jim	2/24	<p>Please vote no on the proposed paved bike path at Lebanon hills park. It will destroy the environment.</p>
Nichols, Mary Ellen	2/19	<p>Please don't approve the master plan for Lebanon Hills because it includes adding paved trails to the park. The park is a gift of nature that we all should be working to preserve in its natural state, not adding paved trails. The park currently is used by a wide age range of people, I don't understand why paved bike trails are necessary. You will have people riding their bikes, racing through the park. You will not be able to prevent that from happening.</p> <p>It's hard for me to imagine that any of you would be voting for paved trails if you spend any amount of time in Lebanon Hills. Our family has used the park for years. Hiking in the summer, skiing and hiking in the winter, swimming, etc. You can feel you're in the middle of nature even though you are in suburbia. The park is a gift, we need to maintain it in its natural state, without paved trails. I think of the song " They paved paradise, and put up a parking lot." Thank you for reading this, and please do not approve paved trails for Lebanon Hills. Your children and grandchildren will also thank you if you do not pave the park.</p>
Nimps, Adam	2/24	<p>I'm no longer a Dakota County resident but feel that its well worth my trip from Minneapolis to visit Lebanon park. I feel that altering the park by paving new trails and adding other amenities and changes would take away from the park's already existing greatness! Please don't pave Lebanon hills its perfect the way it is!</p>
Ninow, Lauralyn	2/18	<p>Leave Lebanon Hills alone. Do not pass this "Revised Lebanon Hills Development Plan" We do not need more amenities and trails. Please preserve it as it is now. We do not need to be spending our tax money on this. Let us study nature as nature and experience it as it's intended to be. Our children need this. We need Lebanon Hills as is.</p>

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Noreen,  
Harriet and  
James

2/19

I have followed the controversy for the new plan to develop Lebanon Hills and also followed the past master plan. You have heard all the pros and cons and I have nothing more to add. I am very, very opposed to the new plan. Please maintain the wilderness in the city. Use the funds wisely instead of just using them. I really cannot understand why the new trails are necessary. As has been pointed out many times, there are so many other parks with such amenities, but only one natural environment like Lebanon Hills. Money should be used to maintain that natural state by removing buckthorn and other invasive plants as well as reestablishing the natural tree and plant growth. Please listen to those who use the park as it was intended. From the website:

NATURAL RESOURCES: Since 2001, Dakota County has not committed adequate funding for successful restoration in Lebanon Hills. The revised plan will allow this trend to continue.

MY COMMENTS: RESTORATION MUST BE A FOCUS FOR LEBANON HILLS!!

CONNECTOR TRAIL: Revised plan emphasizes recreational use, but design criteria did not change: 6 miles; at least 10-ft. wide asphalt; free of snow/ice; wide construction clearance; grading to 5% requiring cut/fill and structural support; site lines for bike speeds up to 20mph.

MY COMMENTS: I AM VERY OPPOSED TO THIS PLAN!!

NEW DEVELOPMENT: \$13.7 million estimated total. Commissioners have not stated how they will fund annual expense increases at Lebanon Hills while also adequately funding pertinent park services including stewardship, staffing, marketing and programming.

MY COMMENTS: THIS IS NOT USING PUBLIC MONEY EFFECTIVELY AND MAY ADD TO TAX BASE LATER FOR THESE SERVICES!!

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Noreen,  
Kevin

2/23

I DO NOT support the proposed Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. There has been an overwhelming citizen opposition to developing Lebanon Hills Regional Park in the manner the plan was developed and presented. Overwhelming opposition... by the by the citizens you represent. When it comes time for you to act on our behalf, your consideration of what's best for the people and the sustainability of the park will most certainly be influenced by the dollars driving development. This plan and this entire process is questionable and controversial, as this park will forever be changed in ways you will be remembered for and we the people will pay for.

I have participated in and followed the proposed plan from it's early stages. I've been to the public introductions and the advisory groups. I was made aware, by a planning official at an early meeting, this park does not need to add additional paved trails as a condition of meeting ADA requirements. There's enough already. I learned the demand for park development is not truly supported by data gathered from a minimum 30 subjects, where an outcome driven survey only gave participants specific options to choose from. That's a weak survey, especially considering this roughly a \$30 Million plan. I am aware there are several alternatives to paving a path through the middle of the park, the most obvious choices go around the park and connect with existing trails. I am aware the Citizen Panel created to represent public interest in only the final stages of this process was limited in the scope of their abilities in such a way they were a non-factor in determining direction or outcome of this plan.

I believe the efforts of Dakota County officials have obfuscated the proposed plan at every opportunity and can be expected to pave through the heart of Lebanon Hills with little to no accountability for the restoration, maintenance, and education programs already lacking in this jewel of a park. This is a waste of Legacy Fund dollars, which is to say Legacy dollars were not meant to develop this park in a way that opposes it's theme of "Forever Wild" and directly conflicts with the current master plan, public needs, and the best interests of the park. Other potential routes follow common sense, fiscal responsibility, environmental leadership, and public preference. At the same time, the common sense routes still provide the best of services to all park users.

Your current vision for the park completely ignores the previous master plans put in place to protect the park from the kind of devastation, excessive development, and wasteful spending proposed. That's bold, and to be clear, the priorities you have chosen do not align with the

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		majority of public opinion or need. You know that. I do not support the proposed plan to develop Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Unfortunately, it now looks to be a done deal, one the public was thoughtfully disabled to impact. This is the shameful path elected public officials have chosen for Lebanon Hills thus far, all while distorting the facts and minimizing opposition to push the plan through. When the heart of park gets leveled and paved... and more people want to know why? Follow the money.
Norris, Roger	2/18	As a lifelong resident of Eagan I have utilized all our beautiful parks and associated amenities. We do not need more paved trails and development of Lebanon Hills Park. We need to maintain the natural and undeveloped wilderness. Thank you.
Norton, Jack	2/17	I have lived in Minneapolis for 16 years and come to Dakota County only for Lebanon Hills. I drive down, run, and then stop at local businesses on my way home for food and groceries. If you pave Lebanon Hills, I'm not going to bother driving to Dakota County and I won't be spending any money at local businesses. I could make arguments about the beauty of Lebanon Hills and its unique place in the hearts of the running community for it's non-paved trails. Yet I think that is the lesser argument, else you would not be considering the action you are. Please do not pave Lebanon Hills. I enjoy it as is, and look forward to sharing it with my young children as they grow into an appreciation Minnesota's natural resources.
Nussen, Jared	2/24	I am writing to you regarding the issue of paving trails at Lebanon Hills. Personally using the trails for both hiking and running, I am fearful that paving the trails would degrade the experience of visiting the park. It would be great for runners, allowing a more consistent step without the concern of rogue roots or rocks, but the best part about the park is feeling like you are outside of the city and away from the crowded environment. Pavement insinuates urbanization, and that would take away from the experience of hiking or running through Lebanon Hills. Paving the trails would have a negative impact on the experience of visitors at Lebanon. If there is extra room in the budget it should be spent on removal of invasive species in the park.
O'Donnell, Chad	2/22	I do not want to see more development in Lebanon Hills Parks. Please simply maintain it the way that it is and only update existing facilities when needed. Thank you,
O'Neill, Shelley	2/23	<p>I do NOT support the plan for Lebanon Hills to have paved trails running through the park or to make it a hub for the bike system. As a society, we need to set aside some of the special parks within the city for future generations. Leave the park for quiet recreation, hiking, cross country skiing, bird watching, silent sports. Please preserve Lebanon Hills for for the animals and plants. Paving trails causes much destruction to the ecosystem, especially at Lebanon. (I have seen the plan). Legacy funds were never intended for paving and maintaining the paved trails. 10 foot wide trail is like a highway running through the park. Money already needs to be spent to maintain what we have, remove buckthorn, maintain buildings and trails that already exist. Education about environmental issues and the park.</p> <p>Adding more bike trails is not a good idea. I have experience biking at the mountain bike trail. Some of the riders are VERY fast and and careless. This is not going to be a nice place for wheelchairs and strollers.. People that ride on the Greenway trail fast. I know because I have biked on the Greenway with the TCBC. The bike trail should go along Cliff road, and NOT within the park. I do not believe that every park has to meet every single individuals needs. There are many parks that are accessible. Please leave the park the way it is, and improve it by removing buckthorn, and other invasive plants, maintaining trails. Perhaps adding more boardwalks to protect sensitive areas and preserve the park for future generations.</p>
Oberg, Jen	2/18	<p>I'd like to comment about the bike path/hub/highway that is being proposed to go through Lebanon Hills in Eagan and Apple Valley.</p> <p>1) With bike speeds up to 20 mph (who really is going to be enforcing that?) what handicapped person or rollerblader do you think would feel safe riding/walking/skating on it?</p>

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- 2) The path being 10 feet across and at least 30 feet across will need to be cleared and flattened. That takes a lot of work and clears a lot of trees that makes that park beautiful. I find it interesting that it's being said that this path will be cleared in the winter. When? What is going to be cut (budget-wise) to make this happen? I don't believe I've seen that there is the budget for the clearing?
- 3) I know a lot of people who do bike and love the Twin Cities bike paths but I haven't heard any of these cyclists wanting this plan to go through.
- 4) I don't live in Eagan, but I have hiked, kayaked and XC skied in the park many times. I know there are barred owls and all sorts of wildlife that will be inconvenienced.
- 5) If this is a definite need (and I suspect public comments would state that) I would like to see the path can go on the outskirts of the park and not impact Lebanon Hills quite so much? All the public comments I've seen are against this.

I do not support the current plan. Thank you for your consideration.

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For the following reasons I am unable to support the revised 2015 Master Plan:

1-The cost of the ongoing maintenance for the proposed infrastructure, in particular, the paved bike trail, seriously risks diverting precious resources needed for other park priorities. Adequate funding for priorities which ARE well supported by the public, such as natural resource stewardship and restoration are essential. We have witnessed that natural resources have suffered over the past decade and more, much to the distress of many constituents. I am very grateful there is refocused effort in this area, but the public needs firm assurances that this will not take a back seat in the future due to other financial pressures.

2-The proposed Plan relies too heavily on costly infrastructure to bring new visitors to Lebanon Hills. Additional soft trails are also unnecessary at this time. Innovative outreach and robust programming are a far better and more fiscally responsible way to attract visitors, and new demographic groups to the park. If a strong commitment is made to increase visitors through outreach and programming, I would fully support expanding the visitors center to accommodate these opportunities. I have spoken with professionals who work with young families from more distant areas of the county, and once aware of Lebanon Hills as a field trip destination, they have expressed real interest in coming to the park. Outreach and programming could make a significant difference in bringing new groups of people to Lebanon Hills.

Oberle, Jean 2/25

3-The construction of the paved connector/bike trail would negatively impact the existing woodlands (oaks in particular), the ponds, and hilly terrain the park is known and loved for. Any proposed restoration would never be able to restore the topography or the fragmented habitat. Having viewed recent Dakota County bike trail construction, I realize it involves significantly more intrusion into the environment than I ever would have expected. It is not simply a ribbon of trail, woven harmlessly between the trees, ponds and hills. I strongly encourage Board Members to tour the construction area at Spring Lake Park Reserve before making decisions on Lebanon Hills.

4-Accessibility is very important, and I do not believe the paved connector trail is a safe or meaningful way to address this goal. I would suggest the option of a firm and stable surface loop around McDonough Lake, which would be off limits to bike/rollerblade traffic. An additional possibility could be a spoke into a wooded area near the Visitor's Center, which could be an extension of the accessible trail already existing there. Programming and accessibility equipment would be an excellent additional way to provide opportunities for a comparable experience. I believe further collaboration with the disabled community would be helpful in reaching this goal.

5-This plan represents a fundamental shift in vision for Lebanon Hills from a more rustic, nature based park, to the hub/center of the regional bike trail network with significantly more development. This shift is not well supported, and is actually opposed by much of the public.

While the updated Master Plan has some good language, in particular regarding much needed restoration of Natural Resources within the park, and the desire to work with volunteers, it remains problematic on many other fronts. I ask the board to thoughtfully review and consider the

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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public input they have received, and make some significant alterations reflecting that input, prior to moving ahead with the Master Plan. Thank-you for your consideration

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Please vote to keep this pristine area as it is now!



Odlaug, Paul 2/25

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Ojala, Leslie

Phone Comment: I encourage that the Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan will not have paved trail and am happy for maintaining the cross country skiing trails. Please keep the park from being over developed.

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Olafson, Pat

Phone Comment: I recommend delaying the Master Plan decision. There are so many paved areas and Lebanon Hills Regional Park should be left alone.

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Olsen, Keith 2/10

I strongly favor preserving the unique "wilderness" character of Lebanon Hills Regional Park and oppose any paved trails within the park. Hiking the backwoods of the park with no semblance of anything "urban" is a very special experience.

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Osgood, Ann 2/21

Please!! Oh Please!! Leave this beautiful park as is!!! Too many other parks with paved trails go unused soon after paving. The asphalt shifts and crumbles making the trails extremely dangerous and ultimately abandoned. DO NOT DO THIS TO OUR BELOVED LEBANON HILLS PARK!!!! Great things are to be found at this park - and it is used by people who appreciate it. Please --- keep this park as it is!!

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Osojnicki, Lucy 2/24

I am opposed to the construction of a paved bicycle path through Lebanon Hills. There is already a bicycle path along Pilot Knob Road and part of Cliff Road. Once the bicycle path along Cliff Road is completed from Pilot Knob Road, east to the Schultz Lake entrance, there will be no need for a path through the park. Bicyclists will have easy access to all park entrances - Jenson Lake, Holland Lake and Schultz Lake - without disturbing the natural beauty of Lebanon Hills Park. And it goes without saying that Legacy Funds should not be used for this purpose. The funds should instead be used for buckthorn removal and maintenance of the park's natural resources.

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Oustroushko, 2/24

I recently read that there was some drastic changes being planned for Lebanon Hills. I would suggest that proposed plans would be the largest

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Jonathan		<p>mistake to happen south of the river in a long time if they were to go through. I grew up and spent most of my life in Apple Valley. Some of my fondest memories were the days I spent hiking the extensive natural trail systems of Lebanon Hills. The reason they are the fondest memories is because Lebanon Hills is somewhat of an oasis of nature amongst it's overdeveloped fast paced surroundings. The amount of life lessons and lessons of nature that can be learned within such a natural place cannot be overstated. It was pretty devastating when the Diamon T Ranch was sold to developers so more houses could be built closer yet to the park. Unfortunately that is nowhere near as devastating the beauty of this natural environment as what is being proposed now. We need to preserve this oasis in all of it's natural glory. I urge you to turn down the proposed changes.</p>
Owens, Lee Ann	2/25	<p>Please reconsider your master plan. Please leave Lebanon Hills Regional Park as is. The park is perfect now. It is unique. The metro area has few places that are in a natural state.</p> <p>Paved trails and other enhancements would detract. The parks around my Edina home are filled with such amenities at the cost of trees and tranquility. The nearby circle of Minneapolis "Lakes" has inter-connecting paved trails, huge crowds and full-calendar of events. Lakes activity levels are so high, I do not visit them even though they are very close.</p> <p>As an avid bicyclist for 25 years I have seen the metro trails system grow and use along with it. I and a family member have both been in minor accidents on the bike trails around the lakes; they just get too busy around peak times. Now, we ride out bikes other places. Metro paved trails are not peaceful places to ride, especially at peak good weather times -- the times working people are the most likely to be out.</p> <p>As a novice hiker, I travel all over to find wilderness areas to walk my leashed dog -- a very active woods-loving German pinscher; he enjoys dirt paths not pavement (also better for dog paws and my feet). Lebanon Hills Regional Park is the only place in the metro that feels wild and reminiscent of the North Shore trails I so enjoyed exploring in my youth. Please don't take that experience away from us</p>
Palo, Brenda	2/25	<p>Hello, and thank you for the thorough, thoughtful, and detail-filled document Revised Plan dated January 2015. I read most of the plan and have just a few comments to add. I am a weekly user of the Lebanon Hills Park for much of the year and for the other part of the year, a monthly user. I am a runner and hiker. I use the unpaved trails year round and particularly appreciate the winter access and quieter moments when fewer visitors seem to be around. I live in a city filled with people and appreciate LebHills for its peacefulness. I do not use the bike, horse, or ski trails. I do not fish or swim or canoe in/on the lakes.</p> <p>I most appreciate the quiet, the ability to run or jog on UNpaved trails, and the variety of plant and animal life in the park, particularly the trees, lakes/ponds, and birds. My main thoughts echo those of many joggers/runners/hikers. I request no decrease in unpaved trails. I agree that some degradation of the natural ecosystems is visible and would prioritize its rejuvenation.</p> <p>I appreciate the need for ADA-related access and the desire of many people for common areas, gathering spots for events and picnicking, and the use of the facilities for educational purposes--for children and adults. I applaud efforts to address those needs. However, I do not think these needs should be the main focus of the park changes. They are important, but should be of lesser focus. I will close by saying</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Please keep as many unpaved trail miles as possible, ideally not decreasing the quantity.</li><li>2. Please focus efforts on restoring the ecological health of the park and continue efforts to remove or control invasive species and restore park health and diversity as much as possible.</li><li>3. I would be interested in volunteering some of my park time to helping remove invasive species, plant buffer areas, etc., as needed to support the restoration efforts.</li></ol> <p>I love this park. It has enriched my life and experiences in the metro area of the Twin Cities, MN. I am from the Iron Range and grew up surrounded by beautiful natural spaces and many lakes. Leb. Hills is a treasure and I would like to do my part to help with the efforts proposed in</p>

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the revised 2015 plan. Thank you again for all of the hard work and excellent communication efforts.

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Parakh, Khursheed 2/21 I am writing to vote NO to the proposed development of paved trails through Lebanon Hills Regional park. This park is too precious to pave over. Having read through the ideas for the development of the park including, Hill removal, Valley filling and Curtailing current uses, I think this is an absolute appalling idea. The very thought that the pristine and beautiful park spaces that make up Lebanon Hills regional park would be subjected to such a terrible onslaught is painful. We DONT WANT this to happen. I think its really important that the County and Board give up this idea. If there are funds available from State Legacy Funds and federal Alternative Transit Funds, by all means, let's put in bikeways along the roads on cliff road and let's think about an improved maintenance and removal of invasive species plans but there is NO need whatsoever to tamper with the pristine and lovely wildness that is Lebanon Hills Regional Park. The argument that we need to open up the park to comply with ADA is a nonsense reason. There are already plenty of parks in Dakota county that meet these needs adequately. Additionally, it is not possible to have all traffic, walking, wheelchair, biking and rollerblading on one trail and it seems like the county commission is reaching for reasons rather than listening to what the people of Dakota county really want. This is a great opportunity to uphold that the county commissioners main focus has to be to listen to the wants and wishes of the county and not consider how to spend funds that they have access to. Let's preserve what we have and not try to mess with a good thing! Thank you!

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Parker, Dee 2/25 If the plan for Lebanon Hills is to be accessible for people with disabilities, would Dakota County consider an all-terrain wheelchair rental program similar to other rental programs already in place?

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Parker, Dee 2/25 Please keep the natural feel of Lebanon Hills - no more paved trails. Lebanon Hills is a very special park. Paved trails would change it to mean that it is another park with paved trails. Thank you for your consideration.

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Parker-Grewe, Trinity 2/24 "I do not support this plan. Vote NO to this plan."

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Pasillas, Greg 2/4 Lebanon Hills Regional Park (LHRP) is a jewel in the southern metro area. It is an oasis of green and blue, surrounded by the suburbs. I as a neighbor and user of the park appreciate and cherish it's peaceful setting and serenity. It is a place that should be protected for the future. We need to protect it from natural infringement: flooding, erosion, fire, infestations, etc. But, we also need to protect it from human impact: spoilage, litter, defacing, graffiti, damage and vandalism. But, there is another force from we must also protect the park: "over-management". It appears that those that over-see the park feel compelled to develop it, and not necessarily in friendly, preservation ways that support nature. They want to strip the ground and bulldoze level grades to create thoroughfares as paved "trails" with vast sight lines. Such pathways are not supportive of nature, they would only become race-ways through the park's natural environment. This is Lebanon HILLS. If the park is over-graded, there will be few "hills" left! In pursuit of our recreation, we spoil and degrade the features that made the area attractive in the first place. Not one tree should be removed, or one hill be leveled to create, what the park managers think is a desired "neutral", zero grade road through the park. The park has suffered enough as a result of over-management. My suggestion: Let's declare that Lebanon Hills Park is a "finished" project and work to preserve and maintain it's current and remaining "natural" state. No further development needed only maintenance. Think of the cost savings! No surveyors, no environmental impact surveys, no heavy equipment, no construction materials or tools. Only rakes and brooms and maybe a little paint. What a concept! Consider Mt. Rushmore in South Dakota. The vision, the planing, the massive physical undertaking to create a global icon. Just as important as

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having the motivation to accomplish the feat, having the wisdom to know when to stop. So, in 1941, the mountain sculpture was declared finished. Efforts then shifted to preserve and maintain the beauty and significance what had been created.

Let's do the same for Lebanon Hills Park. Let's declare that it is in it's finished state. Then we can shift into true maintenance mode to preserve and protect for the future.

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First and foremost, I strongly object to the proposed changes to the Master Plan where a paved bike path is being proposed to go through the park. Not only is it wrong ecologically for the park, wrong for Dakota County residents now and in the future, but it is also wrong financially for the Park.

1. Ecologically - the park is a critical part of the watershed within Dakota County. The paved bike path will diminish the parks ability to provide the natural filtration and water drainage when there are large storms. We are already experiencing heavier rainfall in individual storms and the watershed is critical to prevent flooding in the surrounding areas. More pavement means heavier runoff and will negatively impact the remaining park and possibly surrounding neighborhoods.

2. Dakota County residents want to have natural spaces with natural footing. Paving an ADA approved bike path will effectively reduce the natural space the park makes available. We already have many bike friendly areas - there is no need to add additional bike paths through this natural space. Lebanon Park does NOT need to be like the lakes in Minneapolis or St Paul, which is basically what is being proposed. Wild spaces within the county are becoming harder and harder to find. Once paved it will gone forever and can never be replaced. Think long and hard about that! All the things that make the park special and truly a treasure in Dakota County will be destroyed if this plan is implemented. It is so completely opposite of the concept of FOREVER WILD and destroys the integrity of Lebanon HILLS as the jewel of Dakota County and is not in the best interests of the county residents.

3. Fiscally, it is irresponsible to do this. Yes - there are funds available from the Met Council, but that only covers part of the cost of construction. What about the long term costs? Paved trails have to be maintained all the time. Cost of asphalt is high to install and maintaining it for year round use will mean continuous cost that the County has to bear. Plowing and repairing the surface is considerably more expensive than the cost to maintain natural surfaces, especially trails like those in Lebanon Park - which have been designed to be low maintenance. Just because the Met Council offers money now, doesn't mean it will be there for the long haul. County budgets are tight and less money is available for maintenance as it is. The additional cost to maintain the proposed bike trail will just be an additional burden to county residents. There is no financial benefit to a bike trail - users won't pay any fees nor will it attract high paying jobs or other sources of revenue. It will only cost more to build and maintain on an already insufficient park maintenance budget.

In summary, bulldozing the park to put in a paved bike trail is the equivalent of rape to the park! It would strip the natural canopy that provides a wonderful place to hike, ski, snowshoe and ride horses through. It would leave a harsh, unforgiving asphalt surface where nothing grows and people race through without stopping to see the beauty around them. Please, please, please - protect the park! Once the bulldozers are unleashed and the canopy is destroyed, it can never be restored. As Park Board commissioners, you are responsible to protect the park, not destroy it. As a long time resident of Dakota County, I can see absolutely no benefit to the proposed changes and DO NOT want my county taxes used to destroy the best park in the county and probably the entire Metro area.

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Pasillas,  
Peggy

2/17

Passe, Mary  
Ann

2/25

Lack of public support for the 2015 Revised Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan Draft can be attributed directly to the county's lack of credibility in management of the park. There is little public trust that the county will do right with a multimillion dollar major new ten year plan for Lebanon Hills based on their awareness of years of park management problems in all areas. I so not support this plan and urge Dakota County Commissioners to not approve it.

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		<p>When there is enough snow, I often cross country ski at Lebanon Hills Park and in the summer, sometimes hike the same trails.</p> <p>Two years ago, I had foot surgery and was unable to bear weight on that foot and was in a cast for three months. I learned how isolating it is to be unable to walk and how much it kept me inside.</p>
Pasternack, JoAnn	2/23	<p>I am also an avid bicyclist. I love the plans Dakota County has to create off-road bicycle trails that will connect a large part of the county. I live in Mendota Heights and currently must ride on roads or sidewalks to get to the more southern parts of the county.</p> <p>For these reasons and because the large interior of the park will be left unpaved, I feel that creating a paved trail near the perimeter of Lebanon Hills is a wonderful idea.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my comments and for providing the wonderful park system we have in Dakota County.</p>
Pat	2/22	<p>Please read this article. It explains what many of us feel as Lebanon Hills is being slated for destruction. <a href="http://www.hcn.org/articles/aldo-leopold-explains-it-all">http://www.hcn.org/articles/aldo-leopold-explains-it-all</a></p>
Patera, Mark		<p>Phone Comment: Do not build connector trail in Lebanon Hills Regional Park. The park is one of the last big wildernesses, we don't need paved trail. Enough us is already in the park.</p>
Patrick, Jana	2/18	<p>Please leave Lebanon Hills Park the lovely wilderness that it is. I have cross-country skied and hiked in the park. There is just nothing like it around!</p>
Patten, Mary	2/18	<p>I am an 8 year resident of Eagan and live within 2miles of the Lebanon Hills Park/Holland Lake access. I would plead with you <u>not to change</u> a thing about the park. It is beautiful just the way it is. I understand we need to provide some handicap access – but we have other parks in Eagan that offer that – Thomas Lake for one. Can we just leave this one ALONE? Thank you for listening.</p>
Paul	2/24	<p>“I do not support this plan. Vote NO to this plan.” I do not believe we need a significant expansion of paved trails in Lebanon Hills.</p>
Paulsen, Theodore	2/25	<p>I am writing to tell you I do not agree with the Revised Plan and strongly hope you will vote NO. I deeply and strongly disagree with wide, paved trails. Parks like Lebanon are for recreation, not transportation. The park trails were already expanded and re-designed once. That was more than enough. There are still obvious old trail "closed" sections being used regularly. And there simply is no way to make a paved trail easily crossed by skiers.</p> <p>Further, I deeply and strongly disagree with lighting any portion of the interior of the park, this should be reserved for areas near parking. This is a beautiful, unique park and it's specialness should be promoted and highlighted. It does not need to be Highland or Theodore Wirth. People come to it because it is not highly developed. It cannot be everything for everyone. I would like another place to skijour, but Lebanon does not need another activity.</p> <p>I do appreciate the development of the Greenway system overall and am a strong supporter of biking, but Lebanon Hills is not the place for it. There are excellent shoulders and bike paths along most major corridors in the area already and helping to arrive at Lebanon via bicycle is laudable, just as is getting people there by car or public transport. I support improving and adding bike trails outside the park. I also appreciate the discussion on water resource improvement and think this should be a main focus of any improvements in the park.</p> <p>Lighting and the connector trail are extremely expensive, unnecessary, requiring far too much long term maintenance and not supported by the public. Vote NO. Then, reconsider a new planing process with deep and meaningful citizen involvement from stage one, not most of the way</p>

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through the process. This park means so much to so many of us. Take advantage of this to harness our ideas and energy!

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Paulsen,  
Wendy

2/24

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I do appreciate the development of the Greenway system overall and am a strong supporter of biking, but Lebanon Hills is not the place for it. There are excellent shoulders and bike paths along most major corridors in the area already and helping to arrive at Lebanon via bicycle is laudable, just as is getting people there by car or public transport. I support improving and adding bike trails outside the park. I also appreciate the discussion on water resource improvement and think this should be a main focus of any improvements in the park.

Lighting and the connector trail are extremely expensive, unnecessary, requiring far too much long term maintenance and not supported by the public. Vote NO. Then, reconsider a new planing process with deep and meaningful citizen involvement from stage one, not most of the way through the process. This park means so much to so many of us. Take advantage of this to harness our ideas and energy!

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Pechacek,  
Jeff

2/24

I grew up in Eagan near the park and the endless wonder that it holds. It is truly one of the last places in the twin cities that people can so easily get to and experience nature in a natural setting. It is because of my time spent in this park that I am the person I am today. I went to school for environmental studies, own a house in minneapolis and work as a conservation biologist and wildlife technician in La Crosse WI.

I know countless people including myself and my roommates in Minneapolis that drive or bus down to Lebanon on a weekly basis because it is the only close place they can easily get to and enjoy nature unspoiled by the development of paved trails, large parking lots, giant playgrounds and the many other things crowding most of our parks. The park already has some of the best mountain biking trails in minnesota, which keeps drawing me and my friends in, great cross country skiing, plenty of space to camp, grill, swim, picnic, play, have birthdays, grad parties, wedding parties, ext. With all the amazing opportunities already in the park there is no need to add more and ruin the last wild place in the twin cities. Where else can someone swim, canoe, kayak, portage, camp, hike, bird watch, see amazing wildlife, and mountain bike all in one park.

I am all for mixed use and studied it in great detail in college as well as conducted park use surveys for the met council which included Lebanon Hills and found people love the park the way it is, it was one of the few parks where people didn't want to see any changes. Now as a conservation biologist and wildlife technician I see the importance of leaving large untouched contiguous landscapes for our cherished wildlife. I have also written and reviewed many land management proposals over the years and know the importance of having great mixed use areas as well as bringing in revenue to regions near our natural resources. There are lots of parks and areas for those seeking paved bike trails all around the cities, you could try to jump on board this but at what cost. You currently have the market on mountain biking, low impact activities and wilderness cornered and it would be a shame to take your strongest selling point and throw that away to just become another park amongst hundreds offering nothing that can't be found somewhere closer to ones home. You will loose your base as well as everyone willing to travel sometimes up to an hour or more to get to your park. This would in fact lead to lost revenue for the park, more expenses with initial build and added maintenance costs, and no real cost effect way to undue the damage that is done. In times when cash is short shouldn't we be trying to

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not only save money but keep the revenue we have coming in? P.S. If it isn't broke why break it?

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Peek, Anne	2/18	Please maintain Lebanon Hills Park's sense of wilderness; there are lots of other parks in the twin cities that have numerous accessible trails. The proposed plan will eliminate what makes the park unique, and once changed, cannot be undone easily.
Peick, Brenda	2/22	I am sharing my opinion as a 20 year resident of Apple Valley. Please don't continue with your plan to pave the trails in Lebanon Hills. Lebanon Hills and the other parks in this area are where I've raised my daughters to love nature and understand the importance and impact that keeping a more 'natural' lifestyle can give. Being closer to nature is better for our own health and the health of other animals and our water. My youngest daughter now goes to the School of Environmental Studies (next to Lebanon Hills) and has learned that increasing the amount of impenetrable surfaces gives less chance for the natural water cycle to work. Therefore, in paving paths to give more people access, you could also reduce the quality of water for an even greater population. Again, I ask the we leave the paths in more of a natural format. Thank you for this forum.
Perl, Erica	2/17	I am a St. Paul resident. I have visited Lebanon Hills Regional Park over the years, primarily to bird watch. It is a remarkable place, due to its wilderness character in the midst of a developed area. I am writing to express my strong feeling that adding any more paved paths through the park is likely to significantly adversely impact the unique character of the park. I would like to add my voice to those who oppose the addition of any paved paths through the park. Public funds would be better spent on conservation and restoration of existing habitat and natural areas in the park. Thank you for your consideration and for your thoughtful stewardship of Dakota County's natural resources.
Perry, Alice	2/22	As an Eagan resident I have enjoyed using Lebanon Hills Regional Park for many years. This is a fantastic wilderness space. I support the revised master plan with fewer paved trails. Thank you for considering my opinion.
Peterson, Joan	2/24	I am against the board's plans to develop Lebanon Hills Park. I would like to see the park stay as close to its current natural condition as possible.
Peterson, Sieren	2/18	I oppose the idea of adding more paved trails & facilities to Lebanon Hills. The beauty of this park is that it is still in its natural, wild form! The dirt under your feet, the trees all around, the sound of the birds and wildlife... that is what makes the park what it is! That is what makes it so special. The reason I frequent the park regularly is because I can go there and be surrounded by nature, where the only sounds I hear are the wildlife around me, my feet on the trail and my own breathing. It is the only park I go to for hiking, running and horseback riding. It is such a peaceful environment. It is the only park that offers this much of a complete immersion into nature. There is no other park like it. There are plenty of other parks out there that offer paved trails, lots of amenities and facilities. Doing this would ruin the charm and appeal of Lebanon Hills for me and many others. Please do not take away the only nature that we have & cherish so much! Thank you for your time & consideration.
Peterson, tom	2/18	I think the paved paths around the visitor center were a mistake. Don't compound it by paving a trail through the whole park. It will destroy its semi-wild character.
Petran, Ruth	2/21	Please do not move ahead with the plan to add paved trails to the existing park system. My husband and I like walking in the the peaceful atmosphere in the non-developed park. Please respect this feeling.

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Pheiffer, Gene		Phone Comment: Don't destroy the park. Put it up for a vote.
Pickens, Barb	2/4	<p>Just wanted to let you know what I think of the paved paths idea...</p> <p>I so enjoy the beautiful Lebanon Hills parks we have here in Eagan.. And I understand how some people might want the paths to be accessible to bikes and wheelchairs. But putting in cement paths is a bad idea.. They are downright ugly, and look so out of place in what is suppose to be a natural environment.</p> <p>I have been to Schulze Lake in Eagan, and I purposely avoid the cement paths that are there because, yes, they are ugly. Even some kind of tar with rocks in it would look better!</p> <p>It's so interesting to me that unnatural cement paths would even be considered in such beautiful places. My first choice would be to leave the parks alone - do not ruin these areas! But if that is not possible --- Please Please Please --- no CEMENT paths!!!</p>
Pilgrim, Leslie	2/18	<p>I am a 50 year resident of Dakota County. I was a kid when Eagan was all farms and a smattering of houses. My childhood home in Mendota Heights seemed rural--pastures, farms, woods surrounded my enclave. I never could have imagined 50 years ago what incredible development was in store for the county. Let's resist taking more, doing more. Let's put what little ecosystem and natural habitat we have left and hold it in the highest esteem. We humans have enough. We have enough access, we have enough to enjoy, in Dakota County. No more trails. No more disturbance of Lebanon Hills. Preserve it as a functioning ecosystem</p>
Pineseter, Lynn		Phone Comment: I am saddened by the connector trail. The perimeter trail doesn't work. Please consider Highway 3 as an alternative.
Piontek, Frank	2/19	<p>I am writing to comment and provide public input regarding the Lebanon Hills master plan currently under consideration. I understand that there is considerable contentiousness regarding balancing the concepts of providing large natural areas vs. 'improved amenities' such as paved trails.</p> <p>As a person who hikes, bikes, x-c skis, goes birding, does outdoor photography and other outdoor pursuits, I have an both an appreciation for the need to preserve natural habitats and for intelligent integration of amenities in those areas that allow people some degree of access to them. There is not an inherent contradiction between the two, where one completely negates the other, as seems to be proposed in a February 18, 2015, op-ed piece in the Star Tribune, titled 'Everyone Loses if Lebanon Hills Master Plan is approved'.</p> <p>I have contributed financially for decades to preserve natural areas, parks and open places to protect the environment, wildlife and as places where people will experience these things themselves in the hope of seeing the value and doing likewise, themselves, for future preservation.</p> <p>Also, as a longtime bike commuter, tourist and fitness rider (with several bikes, including the "high speed bikes" mentioned in the op-ed piece) I am also keenly aware of the need for interconnected biking and walking trails which are integrated into a usable system with thoughtful, long term planning and which spans local, city, county and regional jurisdictions and boundaries. How useful would our roadways be if one cities' roads didn't connect with those an adjacent communities? Of if drivers couldn't readily move across county or state lines?</p> <p>With careful design, I believe there can be a great park experience for most everyone at Lebanon Hills Park. Both those who want a natural, open space experience (myself included) and by offering a quiet, eco-friendly connector trail carefully integrated into a larger trail system for those (like myself, also) who ride for recreation, health, commute or just to be outdoors and experience the sights and sounds of nature along long stretches of continuous greenway.</p>

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Plan, Matt	2/24	<p>I am writing to express my disapproval with the pending master plan for Lebanon Hills. This initiative undermines the mystical allure of the park and the reason why it is such a treasure to begin with. Moreover, once we as people take something that is as close to natural as Lebanon Hills and replace it with asphalt, concrete, parking lots and visitor centers, it can not be undone.</p> <p>In considering doing this, I have to ask, "What's the gain?"</p> <p>In my 40 years as a resident of Minnesota, I have lived in Dakota County for all but four of them. In that time, I have walked the paths, ran the paths and introduced my friends and family to the park and it's uniqueness. My children and I have camped at the park and the thing I tell everyone is once you've pulled off of Johnny Cake Ridge Road and set up your camp, you might as well have driven 3 hours north to a rustic destination because it seems like you have done just that. There is no traffic noise, no city lights and not much in the way of disturbances unless you consider a family roasting marshmallows annoying.</p> <p>Lebanon Hills is truly a rural retreat within the cities. To consider changing that, "What's the gain?"</p> <p>Or a few other questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who is asking for this plan?</li><li>• Where can't people already find these amenities beside Minneapolis, St. Paul, Elmo, Boomington, Savage, Lilydale, Inver Grove Heights just to name a few?</li><li>• Why do we want to build something to attract more people with more wheels when the attraction is the quaintness that already exists?</li><li>• How much will this cost from an expenditure stand-point and an annual expense stand-point? What revenue will it generate?</li></ul> <p>I can list many more but please note the theme, "What's the gain?" We don't need a "central park". We don't need "a hub". We don't need "more bikes". We don't need to support an accomplishment to use in our run for County Commissioner next term because we enjoy it how it is.</p> <p>What we need, is to preserve something that is unique and limited before there are no places left like Lebanon Hills. We as people can build buildings, community centers, bike trails, amphitheatres and a host of other things. What we cannot build is a space with hills, ponds, mature trees, diverse flora and fauna and a bit of serenity where those with a little ambition, a walking stick and some bug spray can experience something priceless.</p>
Plummer, Joseph	2/18	<p>Please keep Lebanon Hills wild and vote against paved trails. Why can't there be one park in the metro area without paved trails? Please don't make Lebanon Hills like all the rest. As the saying goes, if it ain't broke don't fix it!</p>
Poenix, Jeff	2/19	<p>My name is Jeff Poenix. I'm 36 and I live in Grand Rapids in southern Itasca County. I've lived here all my life. I don't know that I've spent much time in your county, but by all the accounts I've read in the Star Tribune in regards to the Lebanon Hills Park, it sounds wonderful. The reason I'm writing is to share some of my own experiences and observations as they relate to Itasca County. You may think that our counties aren't very similar, but I assure you that they are in one respect: our rural feel. This is part of the quality of life that people enjoy and stay for. I'm sure that Lebanon Hills is a similar attractant to Dakota County.</p> <p>The problem we in Itasca have is that we still have a pioneer mentality. What I mean is that when it comes to development, we tend to feel "What's it matter if we pave another block of forest? We have more woods." We've had acres upon acres of high quality pine cut in Grand Rapids and paved over for big box parking-lots and to what benefit? In no way has this improved our lives or our natural environment. This is just a small example of what goes on up here and sounds like what you are experiencing with your park. Take it from me, you don't get it back. It may start with a small paved trail, but you've opened the flood gates. Where does it stop? Answer: It doesn't. You'll have a main trail,</p>

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then some laterals, then more bathrooms, garbage cans, pavilions, whatever. After a while you'll be left with a mowed park with a few scattered trees and maybe the fragment patch of woods here and there- just like every other park.

I'm all for providing accessibility, but some things just don't need easy access. I'm in the process of canoeing entirely around every lake within the Chippewa National Forest. There are about 700 of them and most of these don't have developed access. Were I in a wheel-chair or otherwise handicapped, I'd understand that I wouldn't be able access these lakes. In my mind most of these lakes would be spoiled with developed access. By the way, this is an open invitation to any of you that want to spend a day canoeing on one of the gems of North Central Minnesota!

That said, please take these considerations for what they are, but for the sake of habitat loss, the human experience and the idea that sometimes less is more, think about the hard right thing to do, and consider not adding infrastructure.

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Pond, Inez

Phone Comment: It's a big mistake to improve the park with paved trails. I'm 89 years old and don't need paved trails.

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Poorfarmkid 2/25

KEEP THE PARK AS A NATURAL AREA. You each should go to the area and see the natural beauty of this great park. WALK THE TRAILS , SPEND TIME IN THE WOODS. UNDERSTAND, BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE. THE HILLS ARE ALIVE, DON'T KILL THIS AREA WITH MORE TAR.

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Popp,  
Laurence

Phone Comment: Leave the park alone. Spend money on buckthorn. The County is filled with crooks.

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To start with, this is the first time writing in for a city/county/state type issue. I am not sure if comments to these email addresses will be read nor how you are collecting input for your decision. I am writing in regards to the recent plans for Lebanon Hills and the modification plans to the park. I live about a mile from Lebanon Hills near Pilot and Diffley, and use the park extensively during the spring, summer, and fall. General use is taking my kids walking along the trails, using the Jensen lake playground, or running on the trails through the park.

Popp, Nick 2/19

I was very disappointed to hear of the plans to pave and widen trails through the park being proposed. I am not sure the pull of different funds/interest groups that is forcing you to make this decision as the articles I have read do not go into all the background details. But I wanted to send a note expressing my disappointment in your plan to "improve" the park. I am even more saddened if taxpayer money will be used for this plan, once again reinforcing a general disillusionment in our elected representatives. The comments written below from the recent star tribune article express the disappointment so well that I will simply copy them below: *This proposal is a very different direction for Lebanon Hills. It will degrade every one of the park's current high-quality, low-impact forms of recreation. Most disturbing is that this plan will forever destroy the opportunity for Twin Cities residents to experience large, minimally developed parkland so close to home. Dakota County should be proposing a visionary park plan that respects Lebanon Hills' unique and valuable sense of wilderness. A plan focused on a large, healthy natural environment — and innovative ways for city residents of all ages and abilities to enjoy and learn about it. A plan designed to draw visitors and revenue exactly because it offers an escape from the built environment. Instead, Dakota County commissioners appear on track to choose to build up and build through Lebanon Hills and offer the same types of amenities and trails that the park system already has in abundance across the metro area. The entire regional parks system will be diminished if this plan is approved.* <http://www.startribune.com/opinion/commentaries/292295301.html>

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Price, Noah 2/25

Please vote no to the restructuring of the Lebanon Hills park. This is a more rustic park than is available elsewhere in the Twin Cities and provides a more wilderness feel than the paved paths and grass of most modern parks. I would like Lebanon hills to stay the way it is.

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Prieve, Ron	2/23	<p>I do not support the revised Master Plan for Lebanon Hills development. I have always enjoyed the special “wilderness” quality of Lebanon Hills. I know it’s not really wilderness, but it gives the feel of being in the woods away from the hustle and bustle—and if not for Lebanon Hills, I would have to drive over an hour to a State Park to get the same benefit.</p> <p>I recognize that it is likely that a paved connector trail will be approved, but I still want to voice my opposition to this. I am an avid bicyclist, but there are plenty of other beautiful paved trails to bicycle without destroying the essential qualities of Lebanon Hills. Too many hills will be leveled, too many trees down if the connector trail goes in.</p> <p>Furthermore, I think the county is being seduced into taking development money which is easy money without thinking of maintenance and preservation costs which will mount over the years. Currently the park is underfunded in terms of maintenance programs, and the revised Master Plan will likely make things worse, especially for timely issues like buckthorn removal. I hope you will consider these issues in making your final decision.</p>
Proescholdt	2/21	<p>My wife and I have become frequent visitors to Lebanon Hills Park in Dakota County, even though we live in Minneapolis with its abundance of lakes and parks. One of the things we like best about Lebanon Hills is that it is not over-developed, as many of the parks in Minneapolis have become. We have believed the Dakota Parks slogan of "forever wild." We fear, however, that the Revised Lebanon Hills Development Plan will dramatically push Lebanon Hills towards the run-of-the-mill overdeveloped urban park model at the expense of Lebanon Hills' natural and undeveloped character. Please re-think the park's development plan and instead come up with a plan that protects Lebanon Hills' wild and undeveloped character.</p>
Puster, Peter	2/22	<p>As a frequent user of Lebanon Hills Regional Park both during the summer and winter, I am very disappointed in the proposed plan to add paving and other amenities to the park. There are not many areas in Dakota County that allow one to have a natural, wilderness experience while still in the suburbs, and to see the planners proposing to eliminate this resource is disappointing. Not every park needs to look like other parks. Not every park needs to connect with other parks via connector trails. Not every park needs paved bike trails. The sad thing is that once you take the natural wilderness experience away and replace it with paved trails, it cannot be easily brought back. Please revisit this proposal before it is too late.</p>
Quammen, Linda		<p>Phone Comment: I urge the Commissioners to vote no on the paved trail. I hike and cross country ski and I’m against the plan because walking on paved trails creates foot pain versus a soft surface trail. Add a bike trail with the Cliff Road improvement and a bike trail link to the Visitor Center. Use the funds instead for remediation and natural resource improvements long-term. This would be good for people, plants and wildlife. Vote no on this plan.</p>
Quammen, Linda	2/25	<p>I urge you to rethink the revised plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. My reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are many other specialized parks throughout the county. (Think of all the athletic ball parks and kids' playgrounds.) Why shouldn't we maintain a close-in natural park to benefit the human/wildlife/plant life connection? In the future, I believe we will come to realize (scientifically and economically) how important large, undeveloped spaces where plants, insects, birds, and other wildlife thrive together will be for Twin Citians.</li><li>• There are many, many paved trails all over Eagan and Apple Valley where people walk and run. I have foot problems and have found, over time, that walking on paved surfaces causes shooting pains in my feet at twice the rate of soft trails. (I know I'm not the only one with this problem.) There are far, far fewer places to walk on soft trails in the local area.</li><li>• Natural areas are hard enough to maintain, let alone restore. Once more development and paving is added, it's very hard to go back, even when the times change and people no longer want to use all the paving and picnic tables on concrete (think Ft. Snelling State Park's developed</li></ul>

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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sections that are so underused now, in comparison to the 60's). We have a natural gem that just needs some restoration to bring out its thousand points of light.

- Ripping up the soil and removing the woodland plants for the paved Connector Trail will destroy or severely weaken fragile native plant/animal ecosystems. Even with remediation of the site, weed seeds will come up from the invasives' seed banks for ten or more years. And wind-blown weed seeds will always aggressively colonize any openings in disturbed ground where the healthy ecosystem has been ripped away. This would mean years of remediation maintenance work--not just one and done--to ensure that weed trees, shrubs and ground covers don't take over Lebanon Hills' woodlands, destroying their beauty and the wildlife who need native plants for shelter and food. In the past, Dakota County has had a poor track record of keeping out invasives, let alone removing them from parks. (Not only buckthorn and Siberian elm but burdock, spotted knapweed, garlic mustard, white and yellow sweet clover, ragweed, Canada thistle, mustard, crown vetch, sweet cicely, and--new in the past 2 years--Queen Ann's lace.) Much of the money allocated for restoration/remediation of the park's vegetation in the 2001 plan was diverted to other purposes. So, the problem has increased and we now need even more money for restoration. The revised plan does not have the allocation strictures of the 2001 plan so I would expect the installation and maintenance of all this development will divert money badly needed for restoration/remediation throughout the park (and will continue to divert it, increasingly, in the future).

A "No" vote on the current revised plan draft for Lebanon Hills is needed. More hard infrastructure development in Lebanon Hills would be short-sighted and not in the best interest of the county and it's people. The bike trail should be added along the current transportation route of Cliff Road (especially once people start using electric bikes), connecting with the bike routes being created on Dodd and Johnny Cake Ridge Roads. A biking spur trail from Cliff Road to the Visitor Center should be created so bikers can access the hiking trails and store their bikes in bike racks. Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts on this issue.

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I urge you to rethink the revised plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. My reasons include

- The many other parks that are specialized (think of all the athletic ball parks and kids playgrounds). Why shouldn't we maintain a close-in natural park to benefit the human/wildlife/plant life connection? In the future, I believe we will come to realize (scientifically and economically) how important large spaces where plants, insects, birds, and other wildlife can live are to humans in the Twin Cities.
- There are many, many paved trails all over Eagan and Apple Valley where people walk and run. I have foot problems and have found, over time, that walking on paved surfaces causes shooting pains in my feet over twice as quickly as on soft trails. (I know I'm not the only one with this problem.) There are far, far fewer places to walk on soft trails in the local area.
- Natural areas are hard enough to maintain. Once more development and paving is added, it's very hard to go back, even when the times change and people no longer want to use all the paving and picnic tables on concrete (think Ft. Snelling St. Park' developed areas that are so underused now, in comparison to the 60's).
- Disturbing the soil brings up lots of weed seeds (and more wind blown seeds aggressively colonize the denuded ground) that make it that much harder to restore or maintain native ground covers that our native animals can use for cover and food. (In the recent past, Dakota County has had a poor track record of keeping out invasives, let alone removing them. (Think of the invasive burdock, spotted knapweed, garlic mustard, white and yellow sweet clover, common lushly growing next to the redirected section of path

Quammen,  
Linda 2/25

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Quist, Lisa 2/19

Please register my comments against the proposed Revised Lebanon Hills Development Plan. I have only recently discovered this wonderful place and especially enjoy the unpaved trails and the experience of wilderness. I agree with all the points in yesterday's Star Tribune editorial against this Revised Plan. Please let me know if you need additional information from me.

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Rada, Mike	2/13	<p>This note is to let you know I am OPPOSED to the changes in the master plan that would allow the paving of trails through Lebanon Hills Park. The undeveloped landscape is unique and is the reason my family and I enjoy hiking the trails. When I want paved trails, I use the sidewalk. Also, the cost to maintain a paved trail must be astronomical. Who is going to continue to pay for that? The motto of Dakota County Parks is "Forever Wild" and development of the park by means of paving is in direct opposition to that motto. In good conscience, I cannot vote in the future for any commissioner who is in favor of this plan and will happily voice that in the next election. Thank you in advance for not allowing the paving through Lebanon Hills Park.</p>
Rada, Patricia	2/11	<p>There are ample paved trails, picnic areas, and play areas within Dakota County parks, city managed parks, and the adjacent parks. What we don't have enough of are pristine wooded natural areas that give the feel of wilderness while being located in the suburbs.</p> <p>Our Lebanon Hills Regional Park is one such jewel. It gives us that rare opportunity to get out into the wilderness for an afternoon without a longish drive. If Dakota County fractures this jewel with paved trails, camper cabins, natural play areas, and picnic areas then they will have ruined our unique park forever. My husband and I regularly use the hiking trails to get away from the feel of the city and connect with nature. You can not do this on a paved trail.</p> <p>The draft's stated goal of "something for everyone" already exists in the multitude of park opportunities we are fortunate to have in Dakota County. Eliminating the additional paved paths would ensure that there remains something for everyone. What would actually be achieved by this proposal is to quote a song "They paved Paradise....."</p> <p>It's a mistake and an irreversible loss to ALL Dakota County residents. Further, it does not correlate to the Parks Departments motto "Forever Wild." The overwhelming voice of the people that use the park is to leave it pristine. If, for some reason, paving the park is required. The paved area should be limited to around Schultz Lake that already has been partially paved.</p>
Radcliffe, Denise	2/18	<p>I am writing to ask the Dakota County Planning and Commissioners to NOT pave Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I actually moved to Eagan to be closer to Lebanon Hills because I love being in the woods and on the dirt trails, either running them or hiking them. In addition, my dog is THE happiest dog on earth when we go to the woods! If Lebanon Hills get ruined with pavement, I have made the decision to move out of Eagan to another county where nature is still honored. Please reconsider: MY FAMILY DOES NOT SUPPORT THIS PLAN!</p>
Raether, Chauncey	2/25	<p>As a citizen of Dakota County I strongly oppose the destruction of habitat to make way for a paved path through Lebanon Hills Regional Park. To quote from Joni Mitchell "Don't it always seem to go? That you don't know what you've got 'TIL IT'S GONE! Pave paradise! Put up a parking lot". Instead of further development, try improving the park by removing invasive plants, not more paths.</p>
Rainford, Morgan	2/25	<p>It has come to my attention that plans have been made to make major changes to the Lebanon Hills Parks system. These additions are not only absurdly large, but quite costly. The addition of paved trails, parking lots, buildings, and pavilions would not only detract from the feeling of being immersed in a natural setting, but greatly impact and upset the natural ecology of the area. The conservation of native flora and fauna should be at the forefront of any changes made. With degrading soil, erosion, and invasive species, urbanizing the park further would be more detrimental than helpful. Changes like increasing the size of the beach and adding play areas are so deeply impactful to the ecology and would cause more pollution in the lake, negating any efforts made to improve water clarity. Adding RV campgrounds brings not only possible sewage and chemical pollution, but an excess of noise, disrupting the native animal populations. Retreat lodges and building expansions require electricity, plumbing, and heating and air conditioning which are not only costly but damage the fragile ecology. The current picnic areas seem dilapidated and run down, so instead of focusing on additions, repairs and restorations to the buildings and natural environments should be the most important goal.</p> <p>As an Eagan resident that has spent many hours enjoying the parks natural environment, I implore you not to make such drastic and invasive</p>

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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		changes to Lebanon. The park has been my refuge. When I need peace or quiet or to be in a new place, I know that there is a place that provides everything I need as is. Please keep Lebanon Natural
Rasmussen, Judy	2/16	<p>i have read the proposal for the Lebanon Hills Regional park project and want to voice my opinion that this project should not go forward as planned. I use the park everyday, I live nearby in Eagan, do not back up to Lebanon hills, but can walk through the Hill top neighborhood into the park. It is pristine, I have seen deer and other animals when I get way into the park. They have learned to stay away from the main trails. I have also been walking through the new neighborhood on Cliff Road, and I see a lot of deer droppings, so know that the deer are coming into that area to graze. Where are they going to go? Is it really that important that we change the park to benefit people? What about the wild life already there? Isn't it important to save their habitat? I don't understand that just because there is money available that there has to be major renovations through the middle of a park known for it's wildlife and natural habitat. What about saving the money to take care of the park for future generations? When they took all the trees out of Parkview golf course it looked like a concrete hole in the ground. You are now planning to destroy more trees? This does not make sense ecologically, and I am surprised that this is even being considered. I do NOT support this project Please reconsider the plan. Thank you.</p>
Rea, Sigrid	2/18	<p>When my husband and I were ready to start a family, we moved further from our places of employment to live in Eagan. We purchased a home near Lebanon Hills to help us develop a sense of wonder and appreciation for the natural world in our child. I am terribly disappointed to hear that anyone thinks this park could be improved with more pavement. If you would like to improve the park and have money to invest, please remove the buckthorn instead to improve visibility and allow the native vegetation to thrive.</p>
Reed, Robyn	2/20	<p>I am a trail runner, hiker, and snowshoer, and the mother of two nature-loving boys. Lebanon Hills is our wilderness in the city. It's where we go to hear owls, see birds and turtles and frogs, breathe fresh air, and leave the city behind.</p> <p>The planned development plan puts this gem of a park at risk. Not just ecological risk, but financial risk too. Please don't move forward with a plan that commits millions of dollars to build trails but little to maintain the park.</p> <p>The Friends of the Eagan Core Greenway recently published their opposition to the plan. Please take the time to read their arguments here: <a href="http://sunthisweek.com/2015/02/19/friends-of-the-eagan-core-greenway-oppose-trail-plan/">http://sunthisweek.com/2015/02/19/friends-of-the-eagan-core-greenway-oppose-trail-plan/</a> Thank you for doing the right thing.</p>
Reed, Robyn	2/4	<p>I run the trails at Lebanon Hills about three times a month, and nearly every weekend in the winter. I've seen more wildlife there than anywhere else in the city. The presence of wilderness like this so near the Twin Cities is precious and irreplaceable. I do not support the development plan to build a paved bicycle trail and lighted ski trails at Lebanon Hills.</p>
Reeves, Hilary	2/18	<p>I know the Dakota County Board will be voting on the long range plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I read a few months ago of plans to put a path through the middle of the park. That story said parks need to be accessible to people with disabilities. That thought resonated with me, because I know our population is aging. But, I also was uncomfortable with the idea that a trail would go right through the undeveloped areas of the park, making the wilderness experience less real. I believe that in this case, the wilderness feeling of the park should be preserved. My husband and I take there a 10-year old Farmington boy for whom we are guardians. He is obsessed with video games, but when we go out to Lebanon Hills, he likes zipping around on the trails. We have canoed there and have talked about trying a portage, so that he has a first-hand sense of what being in the Boundary Waters might be like. This is a hugely valuable experience for Paul, helping to make sure that he has a sense of the outdoors as he grows up. For these reasons, I urge you to reject the parts of the Lebanon Hills plan that cut through the undeveloped parts of the park. Keep the jewel you have for future generations!</p>

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Regan, Laurel	2/18	<p>I am not in favor of the revised Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. In general it allots far too much money and resources to development at the expense of ecological restoration and conservation. Furthermore it is not at all clear where the funding for this development will come from. Lebanon Hills is unique <i>because</i> it has remained relatively unspoiled compared to all the other metro regional parks. Why would you destroy that?</p> <p>The paved east/west bike trail is perhaps the best example of thoughtless planning. It is not needed for the county greenway plan because there is already a long east/west trail just north of the park in Eagan. If bikers want to visit the park, develop a spur from that trail to Holland Lake, where riders can get off their bikes and enjoy a hike or go fishing.</p> <p>The idea that disabled and elderly people will set out on a one-way, 6 mile long hike with bikes whizzing by at 20 mph is ludicrous. A summertime hiker has to walk very briskly or actually run to avoid being covered with mosquitoes or swarmed by deer flies. Disabled people and elderly most likely can't achieve that pace and will stay off the trail for that reason as well.</p> <p>The idea that the trail will connect the campground folks to the beach at Schulz Lake is equally ridiculous. The campers are mostly parents with young kids, or elderly. They too would not likely hike or bike even the round trip to Jensen and back – much less to Schulz Lake. It would be much cheaper to run a shuttle to the beach in the summer than build and maintain a trail the campers won't use. The ongoing year-round maintenance cost for this trail has not been made public, but will certainly be significant. Who will pay for this?</p> <p>I've been hiking and skiing in Lebanon Hills for more than 20 years. It is unquestionably the best park in the metro area because of its wilderness feel. What you are planning to do there seems to be a shameless grab for federal, state legacy and met council dollars. Instead of "Forever Wild", Lebanon Hills will be forever destroyed. Comments to this plan are running overwhelmingly negative. Please listen to the people you serve.</p>
Regan, Mike	2/24	<p>I am not in favor of the revised Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. My rational has been echoed by many others who have generated overwhelming negative feedback of the plan to build a six mile long paved bike trail through the heart of the park. The trail as proposed will fundamentally change the park in a way that's irreversible. Your focus should be on preservation and restoration, not on adding more pavement.</p> <p>A better option would leverage the Cliff Road expansion that could easily accommodate an east/west bike trail. The park's maintenance is already underfunded and your plan doesn't provide a funding source to cover these future additional expenses. A single trail that meets the grade and sight line objectives outlined by the plan will be a very unsafe place for walkers, in-line skaters and others sharing the road with serious bicyclers who will be travelling at speeds of more than 20 mph.</p> <p>I understand the temptation to spend the 'free' capital, but believe that your plan is wrong and is opposed by the vast majority of current and future park visitors.</p>
Reinhardt, Sam	2/26	<p>I hope that this message finds you well. First, let me say thank you for all the hard work that you do on behalf of Dakota County and its residents. Your job is one of great responsibility and importance, but I am sure that most citizens don't realize just how much you do to improve our community.</p> <p>On that note, I am sure that the plans for renovations at Lebanon Hills Regional Park were taken up in exactly that spirit: of making the space better for community members. As a lifelong Dakota County resident, I have extremely fond memories of walks around Jensen Lake and Holland Lake. Sometimes we would bring our dogs with us, and other times it was just us kids with my dad. But every trip there was one of welcome seclusion from suburbia, and an escape into time with nature. On a recent trip to Jensen Lake just this fall, I had the same experience, though with even more appreciation for how rare such opportunities to encounter "wilderness" are in the Twin Cities. The fact that the horse farm across the street has long since become a housing development was a clear reminder of this. As such, I hope that you will carefully consider the plans to "update" Lebanon Hills in the coming years. While public spaces do need consistent maintenance and upkeep, I fear that bringing too</p>

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much civilization to the park will take away much of what makes it unique. In a world of growing urbanization, places like Lebanon Hills will become even more important and more difficult to recreate with the passage of time. Please do all that you can to keep the park usable for citizens without taking away the pristine beauty and charm that make it such a wonderful piece of Dakota County.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you might have. Again, thank you for all of your hard work on behalf of Dakota County.

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I was on the planning commission when the 2013 draft Lebanon Hills Master Plan was developed, and I thought it was a good plan then. I've seen the thoughtful changes suggested by the consensus of the diverse citizen panel you appointed last year, and I believe the current draft is even better. Your staff has worked very hard to create the best plan for the public's interest, and they are to be commended. Although I understand that it may not be funded immediately, I am in favor of the plan's adoption.

Having reviewed the public comments in 2013, I expect you will notice five trends in this year's public comments: First, there will be numerous comments in opposition to the plan. Second, the geographical center of gravity from which those comments come will be the neighborhoods and communities near the park, with fewer comments from more remote areas of the county. Third, you may find that the comments focus on the work of the 2001 citizen panel, with less focus on the more recent work of the 2013 planning commission and the 2014 citizen panel. Fourth, there will be repeated invocations of Dakota County Parks' catchphrase, "Forever Wild." Fifth, many of the comments will contain very little evidence of having actually read the plan.

I suspect that, underlying these themes, and motivating both sides of this debate, is an emotional reaction to the park itself.

The first time I took my family hiking from Jensen Lake to Schulze Lake, I was struck by the solitude. Here we were, on a gorgeous summer afternoon in the middle of a beautiful park in the suburban heart of a large county in a major metropolitan area, and no one else was around. After that day, when I've visited areas of Lebanon Hills away from the handful of high-traffic areas of the park, I've had this experience time and again. Often, I find myself amazingly alone -- sometimes for the entire length of the trail -- as far as I am able to see.

I have mixed feelings about this solitude. On a personal level, I enjoy the rare chance for peaceful reverie. I suspect that many of the plan's opponents have had the same experience, and I suspect this is what they do not want spoiled with a paved greenway connector trail.

But the planner in me asks: Where are all the people? Given its perfect location and the natural beauty, why aren't more people enjoying this park?

This ambivalence, I believe, represents the basic philosophical divide between the plan's opponents and its supporters. Essentially, the difference is between those for whom "forever wild" is not just an advertising slogan, but a creed; and those who believe that the park's uses should be true to the original statutory purpose of the regional parks system, "to acquire, preserve, protect and develop regional recreational open space for public use." Is the park supposed to be a meditative nature preserve, or a recreational and natural resource to be shared generously and prudently?

I support the plan for the same reason the others oppose it: because it will bring more people into the park. I support the plan because we need to get out more. We need to unplug, unwind, and remind ourselves of our place in creation -- and we're not all willing, or able, to go on a hike to do that.

The State Demographer projects that Dakota County's under-65 population will decrease or remain flat for the foreseeable future -- but our senior population will more than double, to almost one-quarter of the population, in the next fifteen years. Our elders need a safe path to nature, and our youth need an easy way to get outside. Personally, I'd like to take my kids biking through the park. Let's open up the park.

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Reitz, Nate  
Dakota  
County  
Planning  
Commission

2/25

## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Reykdal, Cliff	2/18	<p>Thank you for taking time to review and revise the Lebanon Hills future plan. Overall, I believe this plan provides a compromise that Dakota county residents will support. I have only two comments.</p> <p>First is the need for a paved path that would run along the west side of Marsh Lake very close to the beautiful hiking trail. I question if this trail is needed, will have limited usage and could easily be added at a later date.</p> <p>Second, while not entirely clear, I do not see the need for lighting paths beyond what is available now. This seems costly and most of us enjoy the evening walks without lighting. Hikers may also utilize head lamps if they are concerned for safety.</p> <p>Finally, please continue to keep this park "forever wild." There are an abundance of parks with flood lights and paved trails making Lebanon Hills a treasure.</p>
Reynolds, Sally	2/21	<p>I have been an avid hiker for many years, and particularly enjoy hiking in urban parks in the Twin Cities area. Lebanon Hills is by far one of my favorite places to go (if not the most favorite) for a wide variety of reasons. I love the spaciousness of the park, I love the wilderness feel of the trails, and I enjoy the many ponds and lakes in the park. All of these features make it one of the best for urban hiking and birdwatching. As someone nearing her 60's, I understand that older folks may need a bit more assistance with trail mobility. My fellow hikers and I use hiking poles for balance, and I fully expect some of my favorite hiking trails to be to difficult to navigate someday, should I ever reach an age or physical condition where the more rugged trails are tricky. I firmly believe the wilderness nature of Lebanon Hills should be preserved. This is one of the top reasons that I love going to this park. I would hate to see trees destroyed and more asphalt or concrete paths put in that would destroy the lovely character of this park. I know there are plenty of other paved trails that will be an option for me, if the time comes that I need them. I'm also concerned about what these paths, which would encourage faster cyclists and skaters, would do to the existing bird and animal population of the park. On behalf of my many hiking partners (most of them in their 60's) and myself—please keep Lebanon Hills wild!</p>
Rico, Cynthia	2/20	<p>Please do not install paved pathways and further degrade one of the last authentic parks in the area. I enjoy the horseback riding there and also as a student in 2012 attended archaeological digs with Dr. Jeremy Nienow there to explore the farmsites within the park. That, along with the animals, is the undisturbed part of the park that I like so much. Why spend the money to make it into just another park like all the others? Right now it has natural beauty and history, undisturbed country. This is what a park should be. Otherwise we will have to drive and haul horses far outside the area to see what we currently have in our backyard, not to mention the horse homes bordering the area being disrupted by losing this natural area.</p> <p>Some modern "improvements" are not improvements at all and contribute to the loss of the rural flavor of Dakota county that is becoming more and more rare. Soon we will be like Ramsey County, rather than our own unique blend of real farm sites and wild areas. Why would we want to be more urban?</p>
Riehle, Tim	2/25	<p>I am writing to let you know that I am adamantly against the plan to pave (and do other mischief) to Lebanon hills. I have lived in Eagan since 2000, and in 2012 I moved adjacent to Lebanon hills specifically because of my love for the current unpaved trails. Please do not allow this unique area to be forever changed for the worse. Thank you,</p>
Ripperton, Douglas and Patricia	2/17	<p>I DO NOT SUPPORT the proposed development plan for Lebanon Hills. It's value is in its natural state. There already exists or soon to exist paved bike and access trails to the park. Installing an ADA complaint path way thru the center of the park is a project with no way of FUTURE correction. Once this nature area is gone, its gone for good. Putting in, maintaining additional paved trails when money can be better spent on existing trails and community services. PLEASE VOTE NO!!!!!!</p>

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Rishel, Harold	2/22	<p>I just discovered Lebanon Hills park this fall. On my first walk I must have taken 20 pictures. I am a former hunter, due to age, and it was wonderful to walk the "rugged" trails and almost feel as if I were hunting again.</p> <p>I ride a bike, but it would be devastating to have a trail in Lebanon Hills. I realize every park can not fulfill every persons needs. There are many more easily accessible parks for bikers and the handicapped than there are unimproved trailways. Can't this one place be left alone so one can have a more intimate experience with nature?</p>
Ritchie, Clare	2/19	<p>I am in support of leaving Lebanon Hills Park or shall I say, developing Lebanon Hills Park, as a more natural wilderness, with less infrastructure. With an area as large as the Twin Cities Metro, do you not see the value of having this space where citizens can spend time in a more natural wilderness type park, with low impact activities? There are many other parks with paved trails and other activities and Dakota County having one of the perhaps only "wilderness" parks in the area is very valuable, especially in the years to come. Lebanon Hills Park would become a "destination" park. I grew up in the woods in Northern Minnesota and now living in the Metro Area, as much as I love the many parks and accessibility, I need places to go into the woods. It is very important that you consider Lebanon Hills Park as a unique and valuable resource as a wilderness park. I really hope that the Federal dollars are not such a huge appeal that the future of such an amazing wilderness in this large urban area is overlooked.</p>
Robetor, Ben	2/25	<p>Please keep Lebanon Hills Regional Park as it is! There are enough paved trails in the south metro (and everywhere else) already. I enjoy visiting the park primarily because it is still raw wilderness. It's a relief to get away from the urban sprawl and go for a 45-60 minute mountain bike ride or to go for a long refreshing hike on dirt in the woods, the way it is supposed to be, without seeing anything but nature and maybe another person or two enjoying the same thing. The entire park is surrounded by paved trails along the roads, please don't start making shortcuts through the park. We can go around to connect with other trails.</p>
Robetor, Ben	2/25	<p>If anything, you guys should be doing this! Colorado town replacing pavement with dirt trails: <a href="http://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-gear/gear-shed/edge/Eagle-Colorado-Singletrack-Sidewalks.html?utm_source=facebook&amp;utm_medium=social&amp;utm_campaign=facebookpost">http://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-gear/gear-shed/edge/Eagle-Colorado-Singletrack-Sidewalks.html?utm_source=facebook&amp;utm_medium=social&amp;utm_campaign=facebookpost</a></p>
Robinson, Rachel	2/24	<p>Members of the Board and Planning for Dakota County, I want to respectfully submit my comments as a member of the greater community asking that Lebanon Hills be kept as a natural trails park as much as possible while making improvements that help people of all abilities enjoy the park's top features.</p> <p>Our family has spent combined likely over 100 hours hanging out in the Lebanon Hills park over the past few years. We've gone fishing off the dock and met a bunch of characters in the process. And we do truly appreciate the modern facilities.</p> <p>But most importantly, it's pretty much the only park in the metro where we can get a true "hiking" experience - where we can burn some calories, practice for wilderness hikes (with backpacks full of weights and breaking in new boots), and enjoy some peace and tranquility in the process. Like so many Minnesotans, hiking is our passion and we spend our recreation time in our state parks backpacking and portaging canoes. Our son is almost 5 and over the past summer we took him with us on a camping and hiking trip in Alaska. He was a champ about it because we had spent countless hours looping around Lebanon Hills reminding him to stick close and sing to keep away the bears. Every time we're there we see hiking clubs or horseback riders and talk about appreciation for the miles of trails available to just get out and hike. Next summer we are definitely going to sign our son up for Camp Butwin so he can enjoy a slice of the same backwoods experience all summer.</p> <p>We also greatly appreciate the little bits of wildlife we get to enjoy at Lebanon Hills. There are frogs and toads everywhere and for a kid that's the coolest. And just this past summer a really big snapping turtle was resting on the path as we walked by.</p>

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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		<p>The plan to invest in Lebanon Hills Regional Park is appreciated. But we do hope that a balance can be struck between accessibility at trail heads for all and maintenance of the hiking and portaging features that make this park so special. Thank you for accepting comments on this matter and please let me know if you have any questions.</p>
Roche, Jean-Luc	2/21	<p>Please, keep Lebanon Hills Park the way it is now: wild! There is NO need for more paved trails or buildings.</p>
Ron West		<p>Phone Comment: I do not agree with all changes in the Master Plan. Please keep it as a natural setting park.</p>
Ronningen, Joel	2/24	<p>I am writing to implore you not to develop, especially pave, any part of the Lebanon Hills Regional Park. It needs to be kept as close to pristine as it can, not developed. It is beautiful, vital, and needed as it is.</p>
Ronningen, Joel	2/24	<p>PLEASE don't pave or develop in any way further, Lebanon Hills Regional Park. It is gorgeous as it is. Wilderness needs to be kept wild, not "made better".</p>
Rosen, Monica	2/22	<p>Why don't we count??? All of the parks in the 7county area are cement path parks. Why can't the people who are looking for something more on the wild side of nature have one park? I just don't get it.</p>
Rosen, Paris,	2/22	<p>Please don't make a big mistake by altering Lebanon Hills. Not in favor of new master plan.</p>
Rousseau, Peter L.	2/21	<p>Lebanon Hills Park has been a substantial part of our family for the last 30 years. We moved to Apple Valley in 1983 from New Hampshire. My wife and I have a shared love of the wilderness. Being from NH we were always headed north to hike the wilderness of the White Mountains. After moving here we found a gem called Lebanon Hills Park. It was there to hike and enjoy without traveling too far from home. We were able to hike the woods around the ponds and share the wilderness with our sons. We were able to teach them the value of nature and to respect the land for what it brings into your life.</p> <p>Today my sons have grown and moved away but Lebanon Hills Park is still there with all the memories. It's a park that has already diversified to include not only Hiking but Horse Riding, Bike and Cross Country Ski Trails that run throughout the park. The Visitor Center greets those who may have an interest in what the park has to offer. The center hosts many events throughout the year that bring the community closer to nature like few have done in this area.</p> <p>We are disappointed and saddened by the news of the proposed development of the park we now call BWCA South. This park provides a diversion from the built up park system we have today. It contains the habitat that nurtures many species of wildlife that are rarely found in one area.</p> <p>We had many encounters with a large variety of wildlife including Deer, Fox, Coyotes, Turkeys and a variety of small fuzzy animals on our hikes. The Water fowl are best admired from a distance. Wood ducks make their homes alongside the Merganser, Grebes, Swans and Geese. It is the home for many types of wood peckers including the Pileated that has been endangered since the 1900's. As we hike the trails, it continues to provide us a peace of mind as only nature can give. It's a place that enriches the soul like no amount of therapy can ever provide.</p> <p>The park should not be developed to remove the wilderness factor. Increasing the accessibility with paved trails, will only drive out the wilderness and chase the natural inhabitants away. We believe it's time to preserve this environment for the future generations to experience.</p>

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Rowan, Jim      2/25    There are many parks with paved access, but few parks as unique as Lebanon Hills. If you do this, there is no going back.

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After much consideration, I ask you to vote no to the revised draft Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Park. Please see my attached letter with specific details for you to consider.

It was great to talk with you at the public meeting last year regarding Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I have read through the Revised Draft Master Plan for Lebanon Hills, and I have a few comments. I write this as a year-round park user, and I work as a professional park naturalist.

I endorse the guiding principles (p. 34) for the park to “be an urban natural retreat”, “a resilient natural place”, and “an ecologically healthy natural setting.” Therefore, I am concerned about the plans for cutting a wide connector trail through the park, as this will open the forest canopy and soil to increased establishment of invasive exotic species, such as buckthorn. The proposed Draft Master Plan will not improve the health of the park.

Any new trail construction should stay well away from the two significant features identified by the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in the park. The tamarack bog, west of Holland Lake, is sensitive to flooding that may be caused by changes in the watershed. I have observed tamarack trees die in a park when water levels rose after construction caused increased runoff. The second site, a mesic hardwood forest on the south side of Jensen Lake, is notable due to the presence of paper birch and a great diversity of wildflowers and ferns. These two areas are labeled significant by the DNR, even though they are designated in a “degraded condition.” They are still much healthier than nearly all the parks in the metro area, and this is of great value to Dakota County. The restoration potential is greater when there is still a diversity of native plants present.

Rowse,  
Dianne

2/25

An additional high quality feature in Lebanon Hills Park is a wetland just southwest of Holland Lake that I monitored for Dakota County’s Wetland Health Evaluation Project (WHEP) a few years ago. This wetland was designated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency as the reference wetland for Dakota County. As such, all the other wetlands monitored by WHEP in cities across Dakota County were compared to this high quality healthy reference wetland. To protect this wetland and many wetlands in the same watershed, I recommend the elimination of the paved lake loop on the southwest side of Holland Lake.

Lebanon Hills Park is worth preserving, not cutting up further with more trails. The park cannot be “something for everyone”, and still keep its health. Bulldozing through hills to create a 5% grade hard surface trail is not the answer in this natural hilly park. Instead, find a perimeter course along existing roadways to provide this kind of trail.

Another negative impact of cutting a wide trail corridor is the resulting forest fragmentation. Fragmentation has a huge impact on area sensitive bird species, such as the scarlet tanager. I was greeted by several tanagers on a walk in Lebanon Hills Park last spring, much to my delight. These birds will not choose to live here if the forest gets cut up into smaller area pieces.

When I hike around Jensen Lake, I enjoy the narrow trails surrounded by forest and lake edge. I know people like to picnic at Jensen Lake. However, I would not like any more development along the lakeshore. This would negatively impact the nature experience that I seek. Let’s keep the park a natural park and not allow the users to “love it to death.” There are ample picnic and play areas in more developed parks for people who seek those amenities.

Regarding the plans to expand the Lebanon Hills Visitor Center, please ensure adequate funding for interpretive naturalist staff. Interaction with staff can have the greatest impact on the visiting public of any form of interpretive education, more than interpretive signage or printed materials. I hope you will reconsider the potential loss the proposed plan will bring to Lebanon Hills Park unless it is greatly revised. I am counting on your leadership on this issue.

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Rudolph, John	2/23	<p>I would like to voice my opposition to the paved trail proposal for the Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Having been a resident of Dakota County for over 34 years, I have enjoyed the many opportunities to utilize our parks for hiking and XC skiing. The main attraction has always been the natural environment that reflects this area many decades ago. It's like walking through the forests before man started to erode away the beautiful scenery and quiet trails that were first created by the deer population.</p> <p>Paved trails are not what most people want in a regional park. Not only is this proposal undesirable, but it requires a great financial commitment that could be used in a more beneficial direction. Also, if the trails are paved, it would require an annual maintenance budget that we should avoid in a time of limited revenues for park improvements. The future of this park should be to emphasize preservation, not destruction of the existing woodlands. Our focus needs to be to restore and enhance the natural environment for generations to come. Once it's gone, we will never get it back.</p> <p>I would be happy to discuss this issue with any Board Member or County Commissioner to help look for a more positive approach to protecting our beautiful parks. If you have any questions. please contact me.</p>
Rutzick, Josh and Family	2/25	<p>My Name is Josh Rutzick. I DO NOT support the current proposed plan to update the Lebanon Hills Master Plan. I live off cliff and have can walk into the park. Myself and many neighbors take our kids into the park on a regular basis. It is the most incredible thing to hear your children so happy to take long walks through the woods. They don't have that same exuberance at other parks!! It is the most incredible natural oasis we have in the city. I can go for a 10 mile run and every day feels like a new path.</p> <p>The current trail system allows great access for walkers, runners in addition to those who like to geocache and general wilderness exploration. I see student groups out searching the forest for it's natural inhabitants.</p> <p>I am also a cyclist and feel that the proposed trail would not be a great benefit for cyclists either. We have great roads surrounding the park and can easily access other routes without the need to traverse the center of Lebanon Hills. I have ridden mixed paths (those for commuter and recreational bike) and can tell you that they don't work!</p> <p>I truly believe that the proposal to provide paved trails would completely degrade the quality of the trails as they are. Please vote NO for this plan.</p>
Ryan, Daniel		<p>Phone Comment: Say no to the damage in Lebanon Hills Regional Park. There is enough damage already. Development will chase the wildlife out.</p>
Ryan, Kendra	2/25	<p>I'd like to give my thoughts about the new proposal for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I think the plan creates too much development in the one of the last truly natural spaces we have in the Twin Cities metro. One of my favorite aspects of the Twin Cities area is the parks. We have beautiful waterways and natural spaces. But the development has gone too far. I understand the desire for amenities and paved trails but we have plenty in our many other parks. I don't want a system where every park is identical and offers the same things.</p> <p>My parents just moved within walking distance of Lebanon Hills and intentionally chose that location because of the access to the park. I visit them frequently and I want to be able to go to Lebanon Hills and feel as if I've left the city far behind. That is a feeling unique to Lebanon hills and I'd like for it to stay that way.</p>
Ryan, Patricia	2/12	<p>As an Eagan, MN resident and user of Lebanon Hills Park, I have been very disappointed with the sham of this process for getting input from the community. If the Board had truly wanted honest input, they would have allowed voices to be heard and changed their long-ago-determined plan. They didn't and they aren't. Poor Hastings is getting the same treatment with their park!</p> <p>I have been following the Lebanon Hills proceedings and am amazed at how the Board is proceeding with the "paving over" of this park, significantly changing the topography, and using this magical wilderness as the "hub" for their "development", which is un-needed and un-</p>

## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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wanted by everyone that I come in contact with.

I would like my tax dollars used to restore the land, remove exotics, improve habitat, and other projects that will keep this land open and wild. I do NOT want my tax dollars used to bulldoze what is essentially a road, buy pavement and pay for it's upkeep. Accessibility is just a buzz-word that the Board is using to ram their long-ago-determined blueprint down the taxpayers throats.

The Board members believe they are leaving their fingerprints on the area as part of their legacy? I believe that they will be remembered in history for rapeing our parkland!!

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My family has recently moved into the Inver Grove/Eagan area and quickly discovered Lebanon Hills.

After enjoying the park we've spread the word of the wonderful place to friends and relatives. Some relatives from out of town were very excited to learn there was a campground that accommodated RVs and campers. However, they were very disappointed that the campground was so far and disconnected from the main visitor center area with rentals, beach, etc... The entire family had planned on biking around the park, but were disappointed to find out there was no way (no safe way) to get from the campground to the visitor center. In their minds this was a failure of the park's system. Their family has no desire to return. It's unfortunate, but I'm sure they're not the only ones that feel the same.

I'm an avid outdoors person, and love wilderness and nature just as much as anyone, but I would agree with others that feel that a park as expansive as Lebanon should have at least one paved trail from one end to the other. The trail doesn't need to cross right through the most remote and wild parts of the park. It could be located on an outer edge. I can't imagine that one paved trail that accommodates so many more people than the existing hiking trails do would "destroy" the wilderness feel of the park. These aren't motorized vehicles with noise and exhaust tearing up the terrain we're talking about here. They're walkers, runners, wheelchairs, bikes, rollerbladers, etc... People of all ages that can't use the more rugged hiking trails.

In my opinion, I think people that think a paved trail is going to "ruin" Lebanon Hills are over-reacting and short-sighted. A larger cross section of people should be able to enjoy Lebanon Hills. It's one of the closest regional parks in the area.(And largest by far.)Why couldn't it offer just a few more amenities to a few more people?

As well as hiking and camping in wilderness areas, I enjoy biking on safe trails in the area. Just one paved trail running from East to West through the park would open up so many more opportunities for biking in this part of the metro area where bike trails are surely lacking. Imagine instead of my family only hiking once or twice a week, I could hike one day and bike the next. Having more of variety of ways to enjoy the park seems like a very good idea to me! And to many many others as well I'm sure. I'm just afraid the people that have expressed opposition to some of the elements of the master plan are folks that already go to Lebanon Hills mostly for the hiking trails. The trouble with only hearing those comments is that the people that don't go to Lebanon Hills are the ones that don't because there aren't the activities they'd enjoy having. I'm sure you're not hearing from as many of those people because they're not tuned into what's going on. They're not there!

Why not design and plan it so a few more people with varied interests can also enjoy such a beautiful place??

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Sackett,  
Roger

2/18

Citizen Panel  
Co-Chair

2/24

As former co-chair of the Lebanon Hills Master Plan Advisory Panel, retired outdoor recreation professional and frequent user of the park, I'm submitting some personal comments and observations regarding the revised draft. While I agree with the general consensus statements and recommendations of the Panel, the following statements reflect my own opinions.

I'm concerned and troubled by the deluge of letters to the editor and guest editorials in the local newspapers from opponents to some of the elements of the revised draft plan. I find many inaccuracies, distortions and misleading statements from the opponents. Here's my perspective on some issues they have raised:

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1. Lebanon Hills as a "wilderness": I have back-packed and canoed in many federally designated wilderness areas. I do not consider Lebanon Hills to be a wilderness. The federal definition is that "...a wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Lebanon Hills has definitely been trammelled by man. Decades of agricultural use have seriously degraded the original natural habitats. Soil has eroded into lakes; most of the land has been cultivated, pastured or used as woodlots for many decades; old farm roads and trails (which many of us love to hike) criss-cross the area; many plant species have been replaced by less biologically diverse habitats and invasive species; a power line bisects the east portion; roads divide the three sections; and park infrastructure has been developed (though at a lower level than in most regional parks). Only a few small areas are considered high quality natural communities, with the remainder being of moderate biodiversity, not meeting criteria, or not even rated.

The park is a large vegetated open space area, and that does have real value. As a whole, the park is one of the larger regional parks (as opposed to park reserves) in the system. It does offer opportunities for getting away from the crowds and feeling a sense of solitude, but the repeated description of the park as a "wilderness" is misleading and, perhaps, intentionally so. Who doesn't want to protect "wilderness"? Even if the proposed development, including the corridor trail, were to take place, the vast majority of the existing natural surface trail mileage and area would remain available for those wishing to pursue their "wilderness" experience.

2. The Corridor Trail: The proposed corridor trail, particularly as envisioned with the design and development guidelines suggested by the Panel and incorporated into the revised draft, would provide a legitimate, compatible outdoor recreation experience for bikers, wheelchair users, parents with strollers and walkers who may find existing natural surface trails unavailable or unmanageable. These users are currently not well served by the park, though their use preferences and needs are every bit as valid as those of the opponents. The integration of regional parks and trails has always been part of the long range vision for the metropolitan system. The panel recommended, and the revised draft includes, numerous references and guidelines to ensure that the proposed trail is designed and developed with minimal impact and with the recreational nature of its intended use in mind. As recommended, it would not go through the "heart" of the park (as some opponents claim), but rather through more peripheral areas. It would bypass the largest area of "moderate" biodiversity woodland-forest surrounding Portage/Cattail/Schulze lakes. Development of the corridor trail itself would offer opportunities for restoration, as shown in the draft plan. Interpretive stations, pull-offs and overlooks would provide for a very enjoyable outdoor recreation experience for families and other trail users. Again, natural surface trail users would continue to have ample opportunities to enjoy their preferred activities without ever having to pass a biker or step on an asphalt trail.

In regard to the width of the trail, opponents have criticized the recommended ten foot width as being either too wide or too narrow. Some say the trail should be narrower, when I believe they are really saying it should not be developed at all. Other say a ten foot trail is too narrow and unsafe, while at the same time suggesting that bikers be limited to the off-road trails along county roads, which are actually narrower than the proposed trail. I guess they want them to ride on even less safe trails. During the Panel presentation to the Board a commissioner asked me about the ten foot width. I responded that to my knowledge that was the accepted width for a shared use trail of this type. I followed up by contacting Jeff Schoenbauer, a recognized private park and trail planning consultant, who authored a highly regarded trail planning and development manual for the Minnesota DNR. He confirmed that for the proposed recreational use and setting with two way traffic a ten foot width would be the narrowest appropriate width and probably the most common width employed for such use. In fact, many ten foot wide trails are being used successfully and safely throughout the state.

3. The Opposition: Several letters and statements by the opposition members have characterized their views as representative of the general public. They cite responses to questionnaires, attendance at public meetings, etc., as proof that they speak for the general public. None of these are scientific measures of how "the public" might feel about the Lebanon Hills plan, much less what they might think if they were more fully and accurately informed about the plan. What they have seen in letters to the editors, if they have even seen them, is certainly biased and often

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grossly misleading. My guess is most of the general public isn't paying much attention and may not even care one way or the other. But that's just my guess, no more valid perhaps than the opponents' claims. I do know from long personal experience with controversial public natural resource and outdoor recreation issues that the opponents of a proposed action are usually much more motivated to show up, organize and express their opinions than those who are OK with a proposal or don't really care. The opponents certainly have every right to express their opinions, but they do not have a right to make up their own "facts", which I think they have done all too often during this planning process.

This reminds me somewhat of the controversy involving the designation and development of the Root River Trail near Lanesboro many years ago. It was adamantly opposed by many local people, including the local state senator. It was developed, nevertheless, and became one of the most popular rail trails in the state, if not the country. The city of Lanesboro was revived as the local economy benefited from the trail. Local attitudes changed. That same state senator later apologized to one of the DNR officials to which he had directed much of his ire.

Ironically, my recreation preferences probably correspond with many of the opposition group. I like to hike the natural surface trails and get away from the more developed and higher use areas, though I use those areas, too. I haven't been on my bike for a few years (though I would enjoy biking the proposed corridor trail much more than the noisy, straight, mostly boring trails along county roads). What I apparently do not have in common with them is a willingness to share a relatively small portion of the park with others who may have different, though equally valid, recreational desires or preferences. I believe I will still have plenty of opportunities to experience feelings of quiet and solitude with very little, if any, inconvenience or sacrifice. I look forward to increased efforts toward park restoration, hope that the revised draft plan will be adopted, and that Lebanon Hills Regional Park will provide even better recreational experiences for future generations.

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Sanders, Courtney L.	2/11	I am writing with regard to the Lebanon Hills Revised Master Plan and specifically the implementation of the paved connector trail. I do not support this plan. Vote NO to this plan. The natural wilderness available at Lebanon Hills should be preserved. Paved trails are destructive to the natural ecosystem. In addition, the cost of continued maintenance of paved trails will not be sustainable.
Schaar, Michael		Phone Comment: I oppose the paved trails and lit cross country ski trails. I am opposed to paved trail. The park is beautiful and a good place to experience nature. The plan will impact wildlife. There are other parks nearby with paved trails.
Schaefer, Rich	2/24	I'm asking all of you to do the job you were given and preserve our natural wilderness by rejecting this unwarranted trail plan and concentrate on the park's upkeep, which is badly needed. Please, for once, listen to the voices of Dakota County citizens
Schaefer, Rich and Sandi	2/24	Please, I'm hoping you listen to the voice of the majority of Dakota County citizens and reject this ludicrous plan to pave a trail through this special wilderness entrusted to us and future generations. Let's spend these monies on preserving, maintaining and cleaning up this beautiful park instead.
Schaenzer, Mark	2/18	Please make sure that my opposition to the Lebanon Hills Development Plan is included in Public comments. As you know from our earlier email exchange, I am specifically opposed to the paved path through the park.
Schaenzer, Mark	2/24	<p>I would like the public record to reflect that I am opposed to the Paved Trail through Lebanon Hills park that is included in the current Development Plan.</p> <p>Interestingly enough this past weekend I was at the American Birkebeiner Cross Country event in Hayward Wisconsin. I was talking to a gentleman from Waukesha Wisconsin (suburb of Milwaukee). He mentioned to me that he has been in Lebanon Hills and is surprised and disappointed to hear that there is a plan to put a paved trail through the park.</p> <p>My point is simply we have a wilderness jewel in our midst it would be a tragedy to degrade this with a paved trail through the wilderness. Thank</p>

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you for recording my opposition to the Lebanon Development Plan.

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Schaenzer, Susan	2/23	I do not support the Lebanon Hills master plan. I am most opposed to the development of a paved path through the park. It is not realistic to have a bicycle path intended for safe usage with pedestrians, wheelchairs and strollers. The path will destroy large areas of Lebanon Park which will destroy the natural beauty of this regional park.
Schaenzer, Susan	2/25	I do not support the master plan for development of Lebanon Hills. I am most opposed to the proposal for the paved path through the park. The plan calls for this path to be for bicycles, pedestrians, wheelchairs and strollers. I am a bicycle rider and know that bicycle paths are high speed paths which are not intended for walkers as it is not safe. I currently find ample bicycle paths in Dakota County. The paved path would destroy the wildlife habitat and natural serenity of Lebanon Hills.
Schall, Patty	2/19	I am writing to express my point of view regarding the proposed development of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I hope these changes will not happen as planned. I am strongly in favor of the preservation of truly natural landscapes for public enjoyment in the Twin Cities. These are extremely rare. Most parks have intruded on nature with manmade hardscapes, fixtures, and lighting. They have broken up the visual prospects with recreational amenities like boating and biking and picnicking and golf and water play, while offering a compromised experience to those who simply want the peaceful pleasure of a natural experience. Most parks, trying to offer more usability through constructed amenities, have limited space for a true wilderness to exist. This is one way to do things, and I am not against the other types of recreational use, but I hope I don't need to explain or defend the enormous value of the beauty of nature preserved, un-intruded upon. There is not enough of this type of space left any more. Once everyone is invited to do everything, in one place, nature cannot compete and is lost forever. Lebanon Hills is a rare treasure that should not be changed. I am one of many people who prefer the gentle sounds of birds, the wind in the trees, and quiet footsteps on soft ground to the noise of traffic, boat motors, and multitudes of human voices, their toys, and devices. I crave, like many others, a respite from the constant artificial noise and lights of the city. It's extremely hard to find. It's also impossible to restore, once it's gone. <i>Please do not make the proposed changes to Lebanon Hills and alter a rare space where natural beauty still exists for those who appreciate it.</i>
Scheller, Michael J.	2/11	How many relatively untouched places do we have left in the Twin Cities? How much land has already been sliced and diced for highways, roads, paths, and trails in the metropolitan area? Will development stop only when there's nothing left to cut up? Our priority should be to protect and nurture the few remaining special places. So, please DO NOT STICK A PAVED TRAIL THROUGH THE HEART OF LEBANON HILLS. It would be like running a tram up the face of Mount Rushmore—just so more people could get a better view. That would be nonsense and so is the Revised Draft Development Plan. Please do not kill this beautiful, wild park. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
Schlaubschla ger, Kim	2/23	PLEASE DON'T DO THE CONSTRUCTION PAVING PROJECT IN THE LEBANON HILLS REGIONAL PARK. I have read as much information as I can and feel as informed as possible. The park should remain "Forever Wild", or at least as much as possible and I really do feel this is unnecessary. Thank you.
Schleder, Nick	2/21	Please do not develop this beautiful space. It should be left as a primitive space for silent activities in a wilderness setting. I am a mountain biker from Saint Paul and I consider this place my home. I love it and use it delicately. Please do not develop this wilderness into anything other than wilderness.

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Schlutenberg , Kurt	2/24	<p>I oppose the plan to further develop Lebanon Hills Regional Park by adding paved trails. I have visited and birded this park. Because it currently consists of relatively large areas of unbroken woods, it supports a number of bird species (Ovenbird, Wood Thrush, Hooded Warbler, etc) that require such habitat and are rapidly declining because such areas are developed. These species are found in very few other places in the metro area. The few remaining tracts, such as exist currently at Lebanon, should be treasured for the unique resource "they are" and not developed to the extent that they become just another mediocre park, special for nothing or no one!</p>
Schmidt, Erica	2/24	<p>I own a house located across the street from Lebanon Hills Regional Park. My family has lived there for 18 years. Over the years and, for many more to come, we hope to enjoy all of the wonderful trails and wildlife within the Park and in our own yard which is a benefit that we gained when we purchased our house.</p> <p>I believe Dakota County has done a wonderful job at maintaining the Park and providing thoughtful opportunities for people to enjoy this natural treasure. I do not believe that the new proposed Plan that includes paved trails, additional buildings and destroying existing woodlands is in line with maintaining the Park.</p> <p>I do not support this new direction for the Park and the \$13.7 million for new development and increased maintenance expense. <u>I do not support this New Master Plan for the Park.</u> Thank you for your time and consideration,</p>
Schmidt, Linda	2/24	<p>I am writing to request that the park commission restrict the amount of any additional pavement and trails in Lebanon Hills Park. I am particularly concerned that they are considering trails 10 feet wide in this beautiful natural setting. I am also concerned with the environmental/financial impact of the chemicals to keep these trails clear of ice and snow in the winter. If maintaining these trails in the future is not feasible due to unforeseen budget constraints, then sadly the park was changed forever to be used for merely about 6 months of the year to accommodate those on bicycles and those with impaired mobility. At best, those with any physical limitations( or Seniors) will not be able to walk to the interior of the park in best case scenario, even without ice on the pavement. The condition of the trails will also impact visitors who wish to venture into the park on bicycles. The vast destruction of woodlands with grading and installation of pavement will be devastating to a park that is so unique to our city. These changes will remove so many of the distinguishing characteristics that make Lebanon Hills Park truly distinct from all other parks in Mpls/St Paul. Lebanon Hills Park is like no other- for now. I cannot understand the urgency to make it look like every other park in the state. Thankfully, there are many,many lovely parks in this city; one for every taste and certainly one to meet every need. Please leave Lebanon Hills Park untouched as much as possible.</p> <p>When I talk with people about what I love about Eagan and why I live here, Lebanon hills Park is always a place that I mention. It is our paradise and Lebanon Hill Park could bring significant name recognition to Eagan since nearly every other park in the city has miles of pavement at the expense of woodlands. As it stands today, there is no other place like it for many miles. I made the effort to write today hoping that you would reconsider the extent of your purposed changes . I am hoping hundreds of others take the time to share similar concerns.</p>
Schneekloth, Dennis and Linda	2/24	<p>While the newly revised plan is much improved from the 2013 plan, both my wife (Linda) and I wish to go on record as being opposed to the Park Board's plan to develop Lebanon Hills Regional Park for the following reasons: We feel the new plan still goes against the park's theme of "Forever Wild" by adding a paved trail and lighting.</p> <p>The proposed paved trail will be multi-use, combining walking as well as biking and other activities. It has been our experience that walking and biking do not mix well because of the speed differential of the two groups. This may open the door to injuries from collisions. We feel fast and aggressive trail users will ultimately push out or discourage walkers and more leisurely users from enjoying the trail, thus effectively making the trail something that is not as all-inclusive as intended. We feel more money should be spent on restoring and maintaining the park by improving water quality, removing buckthorn and planting more trees.</p>

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		Finally, at least one commissioner has suggested that most of those opposed to the plan have property adjoining the park and naturally wish to deny access to everyone else. We feel this description does not reflect our views. We live several miles from the park and do not wish to bar anyone from using it. The park however, is unique among metro area parks and we hate to see it lose its character through dramatic development; bulldozing portions of it to make way for paved trails and lighting.
Schnuckle, Kristin	2/21	I live in Eagan and my family and I often retreat to Lebanon Hills trails and forests. Please do not move forward with plans to create such over-developed trails. You will forever ruin the very essence of the natural experience that Lebanon Hills currently provides. Thank you.
Schouveller, Sally	2/25	I am a 30 year resident of Dakota County. I strongly oppose further development of Lebanon Hills Park. It has been a gem in the County because of the ecological diversity, the habitat it provides for wildlife. Don't mess up an already good thing. Also, the money that would be spent today on development, and in the future on maintenance are unnecessary financial burdens. Thank you.
Schramo, Nate		Phone Comment: I love the park and Eagan and both are important.
Schuldt, Cathy and Randy	2/24	<p>We would like to take this time to tell you we do not like the idea of putting a paved "path" through the middle of Lebanon Hills. We have been residents of Eagan for over 30 years and treasure the beauty of the park as it is.</p> <p>We understand that those with disabilities may want to enjoy this gem of an area but at what cost and for how many? There are other nice lakes nearby that can be enjoyed with paths already in place. Schultz beach already has some paved areas there for the nature seekers. As for bikers there is a proposed extension of bike lanes with the expansion of Cliff Rd. I do not see any reason to put more pavement that will need to be maintained and at what cost and to whom? I also think it would be dangerous to have a path that is used by both bikers and walkers.</p> <p>Eagan is unique in that it has this wonderful wildlife habitat and destroying that by putting in a paved trail will be a huge disappointment to us. There has to be a point when we start looking out for our resources and not looking for more money! DO NOT put this path through Lebanon Hills!</p>
Schult, Joyce	2/23	NO to anymore development in the Park!!
Schultz, Cindy	2/23	I am very distressed by the idea of creating paved paths through Lebanon Hills Regional Park. As a frequent visitor to the park, I enjoy the solitude, the natural setting and the beauty of the existing park. Please, please, please do not destroy this gem. If there are funds that can be used, please invest in maintaining the natural setting in constructive activities such as buckthorn removal. We have an opportunity to preserve this beautiful place and maintain this unique piece of land.
Schumacher, John	2/25	I do not approve the 2015 Master Plan as it currently stands.
Scott, Bradford	2/24	<p>I am writing with regard to the proposed master plan which would add to and/or expand the paved trail system at Lebanon Hills Park and to voice my strong opposition to the idea.</p> <p>I have been a frequent and devoted user of the Lebanon Hills Park system for over 12 years and have always cherished the park for its quiet and solitude and the refuge it offers from the urban sprawl surrounding it and which is the fundamental heart of the Lebanon Hills experience. It is truly a unique marvel in the greater Metro area.</p> <p>Adding paved trails and development to Lebanon Hills are exactly the wrong ideas of what to do with this singular treasure and such a plan could</p>

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not be more misguided in the depth of its misunderstanding of what the park and the community need.

The multiple uses it already serves today have nearly put the park on the cusp of over use. Adding paved trails invites the wrong users to this trail system and is unwarranted to serve their needs. Such users have alternatives to Lebanon Hills. However Lebanon Hills users today have no comparable alternative to what it offers.

Preserve the park and implement a plan of conservation rather than unnecessarily meddling with what is already a near-perfect community trust. To do otherwise would be a truly shameful act of failed stewardship.

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Scott, David 2/23

Thank you for your continued efforts to find common ground in the development and preservation of Lebanon Hill's Regional Park. While I think that the end compromise to enable more people to experience the internal beauty is within reach, I am unable to support the plans pathway development through the Park's interior as it is presently proposed. I do not feel that the shared 10' wide asphalt pathway is the best means to provide the inner park experience to those with disabilities. I am not against paving a certain percentage of the park but would limit it to access around selected lakes and internal spurs to perhaps secluded interpretive areas, not the proposed pathway bisecting the grounds. It would in my mind not be safe for the elderly or handicapped while at the same time merely offer a roadway experience for those passing through. Please stay the course and hold firm for the development of a plan which will really enable those presently without the means to do so, to some day be able to experience the wilderness and solitude so many of us have found within the grounds. It can be done and I will go to bat for it with all my heart. Sincerely,

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Sears, Paul 2/7

As an Eagan resident, taxpayer & voter, this is my input on the revised park plan for Lebanon Hills: The revised plan is STILL BAD because the latest proposed revisions miss the whole point: When it comes to our parks and Lebanon Hills, the whole point of all this controversy for the past year is this: NATURE and NATURAL is GOOD. PAVING and DEVELOPMENT is BAD. Got it? Nature GOOD. Paving BAD. Trails / Roads / Pathways drastically affect the entire feel and atmosphere of a park. A worst-to-best scale of materials to construct an avenue in a park would be something like –

WORST: Concrete (bright white - a total eyesore, which is what was done to the area around the Lebanon Hills Visitors Center) Asphalt (at least asphalt is darker and therefore a tad less conspicuous)

MUCH BETTER: Wood shavings (a natural material, and a natural color)

BEST: Bare ground (cheapest, too!)

The more man-made, unnatural elements introduced into parks, the worse things get. *When* will the Dakota County Commissioners get it through their heads that the vast majority of Dakota County residents go to parks to experience and see NATURE, and not a paved 10-foot-wide paved road? (Answer: apparently never. It will take an election and tossing the complete set of our present, clueless Dakota County Commissioners out of office for the will of the public to be taken seriously.) P.S. Over \$200,000 spent on the revised planning study?! Unconscionable. Simply outrageous. Every cent was wasted. Just leave our Lebanon Hills Park the way it is, please.

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Seidel, Mary

Phone Comment: I urge the Board to vote no on the plan.

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Seidel, Mary 2/25

As a longtime homeowner in Eagan, I am very concerned about the proposed development of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Our family visits Lebanon Hills several times a month, utilizing the space as we walk, run, hike, swim, canoe, sled, skate and cross country ski. The proposed development would negatively affect our enjoyment of the park. PLEASE VOTE "NO"!

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Serrano, Carolyn	2/22	Please keep Lebanon Hills Regional Park as it is! Not many urban areas can boast a wilderness area within its boundaries. Keeping Lebanon Hills as a natural wilderness area will attract so many people who value nature as the sole purpose of being in the park. This park is a gem! We need to keep it as it is for future generations. The people who demand total access have several other parks to choose from. What other park in the Twin Cities has a wilderness feel? Please keep this unique character of the park. Do not approve the master plan as it stands. Thank you sincerely, An avid nature-lover,
Severson, John	2/20	<p>I am a Dakota County resident and regular user of Lebanon Hills Park. I urge you to re-consider the plan to add substantial paved surfaces and extensive surface alterations that would be part of this. In my opinion, this plan if carried through will irreversibly destroy the character of the park.</p> <p>If there's money to spent, I'd much rather see it used for buckthorn removal and other deferred maintenance of <i>existing</i> park infrastructure. As a paved trail bicyclist, the benefits of adding bicycle infrastructure to the park are simply not worth what would be given up.</p> <p>There would seem to be cost effective alternatives to meeting the County's objectives with little negative impact on Lebanon Hills Park. Specifically, (and I realize at the risk of over simplifying), routing a bike path parallel to Cliff Road along the park's northern boundary when Cliff is upgraded. In any event, please consider alternatives to the current paving plan. The impact to the park is just too great. Thank you.</p>
Shannon, David	2/19	You folks are idiots. You have a slice of the Boundary Waters-like wilderness in your control. You have the opportunity to capitalize the uniqueness of this space, but are considering making into another cookie cutter park with paved trails. I live in Shoreview, but am willing to drive to Egan to enjoy this near wilderness experience. If you pave part of it, you will destroy any motivation I have to visit your town, or patronize your local businesses. I have many parks near me that offer paved bike trails, but I don't have the type of undeveloped natural trails and habitat that you have under your noses. There are over 500 miles of paved trails in the metro area. There is only one Lebanon Hills Park. Don't destroy this treasure.
Shaw, Brian	2/21	<p>As a resident of Eagan I would like to voice my extreme displeasure to hear of the plans to develop Lebanon Hills. Eagan and surrounding cities have extensive trails that are accessible to the elderly, disabled, and bikers. The Twin Cities is already one of the most bike-friendly places in the country. The elderly are a minority of the population and have plenty of other trails that are suited to their needs. The physically disabled also have plenty of opportunities to get into nature without this destruction of our natural habitat.</p> <p>It is invaluable to have a park with minimal human interference. There are people who want a break from the very human elements of this world which a paved trail would disrupt. As America becomes busier and busier it is even more essential to relax and get away from all of the stress. I know that this is very true for me. As a person with mental disabilities it is imperative to be able to escape into something that I can connect with on a primal level. I know for other people and future generations it is also very important to connect with nature in a pure and simple way. These trails would disrupt the very experience that this plan would supposedly provide.</p> <p>This plan has nothing to do with the survival of our natural species, so it is obviously not a concern of those planning this. I'm going to pitch it anyways because I care about more than just a single species that has already developed almost all other livable space in the metro area. Altering the natural habitat of the creatures that were here first is the cause of much distress and imbalance to our ecosystem, or what's left of it. The more we disturb it the more it requires costly measures to maintain it. Natural balance is the cheapest and best way to maintain our earth. The more we develop the less room other species have to do their jobs.</p> <p>The elderly, disabled, bikers, and knee replacement surgeons are the people who would benefit from this. People who love nature for what it is, people with stress and mental illness, and the very habitat that is trying to be admired will be harmed from this expansion. Please vote against any development of the few remaining natural areas we have. Your children and your children's children will thank you. Thanks for taking this</p>

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into consideration,

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This is a follow-up to a message I sent earlier. I have done more research not, so if one is taken over the other I'd prefer this one to be viewed. Also thanks for sending the links to the documentation in the reply email to my first email.

I see the maintenance of our natural ecosystem as the first four points of the purpose section of the Master Plan (MP). These environmentally friendly and common sense measures are then followed by things that are not congruent with the first four points. To maintain means to not further degrade, but human shelters and other community gathering places mean destruction. I walk on the trails routinely in the summer, and rarely do I ever see a piece of trash after I get past the gathering areas. The people who enjoy the trails treat the environment properly. The people who gather for events and fish often litter and contribute to the destruction of our habitat. Also focusing on economic development at the expense of our natural landscape is not something that anyone with their heart in the right place would do.

Shaw, Brian 2/24

In addition to adding these gathering areas and expanding the amount of area humans already take up, there is pavement going in? According to the MP (2015) the "biology, chemistry, and structure of park soils are degraded from their native state, limiting options for restoration." The report states blatantly that degradation of the natural resources already impacts the area, so why would we put more chemicals and unnatural material in with the thing we are trying to preserve. There are reports of blacktop and asphalt causing issues in humans, let alone the soil and the waterways that will be receiving the eroded wastes.

There are many other parks in the area that have availability for the physically disabled and bikers. Why must we develop one of the only large parks left? I am a person with mental disabilities/diseases including depression, anxiety and addiction. The ability to get out and connect with nature as it is supposed to be is extremely helpful for me and many of my friends and family. Adding paved trails would make me avoid yet another park, or area of a park. I get enough of the human elements in this world during the day and when I'm at school. Nature doesn't wish to do anyone harm, unlike humans. If nature does harm it is indiscriminate, unlike humans. We have the ability to process and understand the repercussions of our actions yet we continue to destroy the very thing that gives us air to breathe. Not every possible opportunity to develop should be taken.

In the online poll cited in the MP it states that people like these two things the most, "1) the scenic beauty of the park, and 2) its extensive network of soft-surface trails. These are among the most important qualities to protect with any planning effort for Lebanon Hills." Why put in man-made structures that alter the beauty and add paved trails when it is praised for the soft-surface trails. Please consider these points as you push forward with this plan and thanks for reading,

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Shearer, Chris 2/18

I have been enjoying Lebanon Hills for over 20 years. Now that I have a family sharing it with my wife and son has become a huge part of our lives. However, if the trails are paved, it will no longer have any attraction for us. We live just a few miles from the lakes in Minneapolis. If we enjoyed paved trails we would just walk to lake Calhoun.

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Shores, Dale 2/15

In reviewing the Revised Jan 2015 plan for Lebanon Hills, items that I am opposed to are as follows:

Regard East Park Connector Alternatives: 1) opposed to 2014 draft plan, 2) opposed to 2014 South Alternative

Regarding Middle & West Park Connector Alternatives: 1) Opposed to 2014 draft plan, 2) Opposed to South Alternative

Regarding paved trails around lakes: 1) opposed to idea that paved trail could be considered in future around either Jensen or Portage.

I am a Dakota county resident and use the park for running with some of my buddies. We go to Lebanon because we like getting off paved trails and a more wilderness setting. It is a treasure in its current format. Would hate to see paved trails carved into middle of park.

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Shover, Charlotte	2/6	<p>As a biker, I appreciate a paved trail, but the 80'-wide greenway corridor with a paved trail through Lebanon Hills Park is not a good idea and not needed. A 10' wide paved trail with 10' cleared on either side would allow bikers, wheelchair, walkers, etc. to access the park. There does not need to be much flattening of the land to accommodate these uses.</p> <p>Any wide greenway could be constructed in the right-of-ways of existing sidewalk. It is important to maintain the integrity of the park as you plan to provide a paved trail through the park. I urge you to rework the plan to reduce the impact of a paved trail in Lebanon Hills Park. Thank you.</p>
Sierra Club North Star Chapter Hollinshead, Mathews and Lois Norrgard	2/25	<p>We urge you to vote no to the revised draft Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park (LHRP). The Sierra Club North Star Chapter supports healthy lifestyles such as walking and cycling. In context, substantial infrastructure improvements can advance this value.</p> <p>Sierra Club North Star Chapter also works to protect natural open space, particularly natural ecosystems otherwise underrepresented. Lebanon Hills is a unique local and regional example of natural open space, truly the "Boundary Waters South," as the <i>Star Tribune</i> stated when it selected Lebanon Hills Regional Park as the Best Park in the Twin Cities in its 2013 Best of Minnesota guide.</p> <p>We are concerned that the scale of new trails and trail surfaces proposed in the revised Lebanon Hills Master Plan may fundamentally change the park experience, and that it may reduce rather than increase access to species and habitat diversity by reducing that diversity itself. We therefore believe Legacy Fund Dollars should not fund such outcomes in this case.</p> <p>If the goal of the Master Plan is to bring more visitors to the park, the emphasis should be on improving rather than changing current experience and further differentiating from rather than duplicating other regional and city parks. We support the priorities of ecological preservation and experience embodied in the visionary 2001 LHRP Master Plan, including meaningful limits on the park's "development footprint."</p> <p>Such a continued approach offers the best chance of maintaining the overall goal of conservation, including control and eradication of invasive species, active habitat restoration and managing savannas and prairies already restored so that they remain healthy.</p> <p>Dakota County has wisely understood and protected this unique resource to date. Please keep Lebanon Hills Regional Park "forever wild."</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this plan.</p> <p><i>Founded in 1968, the Sierra Club North Star Chapter is a non-profit environmental organization representing over 14,000 members across Minnesota. The Sierra Club works to safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and litigation.</i></p>
Sim, Ryan	2/19	<p>I loved biking and walking the gravel trails as a kid. Now that I own my own home in Eagan, about two miles from the park I love the fact that "Lebanon Hills Regional Park, is one of the rare exceptions where visitors can still find a sense of "wilderness" in the metro area." (<a href="http://m.startribune.com/opinion/commentaries/292295301.html">http://m.startribune.com/opinion/commentaries/292295301.html</a>) It's a great feature of the city and I don't like the idea of more asphalt and especially construction of more "things" inside the park.</p>
Simpson, Mary	2/21	<p>I am against the improvements that you propose for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I use this park during the winter for snowshoeing and during the spring, summer, and fall for hiking. I do not want to see this beautiful natural park destroyed by installing paved pathways.</p>
Skaff, Vicky	2/14	<p>I vote NO to the plan. Use the funds to get rid of the invasive weeds/vines. The Park needs to be preserved.</p>

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Skelton, Margaret	2/11	<p>There are ample paved trails, picnic areas, and play areas within Dakota County parks, city-managed parks, and the adjacent parks. What we don't have enough of are pristine wooded natural areas that give the feel of wilderness while being located in the suburbs. Our Lebanon Hills Regional Park is one such jewel. It gives us that rare opportunity to get out into the wilderness for an afternoon. If Dakota County fractures this jewel with paved trails, camper cabins, natural play areas, and picnic areas then they will have ruined our unique park forever.</p> <p>The draft's stated goal of "something for everyone" already exists in the multitude of park opportunities we are fortunate to have in Dakota County. What would actually be achieved by this proposal is "wilderness for no one". It's a mistake and an irreversible loss to Dakota County residents. Further, it does not correlate to the Parks Departments motto "Forever Wild." The overwhelming voice of the people that use the park is to leave it pristine. If, for some reason, paving the park is required. The paved area should be around Schultz Lake that already has been partially paved.</p>
Skelton, Margaret	2/23	<p>As a resident of Dakota County, I remain concerned about the connector trail. While the revised plan asserts that it has been moved "toward the edge of the park," this does not change that it is being proposed to go through a wilderness area. The trail is going through the forest whether that forest is arguably on the "edge" or "in the middle." This connector trail will destroy a pristine wilderness area that people enjoy for that very reason. The plan already calls for a paved loop around McDonough Lake. To the extent the justification for this connector trail is "access," then access has been accomplished with the loop around McDonough Lake and the current paving around Schultz Lake. In addition, there are many paved trails in the area including in the natural areas around Thomas Lake Elementary, not to mention along Johnny Cake Ridge Road. This paved connector trail is not necessary, the majority of the public do not want it, it is an unnecessary expenditure of public funds and there is insufficient funding set aside for maintenance of it. Most importantly once Dakota County fractures Lebanon Hills Regional Park with the paved connector trail then they will have ruined our unique park forever. Our elected officials need to listen to the constituents who do <u>not</u> want this paved connector trail.</p>
Skoglund, Adam	2/18	<p>Please, please, please do not go forward with the planned changes to Lebanon Hills. That bit of (sub)urban wilderness is a true gem of the area and while I understand the frustration that those in wheelchairs and facing other physical handicaps face in not being able to enjoy it, there exist plenty of lovely nearby parks with easily accessible trails which they can enjoy. The natural beauty of Eagan is a major reason I've been proud to call it home for the past five years and Lebanon Hills is the crown jewel of that beauty. Your plan, while surely well intentioned, would absolutely destroy this rare gem and that would be such a shame. You're on the verge of doing a big thing badly. Please reconsider the option of leaving it alone as the untouched wonder it's been for centuries.</p>
Slawin, Mike	2/17	<p>I've only been here in Minnesota for 2 years. When I found out that we were close to the park, I was very excited to be close to nature. When I found out that there was some concern over the parks trail system, I was worried. I DO NOT WANT any more Asphalt trails, especially threw the center of the park. My vote is NO.</p>
Smith, Dave	2/5	<p>I would like to register my objection to the overall Master Plan for Lebanon Hills. I have reviewed the most recent updates, as well as the minority opinion. Certainly there is much in the Master Plan that I could support. Unfortunately, the Plan continues to feature a paved and flattened trail that I feel will ruin the most important feature of the park.</p> <p>What is wonderful and unique about Lebanon Hills is that it remains relatively undeveloped. We have plenty of very developed parks. Once they are developed, there is no turning back. Much of the Master Plan would benefit Lebanon Hills, but this paved trail will irreversibly alter the character of the park in a very negative way. If you pass the Master Plan in its entirety, including the paved trail, the hugely negative aspect of the paved trail will far outweigh the positives that are also included in the plan.</p> <p>Please, please, listen to the community voices on this and take the paved trail through the interior of Lebanon Hills out of the plan, or reject the</p>

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plan entirely and go back to the 2001 plan for the park. The park is wonderful, and a gift of nature surrounded by urban life. The paved trail will ruin it.

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Smith,  
Elizabeth 2/25

I hope you all know what a big undertaking you have ahead of you as you decide the fate of Lebanon Hills Park. A few of you are able to make or break a special gem given to this County to enjoy and preserve.

I vote strongly against the 10 foot wide (plus 2 ft berm and then sightlines!) trail through 6 miles of the park. This park is a unique wilderness-in-the city experience. I can't understand how cutting down such a large 6 mile swath through the park could not destroy the unique nature of what we have on tap right here among us.

I feel like there are many ways to enjoy and further the park which haven't been exhausted by any means. Programs with the schools and marketing here and beyond if its people you want. I am impressed with all the people old and young I see enjoying the trails NOW when I go.

I trust you have taken a look at Spring Lake Park nearby to see what that kind of destruction looks like and that there is no turning back once it happens. Please consider what beauty you have NOW in our park the way it is. Put some money into restoration and maybe a very outer trail not going through the middle of the park. Lebanon is described as a mini Boundry Waters. Lets keep it that way! Please don't ruin what beauty we have by putting a 6 mile trail through the park.

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Smyczek,  
Andrzej 2/16

I Don't support this PLAN. Please leave forever WILD. Thanks.

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Soderlind,  
Steve 2/8

Just to inform you that I have looked at the master plan, especially the new paved trail to skirt the north side of the park, and i find it quite acceptable. As a park enthusiast over the past thirty years I look forward to biking between Johnny Cake Ridge Road and Schultz Lake, and I am sure than others like me will enjoy that East to West access. Thank you for your good work on this.

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Soderling,  
Christie 2/20

Hello,I am unable to communicate directly with Mr. Reitz regarding his offensive suggestion that some of us who oppose the paved trail in Lebanon Hills have only their own interests at heart. So I will include it here, as I had wanted to share this with the entire commission anyway. I sincerely hope his characterization of my opinions is not shared by the rest of you. Sincerely, Christie Soderling

Dear Mr. Reitz, While I acknowledge your right to your opinions about Lebanon Hills Regional Park, I take strong exception to your suggestion that my voice should be disqualified from consideration because of where I live. You cannot have read carefully the comments I made about the value of Lebanon to *all* of us, as expressly stated by Parks for the past 40 years. And surely you realize that I spoke for a great many people in my guest column, as did Maryann Passe in her Strib piece. I am not advocating for limited use, only appropriate use that promotes protection of the resource.

In taking your assumptions further by analogy, you should not have a right to voice an opinion about Lakeville parks because you live in Lakeville. Our county commissioners should not advocate for county issues on a metro level because they are Dakota County residents. This, of course, is ridiculous. I would argue that the more one knows about a subject, the better the chance of having a fully informed opinion about it.

Furthermore, you will find, if you talk with Steve Sullivan and others at Parks (please note that my name is Soderling, not Soderberg), that my husband and I have been involved with Park issues and have given much in our support of making Lebanon the best it can be for the past couple of decades. To suggest that my voice is driven by NIMBY concerns is both insulting and indicative of someone who has not acknowledged the history, complexity, or significance of the issues at hand regarding Lebanon.

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Dakota County, along with the Met Council, is headed in the wrong direction regarding proposals in the most recent Draft Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. It is distressing that there has been no apparent change in the official attitude that no longer places a primary value on the unique resources at Lebanon Hills. The panel convened to study the proposal and plans for significant development in the park interior failed to confront all facets of the issues at hand in a balanced way, and thus failed the people in this county.

Lebanon Hills is a treasure that was recognized 40 years ago as a place to set aside and protect. It wasn't in the middle of suburban development as it is now, but the county recognized its potential to be an area where a unique geography and undeveloped status could be protected and enjoyed. The worthy goals of restoration, preservation, education, and providing the opportunity for recreation in a natural landscape have been at the forefront of park management – until now. Whereas citizen input was taken into account in previous plans, the "citizen panel" that just completed its work was a rubber stamp for the development plans according to several participants, and the important and significant criticisms being voiced have been largely ignored.

The aspect of the new Plan most damaging to the integrity of Lebanon Hills is the paved trail proposed for the middle of the park as part of the Met Council's Greenway plan for bicycle commuting. The fact remains that a corridor carved out of the interior of the park - up to 80 feet wide, graded to flatten the hills, with pavement up to 10 feet wide, and plowed in the winter - would forever destroy the views and continuous natural habitat of the park interior that visitors treasure (see the Park's own multiple surveys) and to which 40 years of previous management has been committed. Users of this kind of trail cannot, by simple logic, nor can those in adjacent areas, experience the same natural state that currently exists. There is no "balance" to be found in this sort of development – an area can either be natural or developed – not both. The problem with mixing higher speed commuter trails with wheelchairs, children, and pets, etc. has been well-documented in public commentary. In addition, there would be no way to protect the many wetlands and lakes from oily asphalt run-off.

Soderling,  
Christine

2/24

I also want to note with respect to the Met Council's Greenway plans, that the redundant paved bike trail route proposed on the east side of the School of Environmental Studies as part of the Greenway route is an insult to the purpose of the school. By proposing this trail which duplicates a perfectly good route along Johnny Cake Road, in a location in full view of the school, and sited next to a pond where students first learn about how to value and assess natural areas, planners have shown themselves to be deaf to the very values this unique metro resource works so hard and effectively to teach.

There are many other problems with the new Lebanon Hills master plan proposal. For example, Lebanon fashions itself a mecca for cross country skiing, and skiers highly value the miles of trails that are uninterrupted by plowed pavement as well as providing the natural views along the trail. A paved and plowed trail would be hugely detrimental to the skier experience, and the concept that those who need the accommodation of a paved trail could manage if ski trail crossings were not plowed is not reasonable or practical. Another example is the proposed development on the north side of Jensen Lake that would be visible from the heavily-used trail on the south side of the lake where visitors can currently enjoy the view of a natural expanse. Importantly, maintenance and restoration programs have been severely lacking in past seasons; for example, a walk on the hiking trails for much of the summer involved a single file jaunt through brambles in many places. Buckthorn and sumac are rampant, and sadly, restoration efforts have often been ineffectual for lack of follow-through. There has been a good deal of buckthorn clearing, but in all the locations where this has been begun in the past, it has not been kept up and the buckthorn has returned with a vengeance (Holland lake and the horse trail on the northeast end of Jensen are 2 cases in point). In spite of a state mandate for equalization of development vs. maintenance and restoration dollars, four times as much has been spent on development. The proposed Plan aggravates this trend by committing far more financial resources to development than to maintenance and restoration. Increased development (the paved trail is only a part of the ambitious expansion proposed) will stretch the marginal maintenance dollars even more thinly, to the detriment of visitor experiences and restoration goals. The Plan needs to focus on realistically accounting for the stated, but underfunded aims stated in the Plan regarding maintenance and the natural resources.

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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It seems that Dakota County is no longer in the business of what is best for its own parks. To judge by the side by side comparisons between regional parks that have been used for justification for additional development, we are now in competition with Three Rivers Park District. How many miles of paved trails do we have? How visitors come to the park? What can we build to draw more people? But the wrong questions are being asked.

Let us ask ourselves different questions as we look to the future of Lebanon Hills. Did we commit the resources to teach visitors of all ages about the natural features, plants and wildlife at Lebanon? What is it like to be able to walk for an hour in the suburbs without seeing pavement? Can you come help with buckthorn control? The county got it right on the last Management Plan (2001) where the emphasis was on restoration, keeping the undeveloped areas natural, and providing a unique and valued experience for visitors.

It may make sense for some regional parks to approach or reach the allowed development footprint threshold of 20%. It makes no sense to consider that value to be relevant to Lebanon Hills where the undeveloped landscape is its chief asset. By the act of development, especially in the interior of the park, we would all lose the essence of what was preserved for future generations to enjoy and cherish. It is far better to do what is right by the park than to grab every potential development dollar from outside resources. The paved bike trail, in particular, is inconsistent with the dominant theme of this park.

No one should view the generally laudable aims of the bike routes and accessibility that the Met Council wants to promulgate, and county officials seem inclined to approve, as an automatic approval of any bike trail that planners come up with. There are a multitude of places to bike or otherwise enjoy paved trails in the metro without destroying the interior of Lebanon Hills to meet a perceived need for one more. A swath of land without pavement should not suggest to anyone that the best use of that area is to pave it. Making sure people have an opportunity to enjoy a park is not the same as changing and developing the park simply to increase visitor numbers, nor would increased visitor numbers justify development of the kind proposed for Lebanon. Unfortunately for all of us, the county and Met Council decision makers seem to have missed the crucial distinction between what is simply undeveloped, and what is worthy of keeping that way. Tipping the balance away from management and restoration towards focusing on increasing visitor numbers through development defeats the longstanding focus of Lebanon Hills park management. It smacks of development for its own sake, rather than enhancing the purpose of this particular park. Those making decisions about Lebanon Hills should remind themselves that by far the best course of action would be to heed the Dakota Parks moniker, "Forever Wild", and preserve the land that was set aside for its inherent value as a natural area

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Sovik, Anne	2/18	Human beings need wilderness. In wild places we gain perspective, feel restored, and feel and probably become healthier. In making plans for Lebanon Hills Regional Park, please make sure that the park keeps its unique sense of wilderness.
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St. James, Bonnie		Phone Comment: The Lebanon Hills Regional Park is beautiful, filled with birds and a great place to walk. I walk it often. Do not pave a trail in Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Refrain from paving the trail that the County appears hell bent on doing.
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Stark, Margaret and Charlie	2/23	My husband & I have been proud Dakota Cty. residents, until recently. We are NOT in agreement with the plan to add a paved bike path through the middle of Lebanon Hills Reg. Park, and are disappointed with both the process and the insistence of elected officials to persist with a plan that, for a plethora of reasons clearly confronted with, is un-wise. We are 'typical' residents who enjoy many aspects of the outdoors on a year-round weekly basis. We are AVID cyclists (1000-3000 ride miles per year), snow-shoers, hikers & tent campers. We even have an 'adopted' park that we care for. As such, we are against any plan that will negatively impacts our use of any of the outdoor amenities that our tax dollars support. We ask that an alternative, such as a paved path around the 'perimeter', or other similar alternatives that have been proposed, please be chosen. As regular hikers, swimmers, kayakers & pic-knickers in this park; we most likely STOP using this park, along with our families, if this
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		plan is implemented, as it will undoubtedly take away from the 'natural' setting we have so often enjoyed to date. Feel free to call or email us if you have any further questions.
Starkey, Claudine	2/25	<p>I am writing to you today as a citizen of Eagan that uses the Lebanon Hills park on a regular basis, and asking you to NOT to approve the proposed plan to pave over 6 miles of this park!</p> <p>Our kids live in a world where paved access to parks is prevalent but the ability to wander, explore, and experience nature in its undisturbed state is exceedingly rare. According to the book "Last Child in the Woods", there is a staggering divide between children and the outdoors. Child advocacy expert Richard Louv directly links the lack of nature in the lives of today's wired generation—he calls it nature-deficit—to some of the most disturbing childhood trends, such as the rises in obesity, attention disorders, and depression. I can attest first hand to the benefits my children and I experience when we disconnect, and explore the wild, natural setting of Lebanon Hills. PLEASE, do not forever destroy this natural environment. Once you pave it (10 feet wide for 6 miles) it will never be wild again.</p>
Steele, Richard	2/22	<p>As a resident of Eagan and Dakota County, I would like to urge you to reject the proposal in the Lebanon Hills Park Master plan to construct a paved biking trail through the park. I am a frequent user of the park (both hiking and skiing) and feel this paved trail would thoroughly ruin the wilderness experience of Lebanon Hills. I am also opposed to the use of taxpayer dollars to not only pay for the construction but also the maintenance of a paved bikeway. Please contact me if you would like more specific feedback on this proposal. Thank you</p>
Stefson, Pat		<p>Phone Comment: Don't destroy the park. The Master Plan makes me suspicious.</p>
Steinkopf, Kate	2/16	<p>I'm writing to voice my sincere concern over putting in paved trails at Lebanon Hills. Currently, the park is a peaceful, beautiful place for one to encounter nature and hike for miles along wooded dirt trails. There is no other park in the county system like Lebanon Hills. I would recommend to the park planning commission that you look at each regional park and find a uniqueness for each of the parks rather than trying to be all things to all people with all the parks. I cherish Lebanon Hills for its uniqueness and quiet wilderness. The park is truly an amazing piece of nature and should be preserved. Many people cannot afford to escape to upnorth cabins to encounter nature as it is here in Lebanon Hills. Paved trails lead to a much different feel and purpose for the park. As an avid biker, I can find many paved trails within the community and at other parks to bike, however, I cannot as a hiker find such a beautiful place at Lebanon Hills. I really urge you to reconsider the direction you are taking with the park. Soon, there will be no wilderness within the city distance for nature lovers/hikers/runners/skiers and others to enjoy. Sometimes preserving the wilderness is more important than expanding the access to the wilderness.</p>
Steinkopf, Kate	2/23	<p>Last Saturday as I ran the trails at Lebanon Hills, I stopped to speak with each person I met along the trails. Of the 21 people that I passed, only 4 runners and 1 hiker was aware of the plans to paved the trails at Lebanon Hills. Many park visitors were unaware of the issue at hand. Additionally, they did not know where to go to get information and voice their opinions. The visitors I met along the way were parked at Jensen lake and would not know that a park plan exists at the visitor center. I'm very concerned about the limited amount of information that has been provided to the public regarding this matter. While I realize there is a website to voice concerns, it is an ineffective means to gather public opinion given that the general public may not be aware that changes are being proposed to the park. I'm also concerned that those who are following the issue do not have all the information needed to understand all the proposed changes and challenges of the park.</p> <p>In a response from Laurie Halverson, I understand that the Minnesota Council on Disability is supporting the plan to pave paths for people with physical challenges. There is already a concrete trail around one of the lakes by the visitor center for access to those who have physical challenges. Are more trails needed with more mileage to meet the needs of the physically challenged? If so, what are the needs here? Are there other needs that we do not understand for the physically challenged? While I hear only paved trails are needed are there other needs such as access ramps to campground facilities/visitor center/fishing piers/restrooms etc. The needs for the physically challenged are important yet I</p>

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do not know all the needs nor fully understand how the proposed park changes will meet these needs. Paved trails seem to meet only some of the needs of a small subset of disabilities.

The general public appears to lack knowledge of the proposed changes and/or facts supporting the park changes. Differing views in the newspaper have confused the facts. The proposed changes along with the funding needed to meet those needs is unclear. Maintenance of the current park "as is" is also a concern. I would encourage the planning board to re-address its communication plan for educating the public on the proposed park changes, need for the changes and funding for the future changes.

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I recently reviewed the LHRP Revised Master Plan. The document provides a nice description of the park's biological features and history, plans for restoring natural features, and a lengthy justification for the proposed capital improvements. I remain strongly opposed to the proposals for paved trails and other developmental expansions and I am highly skeptical of the report's justifications for these projects.

As background, I am an avid hiker, runner, cross-country skier, and biker (both road and mtn biking) and have enjoyed LHRP for over 30 years. From many visits to other regional parks in neighboring counties, it is clear that the very lack of development in LHRP (minimal pavement, rustic picnic facilities, etc) and the sense of wilderness that this provides is what gives LHRP its special charm and makes it superior to all the others. In a quick review of public comments on the LHRP website, it is clear that a significant fraction of park users strongly share this opinion. The Revised Master Plan shortsightedly assumes that the lack of development in LHRP is a detriment, rather than a core feature that the board should be looking to preserve. In doing so, the Plan also ignores the obvious lack of public consensus on the issue of LHRP development, which is evidenced by the extensive collection of public comments in opposition to the proposal. Moreover, while the Revised Master Plan correctly identifies a public demand for developed parks and trails, it fails to cite the abundant supply of paved trails and developed city parks within close proximity. Two parks which are less than one mile from LHRP (Thomas Lake Park and Schwarz Pond Park) even feature developed picnic facilities and paved, handicap accessible lakeshore paths. While I ardently support and frequently use the area's paved trails and city park facilities, I believe that such developed features are best suited for city parks and are contrary the mission of the county parks, where the main attraction is nature. Handicap access is clearly important and should be a priority in public spaces, but is not a valid reason to pave and develop the last remaining natural space in an area with multiple options for accessible outdoor recreation.

Stendahl,  
John

2/25

The ultimate tragedy of the Revised Master Plan is that its costly and futile attempts to enhance nature ultimately come at the expense of the very taxpayers who oppose the changes. The Plan details project costs and briefly mentions several government funding sources, but fails to note the obvious taxpayer burden. While taxpayer cost was a frequent concern in the public comments, its absence in the Plan suggests a strong bias from the County's paid staff and consultants, who have direct financial interest in the further development of LHRP. It is unfortunate that the beautiful and fragile park is at the mercy of these self-serving interests and the age old game of park bureaucracy, where facilities proposing development receive greater levels of funding.

The proposed pavement and development of LHRP is fundamentally wrong because it threatens to cause irreversible damage to the park's ecosystem and character at taxpayer expense. This is a great shame. It is my hope that the authors develop a more sensible plan to preserve the park's natural beauty and save taxpayer money.

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Stenemann,  
Erik

2/23

I am never one to contact an elected official, however, I feel particularly inspired to do so with regards to the proposal to pave sections of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I am a resident of Dakota County, and appreciate this park deeply as a chance to surround myself and my family with one of the few remaining truly natural experiences in the Metro area.

I can appreciate that where debate is involved, all things pertaining to costs, accessibility and long term growth can revolve endlessly. I understand that those who would favor such a project can offer as many compelling arguments to pave the park as those who would oppose it.

I, personally, oppose the measure, and will consider this outcome deeply during the next election. My greatest fear is the slippery slope that will

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		<p>follow the laying of pavement in the park: hot dog vendors, golf courses and parking lots to feed them. Traffic signs and floodlights and plastic structures in bright yellow for kids to climb on (many children find a tree to be superior climbing structure). Once this asphalt is laid, it will never be torn out again. Thank you for your consideration,</p>
Stenemann, Keri	2/23	<p>As a Dakota County resident, I do NOT support the paving of Lebanon Hills Park. If you pave through the park, the environment will be permanently changed. You can't un-do that damage. Bring people to see the park for its beauty through innovative programming and educational opportunities. Not, by paving through it.</p>
Stevens, Kris	2/25	<p>I do not support any part of the current development plan by Dakota County for Lebanon Hills Regional Park.</p>
		<p>I am writing to beg you to not over develop Lebanon Hills. That beautiful place, our "Wilderness in the City" would be just like any other ugly paved park if you go ahead with this. I honestly am perplexed by the unwillingness to bend to the citizens who feel so strongly about the park WE OWN. Just like the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority, who don't care about the birds their monstrosity is going to kill. They will decimate my hobby while I pay for theirs.</p> <p>A much better use of that park would be to have a program to control buckthorn. And restore areas that need it. The park is a very busy park. I don't understand why there is a desire to encourage more use. It is already so crowded. Have you ever hiked there? You can't go 10 feet without someone running by at high speed. I am starting to use Terrace Oaks instead because Lebanon Hills is so busy. And I love the beauty of Terrace Oaks..the quiet...the birds everywhere.</p> <p>If you simply take the high speed bike trail and modify it and use the older more well thought-out plan, you will keep everyone happy. Those of us enraged at the destruction will be suddenly mollified, and those who want it to be a part of the Greenway, will still get what they want and be happy to not destroy so much of the park.</p> <p>On another note. I do feel bad that less-abled people are not able to maneuver in a wild park. But, as I hike and bicycle in developed parks, and see ZERO wheelchairs or walkers, I don't feel like adding more space for them is necessary. I can point to many parks, currently unused by them, for their outdoor use. If that sounds callous, I am sorry. It is the reality. There are other ways we could accommodate them. Lebanon Hills could purchase and allow users to use some well designed wheel chairs meant for more wild places. Their experience would be enhanced rather than just another blacktop trail with nothing but cleared paths for them to see.</p>
Stevesand, Pat	2/3	<p>Please read this article. It explains what many of us feel as Lebanon Hills is being slated for destruction. <a href="http://www.hcn.org/articles/aldo-leopold-explains-it-all">http://www.hcn.org/articles/aldo-leopold-explains-it-all</a></p>
Stevesand, Pat	2/3	<p>Please, I beg you. Don't overdevelop Lebanon Hills!!!!!! I'd rather have zero development, than what is being considered. Just because this area is supposed to be a hub, doesn't mean it has to be completely ruined with wide pavement and tree/brush clearing. I hike in this park, and honestly think it is too busy the way it is. You can't walk one block without running into someone. But when I am alone, listening to the birds and watching them hop from tree to shrub, it is a magical place.</p> <p>Making it nearly flat, with bicycles going way too fast, will RUIN this park. So, please consider the legacy you want to leave because once you ruin something, it is hard to undo.</p>
Stinson, Mike	2/22	<p>Let the park be. You do not need to tamper with it by gouging a 6 mile asphalt trail thru its heart. It may take a level leadership you have not had to employ. I still do not know why this has become an issue – the residents do not want it; yet it hangs around. What are you trying to achieve? Your decisions in the county are somewhat straight forward, excepting for this upcoming decision. You receive some pushback over the year, but</p>

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		not at the level that Lebanon Hills has provided. If this is passed and goes to the Met Council, those of you up for election will have a fun time. I have said this publicly that this one issue has galvanized me and I will be active in the election cycles. Please vote to stop this.
Stinson, Mike	2/23	Stinson wrote these comments: please read <a href="http://www.startribune.com/opinion/commentaries/293073201.html">http://www.startribune.com/opinion/commentaries/293073201.html</a>
Stinson, Mike	2/25	I do not support your proposed plan.
Stolhanske, Justin	2/22	<p>I read the article in the Star Tribune regarding the possibility of paving the trails at Lebanon Hills. I, along with family and friends, are strongly opposed to this as we enjoy the natural wilderness of the trails at Lebanon Hills. To take away the natural look and feel of these trails would be a disservice to everyone. There are enough paved trails throughout the twin cities for people to take advantage of. There are very few natural trails in such a beautiful wooded park. We enjoy these immensely as they are and do not want them destroyed by concrete.</p> <p>There is no reason to spend the time and money defacing these magnificent trails. I hope that you will make the right choice in leaving these trails in their natural state and spend our tax dollars where it is needed. Stay true to our slogan of "Forever Wild". Leave the trails as they are for our children, their children and children for years to come to enjoy.</p>
Strain, Sarah	2/24	<p>Lebanon Hills is one of my favorite places. I feel a sense of peace and revitalization every time I go. I love Lebanon and am concerned about the plans for paved trails. Paving any portion of Lebanon detracts from its natural beauty and value. It brings the city and suburb into a small wild haven. While unpaved trails would still be an option, seeing a paved trail while on my hike would detract from my overall experience at Lebanon. I go to lose myself in nature - to forget for a minute or two that I live in an urban setting. Seeing a paved path along my way would be an unfortunate reminder of the city and man's footprint.</p> <p>Additionally, I suffer from several back problems that are aggravated by impact. My doctors have told me to walk for exercise and to keep my back loose - but walking on pavement and other hard surfaces hurts and limits the amount of walking I can do. In many other parks throughout the county where paved trails are abundant, I am forced to take short walks because of the pain. That pain does not exist at Lebanon where the earth and unpaved paths absorb the impact of walking. At Lebanon, I can walk as long as I like without pain, and that means the world to me. I know I am not the only one who finds physical comfort in unpaved trails.</p> <p>To provide access to all citizens, I would recommend paving only the McDonough Lake loop - nothing else. This provides access year round to a beautiful lake while preserving the unpaved bliss and tranquility of the rest of the park.</p>
Strange, Rob	2/8	<p>My family and I are very supportive of the updated plan. We were just hiking at the park today and thinking about how great it would be to have a paved trail that is plowed to walk on.</p> <p>We especially support that the plan provides:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The new paved trails around the lake and through the park will be great for your family and retired parents.</li><li>2. The year round use will provide more ways to get out in the winter and enjoy the park.</li><li>3. The beach enhancements will make summers that much better.</li></ol> <p>Please be aware that someone is putting flyers on cars that park at the trail heads. The flyers are very negative and are using scare tactics to convince people that the changes are negative. The flyer is from a group at <a href="http://wildlebanonhills.org">wildlebanonhills.org</a>.</p>

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Strange, Rob 2/9

I reviewed the new master plan and wanted to let you know that the changes that the Dakota County Commissioners approved all make sense. I really appreciated the time and investment they made into creating a panel of residents to review the information and make recommendations that meet the needs of park users now and in the future.

The addition of paved trails through the park and around the lake (with year round plowing) will truly create more opportunities for all ages, abilities, and seasons. Thank you

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Strauss-Klein,  
Jennifer 2/24

I am writing to express grave concern over the Lebanon Hills Development Plan. My husband and I love the park and recently moved our family within Egan in order to be within walking distance of Lebanon Hills. We walk and run in the park on a near-daily basis. We love the park precisely because it is a preserved, undivided, high-quality ecological system and wildlife habitat. It's been called Boundary Waters South, and there is nothing else like it in the metro.

My sister-in-law has been in a wheelchair for 25 years, and my husband works with many disabled people in his profession. I understand the goal of better accessibility, but the ways in which the current plan achieves this create an unnecessarily large ecological impact. The plan is likely even dangerous, as bikers would share a trail with pedestrians and disabled people using assistive devices.

We're deeply concerned about unanswered questions about the development plan, including the environmental impact of a paved trail, the financial considerations of not only implementing such a plan but maintaining it (while park maintenance even in its current state struggles), and the safety of such a trail. Given the widespread public outcry against the plan--90% rejection!--it's difficult to understand how this is continuing to move forward in any capacity.

It is irresponsible for any official to disregard such an overwhelming public mandate. I urge you to do whatever you can to prevent this use of Legacy funds. Please continue to keep Lebanon Hills Forever Wild. Thank you for your consideration.

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Strauss-Klein,  
Nick

I am writing to express grave concern over the Lebanon Hills Development Plan. My husband and I love the park and recently moved our family within Egan in order to be within walking distance of Lebanon Hills. We walk and run in the park on a near-daily basis. We love the park precisely because it is a preserved, undivided, high-quality ecological system and wildlife habitat. It's been called Boundary Waters South, and there is nothing else like it in the metro.

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It is irresponsible for any official to disregard such an overwhelming public mandate. I urge you to do whatever you can to prevent this use of Legacy funds. Please continue to keep Lebanon Hills Forever Wild. Thank you for your consideration.

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Straybow,  
Chris

Phone Comment: I suggest that the Dakota County Board vote against the plan.

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Strojny, Brian		Sometimes it is about preservation and not maximizing revenue. Reducing traffic and not increasing it. My family and I have been enjoying Lebanon Hills hiking, camping, biking, walking and skiing for many years. Please don't pave it over or develop it. It is one of the only parks left that is truly natural. When you go to one of the other big parks, you no longer think of nature but commercial recreation. Please reconsider.
Strom, Jessica and Mark		We are writing this email to let you know how we feel about the proposed plans for changing the Lebanon Hills park. We have been there many a time and we appreciate the fact that we can travel so few miles and truly get away from the Twin Cities. We believe this park is one of the few places around the metro that is a real representation of the wilderness. We enjoy walking through this gem of a place. Please keep this park as is so future generations can enjoy it as well. Thank you for your time and service,
Stromberg, Mike	2/20	I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PLAN! LEAVE THE PARK THE WAY IT IS! Lebanon Hills is a great park and a perfect getaway for people who want to get close to nature without having to travel far outside the metro area. It's trails are delightful and there is no need to modify it in any way. It seems beyond belief that anyone would want to modify the park in the way that is being proposed. Certainly not a prudent use of tax dollars for the construction (butchering) phase <i>and</i> additional maintenance costs that will never go away. The <i>only</i> thing that makes sense to me is that there may be some covert and un-sincere efforts going on and inspires the questions: Who proposed this? How is this proposal justified, both economically and morally? Who are the <i>real</i> benefactors of this plan? Is there a connection between the contractor(s) and the decision-makers? Are you being sold a bill of goods by some slick developer? Or did someone on the board solicit a proposal from their brother-in-law? I am regularly astounded by the actions of boards, committees and politicians who spend other people's money on what they selfishly and self-righteously believe (at least that is their story) is in the better interest for all, despite the majority opposition and the real facts and numbers. I am a very open minded person and not a radical environmentalist, and not political, but I am a businessman and understand how these things develop. This is a complete waste of time and money and makes no sense at all. And is an insult to those who appreciate, support and enjoy Lebanon Hills Park.
Studnicka, Julie	2/19	I oppose the plan to pave Lebanon Hills. That is a wonderful park with so much wildlife, much more wildlife than any other park I have visited.
Sullivan, Joshua D.	2/17	Please do not move forward with your plans to "urbanize" our park. My family and I absolutely love the natural feels of the trails and we literally walk them at least twice a week.
Sullivan, Kelly		I am strongly opposed to clearing and paving parts of Lebanon Hills Park. I live near the park and use it almost daily with my small children. The magic of the park IS the wilderness. It feels like being at a cabin up north! This is why it consistently shows up in lists of best places to hike and bike. I would rather break my back hauling my kids around when their legs are tired than have it paved for a stroller. It will cost so much and take so much away from this park. Thomas Lake Park already has wooded paved trails only a mile away! Not to mention what it will do to the wildlife! Please reconsider this plan. Leave it wild for children and adults to experience real nature, and let others use the numerous nearby paved parks.
Swanson, Cathy	2/22	I do not support this plan! I have been a Dakota County citizen for 27 years. And love Lebanon Hills just as it is, as will my grandchildren. Our current sidewalks and paths are full of snow and ice most of the time during our winters. They are unusable for walkers, runners, wheelchairs and bikes. Perhaps you could fund to keep the current pavement clear through out the entire year? We do not need more paved trails in the metro area....it already is full of cement and pavement. We need more green spaces, for nature to exist within the metropolitan area, and for overall improvement of our air, and global climate!!!! The humans of the metro area have more then enough paved trails, roads and sidewalks currently!!!! Please do not put this plan into action so that you can author and have a plaque made in your name. It is the tax-payers money!

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Swanson, Jessica	2/23	<p>I am in firm opposition to your plan for paving Lebanon Hills in Dakota County. Lebanon Hills is one of the last true natural parks, where you can feel like you have escaped the concrete jungle of suburbia/the city. I am an avid horseback rider and hiker, and areas like these are VERY hard to come by without driving an hour or more. There are tons of horse owners in this area who feel the same way. We cannot ride our horses down East River Road or the Stone Arch Bridge like people in wheelchairs can. There is plenty of concrete in this world already, and people in wheelchairs have plenty of options. Horse owners do not. As it is, concrete paths rarely get cleared from snow (aka 9 months of the year), so I propose you put this money towards doing a better job of clearing sidewalks in Dakota County than paving my slice of heaven on earth. I can guarantee if you pave Lebanon Hills you will lose more customers than you will gain...I am a tax payer and this is NOT what I want my money going towards. Please make the right decision.</p>
Swyter, Doug	2/18	<p>Please keep Lebanon Hills WILD!. We live close to the trails that are off of Johnny Cake road and enjoy snow shoeing there in the winter and hiking in the summer, fall and spring. One of the reasons we like it is because in a few minutes you are taken from the city into the forest. We have taken our grandchildren there for hikes and they enjoyed walking along the trails. If we want to take them for a walk on paved trails and look at nature we take them to the MN Zoo in Apple Valley.</p> <p>There are many places in the Twin Cities that have paved trails and other services that some people are seeking. Why do we need to keep taking away the natural beauty that has made this area a wonderful place to live when there are other places close by that provide the things that certain people are looking for.</p> <p>We have been home owners for over 15 years in Eagan and we vote. Why don't you put it to a vote by the people if you want to make such a major change. If this get's railroaded through, what is next and who is going to pay for this disgraceful degradation of the beautiful landscape that we have come to enjoy and love.</p>
Taschek, Karey	2/16	<p>I have been a resident of Eagan for 22 years, but was only introduced to Lebanon Hills Regional Park four years ago. I instantly fell in love with its natural beauty and tranquility. I so wish I had known about it sooner! I have spent many, many hours walking and trail running through the park each summer. Now, I am afraid that its going to be ruined by putting in paved trails. Why must you do this? There are paved trails galore in the Twin Cities and the greater Minnesota area. I have spent many hours on my road bike on these paved trails, and while I enjoy these trails immensely, I am still against putting in such paved trails into Lebanon Hills. The exceptionality of Lebanon Hills is that it DOESN'T have paved trails, and that is why it is so special. Please do not ruin this sanctuary!</p>
Tatro, Chris & Tonya		<p>Phone Comment: We bought our house in Eagan because of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Keep Lebanon Hills Regional Park as is. The plan supports high speed bikers.</p>
Tatro, Chris and Tonya	2/19	<p>Hello, I just wanted to voice our concern and officially record that we oppose the development of Lebanon Hills. My wife and I are both from small rural areas and we bought our home near Lebanon Hills so we could maintain our connection with (and love of) nature. We have 3 small children and the park is such an important part of their learning and development. Prior to coming to Dakota County we lived in the Uptown and St. Louis Park areas and the reason we moved to Eagan was because of Dakota counties commitment to maintaining the important balance of nature and wild park spaces. The high speed paved bike/rollerblade paths in other areas are a hazard, we weren't even able to walk with our children. Please, do not pave a trail through the park. Instead, show your renewed commitment to preserving and restoring, it would be so good for the community and park lovers so see the city listen to us, the residents, who have been clear in delivering the message that we don't want this project. Alternate plan would be to add a nice safe bike path along Cliff road, that would be a project everyone would support and it would help connect bikers to the park with improved safety, a win win for everyone. Thank you for listening, we love Dakota County and the beautiful parks!</p>

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

Taylor, Gordon	2/25	I recently heard rumours that there are plans to pave the trails at Lebanon Hills. I just wanted to voice my opinion that paving the trails would be a bad idea. I have been enjoying hiking at Lebanon Hills (almost daily) for over 15 years, and the reason that I enjoy Lebanon Hills is the fact that these trails are more rustic. Currently there are many opportunities to walk paved trails throughout Dakota County, Please leave this one "Forever Wild".
Taylor, Joe	2/24	I am a resident of Dakota County and am writing I in opposition of the Connector Trail proposed in the 2015 Lebanon Hills Revised Development Master Plan. There are enough bike trails for the public to enjoy. If the Connector Trail is built it will be tantamount to building a 10' road right through the middle of this pristine park. Additionally the cost for future maintenance of the trail should not be put on the backs of the people of Dakota County.
Tennis, Maggie		Phone Comment: I oppose redevelopment of Lebanon Hills Regional Park.
Tester, Richard	2/18	As an Eagan resident for almost 37 years who has experienced and enjoyed the recreational activities available at Lebanon Hills Park, I ask that the board <u>not to approve</u> the new master plan. The plan would significantly detract from the wilderness atmosphere that currently exists. The park has the feel of a wilderness setting with its beauty and the quietness of nature just as one might experience in northern Minnesota yet it is located only a short distance away. Please preserve the park as it is. It's been a wonderful asset these many years. I see no need to make any changes. As a cyclist, I believe the proposed the expansion for bike trails is unnecessary especially on such precious park land. For those of us who live in an urban setting, Lebanon Hills is a real jewel. Again, I ask that you to please vote against the new master plan. Thank you.
Thiede, Travis	2/12	I do not support this plan. Vote NO to this plan. Please do not cut paved trails through this wonderful tract of land. Instead spend the money improving the existing wilderness.
Thoennes, Jon	2/25	<p>I'm writing this email to express my concern in what adding bike trails and retaining walls would do to destroy a natural gem in the heart of the city. To pave paradise goes against the very motto of the Dakota County parks "Forever wild"! That term certainly doesn't invoke visions of asphalt and concrete!</p> <p>This amazing natural resource needs to be protected and kept pristine there is so many other places in the metro to bike and rollerblade. I can't think of a single other to experience nature in its natural form!</p> <p>Please!!! I urge you consider the consequences of your actions! once you destroy something natural there's no getting it back! There is no shortage of pavement in our suburban world. I don't want my children growing up with out the opportunity to experience what the entire region that is now housing developments, shopping malls and athletic complexes used to look like! Please, let's work together to keep Dakota County Parks not only the best, but truly "Forever Wild</p>
Thompson, Linda	2/18	<p>I have been aware of the potential plans to change the atmosphere of one our few natural parks left in the metro area, Lebanon Hills. I have spent many hours at this park and do so because of it's dirt trails and natural environment.</p> <p>Before you vote to approve the plan to ruin what is now a great park, I hope you consider the people who currently use the park. I advise you to talk to the members of the Upper Midwest Trail Runners and other trail runners/bikers who meet there regularly and choose this park because of the dirt trails. This is one of the few parks in the metro area where runners can run on dirt trails for long runs without having to run in circles. I have yet to hear a valid argument as to why the county wants to fix something that isn't broken. The proposed changes are not enhancements!</p>

## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

Thompson, Terrie	2/22	I am writing to express my heartfelt wish to keep Lebanon Hills Natural. I have lived in Eagan continuously since 1982, and have come to love the wonderful stewardship that Dakota County has always performed for this precious land. So on behalf of myself, my wife, my children and now my grand children, I ask you to please keep Lebanon Hills Natural! Thank you for listening,
Till, Aleks	2/6	<p>I grew up near Lebanon Hills and occasionally go back to hike the trails. It is a taste of wilderness in the metro area. My understanding is that a plan is being developed to add bike paths, which is a great thing. Throughout the city, bike paths intersect with natural spaces and it makes biking a fun activity and way to get around. However, in the city, the commuter and racing cyclists are expected to ride on the street with cars. It is not safe for walkers, dogs, and people and kids crossing the bike path to worry about being hit by a biker.</p> <p>Again, my understanding is that the proposed bike path in Lebanon Hills addresses this by an expanded bike lane. I believe that this proposal would undermine the integrity of the park. Please consider reducing the size of the bike path, so it's main usage is for trail-users and casual bikers and the landscape of Lebanon Hills is left intact.</p>
Tollerud, Joyce	2/9	I just briefly reviewed the new plan. In general I believe the new draft is an improvement. However, I strongly believe you should not build a ten foot bituminous path through the middle of the park. I would not object to such a path on the north or south sides of the park, but a path like that through the center destroys the unique nature of the Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Yes, handicap access is important, but there are many other opportunities for wheelchairs in the county. An east west bike path is also important, but it does not have to go through the center of the park.
Tonya	2/23	I am just going to keep it simple. Please leave the park as it is. Thank you.
Torgerson, Julie	2/23	Please don't make changes to this beautiful park. It's a treasure.
Trecho, Kris		Phone Comment: Put connector trail on hold. Place trail along Cliff Road.
Tretyakova, Natalia Y.	2/20	<p>Lebanon Hills park is a very special place for many Dakota County residents and others in the Twin Cities area. It is a rare, unspoiled natural area that is within a short drive from the Cities. It is the place where my family and other families come every weekend to be close to nature, to experience true wilderness. On different occasions, we have been fortunate to spot deer, owls, tree frogs, butterflies, hawks, otters, fish, and many other creatures. This park is unique because it has experience limited development, so that wild animals and plants can thrive. It is a sanctuary we are fortunate to have in the Dakota County.</p> <p>You have been entrusted by others to take care of this gem of a place. The proposed new master plan for Lebanon Hills is unacceptable. I urge you to be extra careful about "improving" the park by adding amenities, paved trails, biking trails, etc. These kinds of "improvements" are sure to destroy the wilderness and to ruin this unique park. The decisions you make today about the park's future will have huge implications for the future. Please do not let this unique park to be ruined, so that our children and grandchildren will still have the opportunity to experience nature close to home.</p>
Trower, Dianne	2/18	I am writing to let you know that I think that the new plan for more paved trails, etc., is a bad idea. I agree with many other citizens of this area that we need to have more natural, "wild" spaces. Lebanon Hills is beautiful as it is. I am originally from Iowa, and I think sometimes that people in Minnesota don't realize what a beautiful state this is. We seem to be tearing down trees, etc., just for more "amenities". And when it's gone, it will never be the same. Please don't destroy Lebanon Hills.

## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Tung, Mimi	2/23	I am dismayed that despite thoughtful input from citizens, the Revised Draft Plan for Lebanon Hills continues to include a 6-mile Connector Trail through the middle of the park. To claim that the 6-mile Connector Trail provides better accessibility for the elderly, mobility disabled, or moms with strollers is disingenuous. For people with mobility issues, they generally prefer to be within easy access to their cars, i.e., parking area, and other amenities, e.g., restrooms, water foundations, etc. These are amenities you provide amply at the Visitor Center and the main trailheads. At the Visitor Center, there are many short trails, around lakes, no less, for people to enjoy the park. Cutting a 10-foot wide asphalt path through the middle of the park does not really provide more access, it will only cause irreparable damage to the ecosystem of the park and destroy the unique park that Lebanon Hills is - given its size and the range of habitats it supports. If you care about stewarding the precious resource that Lebanon Hills is, you should vote for money to be directed on long-term park maintenance and preserving the "wildness" (Dakota County slogan) of Lebanon Hills. Please vote NO on the Revised Draft Plan.
Turner, Tim		Phone Comment: I do not support the plan with the paved trail. I am ok riding my bike around the perimeter of the park on roads.
Turner, William		Phone Comment: I am against the proposal for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Paving takes away from the feel of the park. I'm part of the Silver Sneaker Club.
Tymchak, Elaine	2/22	As a Dakota County resident, I urge you to keep Lebanon Hills park as is, please don't pass legislation that will modernize, update, and change the park. It's remoteness is what makes this park so special. Adding amenities will only make it like every other park in the Twin Cities. Please consider the environmental impact of construction and updates as well. Let's keep this park a nature reserve, a place to connect with nature, and to escape city life.
Ulfers, Rachel	2/23	I write to you today asking for you to listen with open minds and open hearts. I grew up with Lebanon Hills literally in my line of sight. Although my family and I have long called the city of Minneapolis home, it is a unique place worth saving. Lebanon Hills as it stands today is a wilderness gem in the heart of a metropolitan area lucky enough to boast exceptional green spaces that can make the rest of our nation jealous. It is a wonderful thing to allow access to nature via paved paths, groomed ski and tubing locations, etc, however, there is not a shortage of those amenities throughout nearby cities. There IS a limited supply of natural setting wilderness beauty, please allow this awesome location to be preserved and enjoyed by my young daughters as well as generations to come.
Undis, Bette	2/22	<p>I have reviewed the revised proposed master plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park and feel strongly that the development of the 6.5 miles of paved connector and loop trails around the lakes will severely damage the sensitive and unique ecosystem of the park. The county's 2013 Residential survey showed that what citizens valued most (71%) is the protecting, and restoration of the woods, prairies, lakes, ponds and wet lands. The study also verified that people visit the park [81.7%] to enjoy the natural setting. The proposed route is through some of the most beautiful areas of the park. Removing trees, flattening hills and paving a wide trail will destroy the very wilderness park users come to see and experience.</p> <p>Last fall, I spent two days in the park taking photos to use when I paint. I noticed, when walking on the paved trail, how many trees were already removed and those near the paved trail were dying. In contrast, when I walked the dirt trails, the wilderness was still mostly intact. I met families with children and individuals with their leashed dogs walking the trails enjoying the autumn colors. As a senior citizen, with some physical limitations, I would not feel safe sharing a trail with bikers and skaters. In fact, when I walk with my daughter in Seattle, Wa, we avoid the multi-user trails. If other older citizens feel as I do, you will find these proposed trails are a deterrent instead of an encouragement for senior citizens to use the park.</p> <p>I have walked in this park for over 30 years. I have seen the slow destruction of the wilderness as physical development as proceeded. I</p>

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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volunteered to participate in the 2001 Master Plan design with the believe our work would result in the restoration and preservation of the this beautiful wilderness. Now, I see all the work we did being ignored and the proposed paved trails hastening the deterioration. Evasive plant species are slowly weakening the ecosystem. Grass and planted trees along the parking lots, paved trails and the visitor center are turning the wilderness into a cultured city park similar to Como Park in St, Paul.

The “forever wild” will become the “forever paved”. The saying, “ if you develop they will come” may also mean that some of us will go. I humbly suggest, bikers may come, but us walkers and senior citizens may stay away. The vast majority of present users of the park will find the very reason they come; to experience the wilderness, will be gone and their beloved park will be ruined forever.

My suggestion is the County Board reject this proposed plan. Consider a connector trail on the edge of the park along Cliff Road, bringing bikers into the park along the side of the entrance roads. Let the bikers park their bikes, like we walkers and skiers park our cars, and join us on the dirt trails to enjoy the wilderness. Do not pave any more trails around the lakes or through the woods, nor from one end of the park to the other. The present paved trail is sufficient for wheelchair accessibility. Spend our tax payer’s money on restoration, preservation and program development. Let us enjoy the wilderness and beauty of this park and leave it in better shape for our children and grandchildren Listen to us, the users of the park. There are hundreds of miles of bike trails in Minnesota but only one wild and beautiful Lebanon Hills Park.

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Vaillancourt,  
Dale

2/12

Good job on the very comprehensive master plan. My vote is for:

- paved trails that have grades and curves which allow inline skating and rollerskiing. Cleary is currently the only option south of the river.
- adding and improving mountain bike trails
- shade in the mountain bike lot
- a bike wash at the trailhead
- adding more skate ski trail
- adding lights to xc ski trails
- adding a 5k snowmaking loop for xc skiing...see Hyland and Elm Creek for demand and success stories...nothing available south of the river....skiers are passionate and will pay for this
- giving folks with disabilities opportunities to move in the park in any way possible
- adding more room for larger indoor special events like weddings..there is a real shortage of such space south of the river..I have been in the catering business for 32 years and therefore see the need every day as we hear from engaged couples.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment

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Van Hoven,  
David and  
Catherine

2/18

My spouse and I live in Eagan on Sherwood Way, which is very close to the Lebanon Hills Park. We have lived in this neighborhood for 23 years, and use the park for hiking quite frequently. We are adamantly apposed to any changes to the park's current lovely appeal, and believe any type of paved trails will be detrimental to its appeal. We are both also casual bikers and understand there are plenty of other options in the area for us (and all others) to ride/stroll or walk when we want to that are already paved/handicap accessible. Adding/expanding/paving trails in Lebanon Hills Park will certainly drastically degrade one of the few remaining natural, beautiful parks in Eagan, Dakota County, and Minnesota. Please give our thoughts serious consideration

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Vergin, Brad

2/20

Please do not proceed with the proposed Lebanon Hills master plan. I especially oppose further paving this 'natural treasure' of the Twin Cities.

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Veum, Susan	2/19	Please, please, please just leave Lebanon Hills Regional Park the way it is now!! I cannot stress enough how important it is to keep some our parks truly natural. Many residents, especially kids, do not have the opportunity to get up north to cabins and this is the closest thing they have to being in nature. Forever Wild is the slogan (which is really good, by the way) for a reason I assume. Please leave it forever wild. Many other parks in the metro area have the paved trails that people in wheelchairs, families on bikes, etc. can go use. I don't think EVERY park has to be totally accessible - that discriminates against those of us that value the natural, unspoiled aspect of Lebanon Hills. Once you tear up and pave and take down trees, it will be Forever Ruined. I don't think you or the residents of Dakota County want that. I'm sure the tax dollars that would be used to degrade the park can be put plenty of other good uses. Thanks for considering this. Please do your job and truly represent the vast majority of residents that DON'T want the development!!!
Vidal, Carlos	2/24	My name is Carlos Vidal and I have been going to Lebanon Hills for the past five years. Lebanon Hills has given me a regional park to grow and disappear in the park for hours at a time. This is something that you do not get at many locations within the Twin Cities. I feel that adding a paved path would only allow people to get from point A to point B without realizing what Lebanon Hills truly has to offer. I currently bike the Cannon Trail path but my goal is fitness and goal times. Lebanon Hills is not this and I would hate for it to become so. Thank you,
Vipond, Mike	2/23	I live in Dakota County and enjoy hiking in Lebanon Hills on a regular basis. I feel like I'm "up north" when in the park. It truly is a unique piece of wilderness in the city. I do not feel that the 2015 Revised Development Master Plan reflects my vision of the future of Lebanon Hills. The connector trail through the park is not a very good idea as it would significantly disturb the natural habitat. Also, I cannot understand how the ongoing maintenance and operating costs would be funded unless this came at the expense of other important projects. It appears this proposal would add amenities to the park that already exist in many other parks throughout the Twin Cities. However, doing so would compromise one of the last unique areas of wilderness in our metro area. I do not support this plan. Please vote no!
Waldoch, Dominic	2/25	Lebanon hills does not need to be developed in order to draw more people to the park. In fact from the media attention this development plan has attracted it seems there are plenty of Minnesota residents who would agree that paving a connector trail, putting lights in the park by lighting ski trails and other trails would ruin the very reason why the park has remained the way it has. Not every part of this planet should be made to be accessible to everyone. The plan is a poor use of real tax money that can do much good elsewhere in society. The fact that there are are people on government pay role whose very job it was to propose this plan has been a waste of tax money. I've been to many of the public meetings and It was hard to find anyone willing to support this plan. Please DO NOT vote for this plan!
Walton, Kim	2/20	I live in Farmington and work in Eagan. Lebanon Hills is a lovely space that we should preserve. Please do not put the large connecting path in the park. I value the beauty and quiet of the park. Thank you
Ward, Shelly		Phone Comment: I reject the Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park for paved trail because it is unsafe.
Warn, Linda	2/6	Please leave Lebanon Hills exactly as it is. I am opposed to the bike hub that is being considered.
Waschbusch, Paula	2/20	<p>As a casual user of Lebanon Hills (5-10 times a year), I am disappointed in the proposed plan to add paving and other amenities to the park. There are not many areas in Dakota County that allow one to have a natural, wilderness experience while still in the suburbs, and to see the planners proposing to eliminate this resource is disappointing. Not every park needs to look like other parks. Not every park needs to connect with other parks via connector trails. Not every park needs paved bike trails.</p> <p>The sad thing is that once you take the natural wilderness experience away and replace it with paved trails, it cannot be easily brought back. Please revisit this proposal before it is too late.</p>

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Wason, Cheryl Jeffrey, Miles and Quincy Gottwig	2/23	<p>I would like to voice my concerns regarding the master plan for Lebanon Hills. I have lived in Dakota county and have enjoyed all of the parks for the past 30 years with my family and friends from Dakota County as well as outside of the county. I feel very strongly that the wilderness feel that that Lebanon Hills has should be retained. Many friends and family that come to share and visit in the park's wilderness feel, are always so amazed that we have something like this so close to the Twin Cities for them to also enjoy, It is such a retreat that is so close to the Twin Cities and should be cherished and kept that way. There are certainly many other parks in the county that have been built up and made accessible to all. Just as we have a place for mountain bikers to use, but certainly not able to be used by all based on their interests and limitations, we should offer a retreat wilderness experience for those who find that to be appealing and important for quality of life. I ask the both the Dakota County planning department and members of the Dakota County Board to reconsider any changes to the Lebanon Hills Park System that would compromise what it now offers to the public.</p>
Weatherston, Lynn	2/17	<p>I am writing to implore the Dakota County Planning and Commissioners to NOT pave Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I actually moved from Lakeville to Eagan to be closer to Lebanon Hills because I spend every unscheduled moment of my life out on the dirt trails, either running them or hiking them. In addition, my dog is THE happiest dog on earth when we go to the woods! If Lebanon Hills get ruined with pavement, I have made the decision to move my family out of Eagan to another county where the dirt and Mother Earth is still honored. Please reconsider: MY FAMILY DOES NOT SUPPORT THIS PLAN!</p>
Wedin, Ryan N.	2/25	<p>I'm sure you've received numerous emails of the same nature. But I cannot figure out, for the life of me, why Dakota County is moving forward with the latest master plan when it OVERWHELMINGLY does not have the support of Eagan and Apple Valley citizens. It makes no sense and is infuriating to read about. It's like watching a train wreck, but you can't do anything at all about it. Obviously the public opinion holds no weight with this.</p> <p>I've read the public commentary. If you have as well, you can see the same things I'm seeing. Hence the confusion. We do not need to do things just because we can. You cannot undo the effect that this will have on nature in Lebanon Hills. And the fact that it hasn't been halted for more discussion just makes Eagan and Apple Valley citizens suspicious that something is going on that we don't know about.</p> <p>If this goes through, I will do whatever I can possible to make sure none of the board is re-elected in 2016 or elected in any other position in Dakota County, especially the Eagan and Apple Valley representatives.</p>
Weflen, Kathleen	2/24	<p>I strongly object to the proposed plan for adding paved paths to Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Though I respect the idea of equal access for all people, I urge you to consider the negative impact this paved path would have on the preserve's flora and fauna. We human beings can afford to allow these creatures the little bit of space we have left for them.</p> <p>My family and I have enjoyed visiting Lebanon Hills Regional Park countless times to walk in the woods, listen to frogs calling, and watch birds. It is the largest natural land near our home, but I would sooner give up visiting the park than to see more of its natural resources destroyed. Conservation of Dakota County's natural resources should be your priority.</p>
Wehrman, John	2/24	<p>I do not support this plan. Leave the covering of nature with asphalt and concrete to the cities.</p>
Weissman, Jon	2/18	<p>As an avid naturalist and lover of the outdoors, I am strongly opposed to any encroachment upon the natural areas of the park, including long stretches of paved walkways. When I go to any US National Park I do not see any of this. Are we allowed to have one park like this in the metro area - I hope the answer is yes.</p>

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Wentworth, Steve	2/22	As a bicyclist, I usually encourage bicycle path development, but I urge you to reject the current plan to put a major bike trail through the heart of Lebanon Hills. I believe there are better solutions to provide accessibility, e.g., proposals to transform trails besides a couple of the park's lakes. And trails should not mix bicycles and pedestrians. Also, the imminent expansion of Cliff road should include a bike trail, a much better place than through the heart of Lebanon Hills.
West, Ron		Phone Comment: I do not agree with all changes in the Lebanon Master Plan. Keep it as a natural setting. There are a lot of places with pavement nearby.
White, Deb	2/22	I am a resident of Rosemount. I have heard much of the planning and commentary that has happened over the last months. It sounds like a large number of people are very concerned about the new proposals for this wonderful park. Although I am no expert on the needs of the many, I do have a sense that you can't go back to the beautiful wilderness that is now present in Lebanon Hills if after you act, you change your mind. "Forever Wild" means wild and no, it's not just a slogan. It helps us remember that we are tied to nature and we need the wilderness in our lives. Take down the trees and insert pavement and you don't have wild anymore. Trees take many lifetimes to grow...they are sacred and must not be treated with disrespect. They also aid in fighting pollution, global climate change, and erosion. I am an avid bike rider, a cross country skier, and a hiker, but first and foremost, I am a person of nature. I can ride in many places, but I cannot find wilderness like Lebanon Hills without a lot of effort. Don't ruin this beautiful place.
Wilderness in the City Jenkins, Holly	2/25	<p>Preserving the natural qualities, character, and sense of place that are the intrinsic values of Lebanon Hills Regional Park, while still providing opportunities for human use, is the ultimate success of any of the park's master plans. Wilderness in the City, a grass-roots citizen organization dedicated to preserving and supporting Lebanon Hills, fully agrees with these Dakota County goals for a new park master plan: to provide greater accessibility, to increase visitors, and to restore and preserve the park's natural resources.</p> <p>Dakota County has determined that to achieve its goals, the county's Greenway Regional Trail Network will be integrated with the 2015 Revised Lebanon Hills Regional Park Draft Master Plan (hereafter referred to as the <i>revised plan</i>) with regional bikeways connecting to and through the park and expanded development at every trailhead. Dakota County's revised plan conflicts with the philosophy of past Lebanon Hills Master Plans and is contrary to the intrinsic values and character of the park. For this and other reasons that follow, <i>our organization does not support the revised plan and we urge Dakota County Commissioners not to adopt it.</i></p> <p>The 2001 Master Plan established a framework to successfully balance recreation and stewardship, recognizing that "although human use issues will continue to be of interest to citizens of the region, these pale in comparison to the important decisions that need to be made to preserve the natural systems in this park for future generations to enjoy." <i>Our organization would support a master plan update that respects the framework and guidelines of the 2001 Master Plan.</i></p> <p>Natural Resource Stewardship Restoration and preservation of ecological systems in Lebanon Hills has been a citizen priority for decades. A master plan update should commit to natural resource stewardship to provide high-quality user experiences, wildlife habitat, and a legacy for future generations.</p> <p><i>Natural Resource Conflicts</i> The revised plan includes language prioritizing restoration but fails to define guidelines for implementation, funding or performance metrics. There is no accountability toward successfully achieving this goal. The 2001 Master Plan guidelines should be strengthened in any plan update to assure commitment to implementation and funding both short-term to reverse the downward trend and long-term to assure preservation of the park's natural resources.</p> <p>Trails and Recreation Areas A master plan update should show commitment to due restraint in creating new or expanding existing development. Any proposed development should reflect the simplicity of the outdoor experience being sought by providing safe, high-quality recreational and</p>

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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educational opportunities in harmony with the park's natural setting.

### *1) Recreational conflicts*

*Safety:* Unlike the 2001 connector trail, the proposed trails are defined as paved, year-round and multi-use, combining bikes and inline skates with families with young children, disabled, and elderly. Our organization has serious safety concerns about mixing recreational uses on bikeways designed to accommodate speeds ranging from 10 to 20 mph.

*Compromises signature activities:* The addition of four-season, multi-use trails will compromise the high quality recreations that make Lebanon Hills a destination park. Hiking, trail running, cross-country skiing, equestrian, birding, educational programs and more will each be downgraded.

### *2) Ecological conflicts*

The revised plan's emphasis on new development is in direct conflict with the public's priority of ecological stewardship. Leveling hills, filling valleys, extensive tree removal and negative impact to residual trees will be required for a 6-mile, ADA-compliant, multi-use bikeway. This extensive construction will irreversibly impact the park's hilly landscape and fragment its wildlife habitat. Ongoing maintenance for snow removal and ice control can be detrimental to soil and water within the park.

### *3) Financial Conflicts*

As more amenities are brought online, the cost of ongoing operations and maintenance increases. The revised plan suggests that both increased development and natural resource stewardship can be achieved and maintained. Since 2001 Dakota County's record shows inadequate funding for both natural resources and maintenance of existing, minimal infrastructure in Lebanon Hills. This is evidenced by neglected rustic structures, rutted natural trails, and widespread growth of buckthorn and other invasive species. Our organization has serious concerns about the financial sustainability and ongoing burden to taxpayers for this revised plan.

### *Stated Goals*

#### *Accessibility*

The Lebanon Hills Master Plan should allow for greater accessibility by providing all ages and abilities with a comparable experience to the natural qualities, character, and sense of place that are the intrinsic values of Lebanon Hills. Our organization disagrees that a multi-use bikeway through the park is the best solution for providing a comparable high-quality recreation experience.

#### *Increasing Visitation*

The Lebanon Hills Master Plan should emphasize non-capital investments to increase visitor numbers. Outreach, programming, staffing and volunteer opportunities will increase visitation, have less impact on the park's natural resources and a lower burden to taxpayers. The revised plan relies heavily on capital development that has significant environmental impact and adds an ongoing taxpayer burden, with no definitive estimate of increased visits.

Moving Forward A master plan update should achieve the county's goals, respect the intrinsic values of the park, and earn broad public support. The 2013 plan and the 2015 revised plan have garnered unprecedented public opposition and controversy over the future of Lebanon Hills. To alleviate this controversy and mend serious discord, Wilderness in the City requests that Dakota County step back from this revised plan, and move forward in an open and transparent manner making decisions about the future of Lebanon Hills with citizens, not for citizens.

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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

Willette, Kristin	2/6	I am writing to comment on the proposed improvements to Lebanon Hills. It is a beautiful natural area, and a 10-foot-wide paved path is overkill. It is a violation of a natural area, and needlessly expensive. This is not a through-way for bicycle commuters, it is a slow-paced, recreational natural area. 3 feet wide would be plenty, in my opinion. It would be much better to spend the money on control of invasive exotic plants like buckthorn.
Williams, Ryan	2/19	Hello! Just a quick but sincere note about the possible changes coming to Lebanon hills. For someone who has enjoyed the natural, rustic, and beautifully undeveloped trails of Lebanon for 12 years, please consider not paving new concrete trails. I'm sure there are other ways of improving the park without losing what makes it unique. Thanks so much for your time! I know you will make a good decision!
Williams, Yvonne	2/15	I would like to give my comment on the planning proposals being talked about for the master plan. I would like to see as little as possible the amount of trails being paved. Over the many years that the park was in existence my husband and I would take our 2 sons from the time they were preschool age until they were in their 20's to Lebanon Hills park. It is one of the few parks left with natural trails where you actually feel like you are walking in the woods and around nature. I would hate to see that experience disappear due to paved paths. There are many other parks where people can go to if they need paved parks. I would love it if you could keep this one natural. Thank you.
Wilm, Mary Lou	2/9	When I voted for the Legacy Act, I never thought the money would be used to lay more asphalt on an already over paved metro, MN, planet. Lebanon Hills and Eagan's remaining forests should be preserved as oases of climate change barriers, refreshing to the body and spirit. That's how I urge the Legacy money be spent.
Wilson, Jim	2/18	I would like to consider not voting for the expansion and development to our regional park system. I do not agree with a paved trail system that connects various other parks within the area. We have a unique park system in the county that most metropolitan areas would be envious of. Please help maintain our wilderness component by not paving our trails.
Wilson, Toni	2/23	Please leave Lebanon Hills Park just the way it is. Please leave the natural beauty just as it is, change is not always a good thing.
Wolfe, Jean	2/6	I do not support the Lebanon Hills development plan!!
Wollschlager, Sandy	2/18	I read the Feb. 19 Star Tribune article, "Everyone loses if Lebanon Hills master plan is approved," and would like to comment. I ride my horse here and love the wilderness feel. There are not a lot of places to ride horse anymore, and I would hate to see this option taken away from the public. thank you for your consideration,
Wolverton, Karin	2/18	Please do not pave the trails at Lebanon Hills. My family comes from Richfield frequently to enjoy this wonderful wilderness area and we would definitely use the park much less if it were more developed. Thank you for considering my voice in this matter.
Women Observing Wildlife Zimmer,	2/25	These comments are submitted on behalf of Women Observing Wildlife-Minnesota (WOW-MN) whose mission is, "to promote the observation of wildlife as a healthy recreational, educational, and scientific endeavor, in such a manner that does not disturb wildlife from their natural processes". Lebanon Hills Regional Park (LHRP) is much loved because it retains its wild character. Close to 150 bird species have been identified at LHRP, including rare avians such as the Hooded Warbler and Yellow-breasted Chat. LHRP used to have Bobolink, a pretty cream and black prairie bird with tinkling song, but, according to one Audubon member's bird survey, the Bobolink has not been seen in LHRP for 17 years.

## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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Catherine

WOW-MN enjoys visiting LHRP in the spring to watch the return of the Bluebirds and hear the booming of Bullfrogs and Spring Peepers. We prefer LHRP because it is not overbuilt like many other metro parks, e.g. those in Hennepin County. There is little native habitat remaining in the Metro area: places such as LHRP are valuable for wildlife and for the people that love them. LHRP has relatively rare natural resources such as a Black Walnut and Ironwood Groves, Tamarack swamp and some relatively clean lakes for swimming and wildlife. The 2001 park plan called for restoring natural resources, yet, that restoration work has not been completed. Minnesotans and Dakota county citizens love their natural resources, open space and wildlife. According to the 2013 Dakota County resident survey data, “the most important investment was seen to be protecting lakes, streams and

wetlands from pollution, followed closely by protecting the highest-rated natural areas”.<sup>1</sup> When Minnesotans were asked, most cited reasons such as clean water and preserving nature as their primary reasons for voting “yes”,<sup>2</sup> for the Legacy amendment.

Despite citizens’ call and support for protecting and restoring natural resources, Dakota county categorizes “natural resource management, stewardship and restoration” as “priority 4 & 5” in its list for parks and trails FY 2016-17.

Additionally, Dakota County is proposing to spend 85% its Metropolitan Council (Legacy) dollars on *new infrastructure*, with only 15% to be spent on natural resources<sup>3</sup>. The LHRP draft plan continues this pattern; of the approximate total spend of \$14.7M, only 25% (\$2.9M) will be spent on stewardship and natural resource restoration. Allocating resources in this manner is a misappropriation of the taxpaying public’s position on how their tax dollars are to be spent.

### Natural resource restoration

While LHRP retains a “wild” character, its natural resources, as pointed out in the draft plan are severely degraded. The draft plan lays out good strategies for restoring the natural resources at LHRP; *this is a top priority* for citizens as noted in numerous surveys. As stated above, Dakota County plans are under-financing natural resource restoration, only 15% of spending. For LHRP, 25% of total tax dollars will be spent on stewardship. This imbalance must be corrected to both satisfy citizen desires and achieve restoration goals.

### New infrastructure and trail construction

LHRP already has trails for most uses—biking, equestrian, hiking, snowshoeing/skiing and some accessible portions. It currently has considerable infrastructure—visitor center, parking lots, driveways, picnic areas, beaches, fishing piers, and a large maintenance facility. Adding and paving trails, buildings and parking lots increases habitat fragmentation, pollutes lakes, streams and wetlands, and degrades the natural experience most citizens come to the park to enjoy. Fragmentation is one of the leading causes of songbird habitat impact and songbird population decline. According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR), fragmentation has the following impacts<sup>4</sup>:

- ` Disrupts animal travel corridors and creates barriers that isolate populations from potential breeding opportunities.
  - ` Following fragmentation, habitat for forest species that favor forest interiors (such as Orioles, Tanagers, and Wood Thrushes) is lost and there is greater vulnerability to predators and nest robbers. The same is true for species such as the Bobolink, preferring large areas of prairie habitat and mixed grasses<sup>5</sup>.
  - ` Species that cannot easily disperse, including Reptiles and Amphibians, are more likely than other species to be harmed by fragmentation.
  - ` Smaller remaining forests and prairie are more susceptible to invasive species, often resulting in a loss of species diversity.
  - ` With smaller native habitat areas, there is an increase in the frequency of conflicts between people and wildlife.
  - ` Scenic views are lost, making the places we choose to live and visit less beautiful.
  - ` By losing forests, prairie and savanna we are losing the ability to clean the air and buffer our environment from pollution.
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## Public Comments Received on the 2015 Revised Draft Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan

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The draft plan is heavy on infrastructure and trail construction at the expense of natural resource protection and restoration. Ironically, these proposed “improvements” destroy LHRP’s beauty, e.g. Trees are removed, hills are graded, topsoil and plants are removed, animals are disrupted, displaced, or killed, eroded soils and pollution run off into surface waters. While some may say, its only one trail here or parking lot there, these “amenities” collectively add up to “death by a thousand cuts”. WOW-MN suggests removing the following elements from the plan to allow more dollars to be spent on natural resource restoration:

### *Visitor Center*

Eliminate: expanded visitor center, lakeside picnic shelter, showers, canal, play area and beach house expansion. The infrastructure at the visitor center is already quite extensive; the addition of more will also increase pollution to the lake and the addition of a canal is in direct conflict with the proposed restoration of stream channels. WOW-MN would suggest the area is already sufficient for play, after all, isn’t the entire park a “natural play area”? Eliminating this increased build will save, or increase the amount available for restoration, by about \$1.5M.

### *Holland Lake trailhead*

Eliminate the expanded pier, boat rental and racks, soft trail along lake, clearing for lake views, natural play area and fire ring. This is a trailhead frequently visited by WOW-MN. It already has considerable amenities. The current pier is quite large and as this lake is rather isolated and shallow, boating is not a recommended activity; boating disturbs wildlife and waterfowl. Eliminating this increased build will save, or increase the amount available for restoration, by about \$400K.

### *Jensen Lake area*

Eliminate new asphalt road and parking, picnic area, nature play area, improved canoe launch. See “visitor center” above. Eliminating this increased build will save, or increase the amount available for restoration, by about \$1.5M.

### *Southeast trailhead*

Equestrians are about 10% of total park users. When asked, they requested continued use of the trails, water and a muck station. They did not indicate a need for improved parking, other equestrian amenities, way finding kiosks, restrooms and the connector trail. Eliminating this increased build will save, or increase the amount available for restoration, by about \$500K.

### *West trailhead-mountain bike trails*

This area of the park had numerous improvements in 2012. Eliminate event amenities (this was ranked very low by park users), overflow parking and driveway and improved trail access. Eliminating this increased build will save, or increase the amount available for restoration, by about \$150K. It is important to note both horses and mountain bikes cause the most damage to trails and animals. WOW-MN has found dead Turtles, Snakes and Frogs likely a result of these activities. To help protect wildlife, WOW-MN suggests adding signage to help safeguard these slow moving animals and, seasonally close equestrian trails proximate to turtle egg laying areas so the female turtles are not crushed by horses’ hooves as they migrate to lay their eggs.

### *Campground*

The campground looks like an RV park and certainly not a wild-friendly experience. WOW-MN members have tried to camp at similar facilities and found them ugly, noisy and lacking privacy. Eliminate new contact station, expanded parking, new restrooms at Gephardt Lake, camper cabins, connector trail, wading beach, laundry, sun shelter and playground. Eliminating this increased build will save, or increase the amount available for restoration, by about \$1.9M.

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### *Camp Sacajawea*

Eliminate: paved trail, improved adventure course, outdoor gathering and fire ring, expanded parking, group camp kitchen, expanded lodge (remodel within existing footprint), group camp shelter and bunkhouses. Eliminating this increased build will save, or increase the amount available for restoration, by about \$1.4M.

### *Paved surface trails*

Almost half, \$4.8M (41%) of the proposed spending is on adding trails to an already well-trailed park. Citizens most commonly walk and hike in the park, they did not request more trails, but again, asked for natural resource protection. As the MN DNR notes, trails increase fragmentation, degrade habitat, pollute water bodies, and diminish the overall park experience.

A “connector” trail is not needed; most sites are already connected with the current trail network. As a cyclist, I do not need to ride my bike through the center of the park on an asphalt trail; I can connect via current roadside bike paths. Zooming through a park on a bike does not increase my knowledge of nature or necessarily want me to protect it. Environmental stewardship is born of slow walks with the beauty and uniqueness of natural features pointed out and explained. WOW-MN suggests amending the current trails to ensure their stability, restore un-intended trailed areas and add a short, lighted Nordic ski loop as requested by many users. Eliminating most of the increased build would save or increase the amount for restoration by over \$4M.

### *Reduced spend or increased restoration summary*

Eliminating the construction of the above listed “amenities” saves approximately \$11.2M for the much-needed restoration, reduces impacts to natural resources and provides dollars for restoration needed subsequent to the building of infrastructure. It is a triple win and we may see the Bobolink return. Parks do not need to be everything to everybody and most people do not *need or want* all this proposed infrastructure to enjoy the out of doors. There is precious little native habitat left in the metro area. WOW-MN asks LHRP and other Dakota County parks focus on natural resource restoration and stewardship. There are numerous parks that provide the other infrastructure features. People enjoy LHRP and the other Dakota County parks because they are wild, and can be “forever wild” with planning and spending as the public intends and wants.

### *Conclusion*

WOW-MN asks you and Dakota County to reject the draft master plan for LHRP. Citizens and taxpayers have repeatedly asked for protection of our waters and preservation of nature. The plan proposes extraordinary spending on hard surfaces and infrastructure and only 25% on natural resource restoration and stewardship. WOW-MN suggests Dakota County to revise the plan by utilizing external *conservation*, as opposed to planning, experts and citizens, to develop a restoration and stewardship plan reflecting on the overarching themes of the 2013 citizen’s survey<sup>6</sup>, that is, *first* protecting natural resources. Then an infrastructure plan can be overlaid to identify whether and where trails, buildings and picnic areas are necessary. With proper planning and much needed habitat restoration, we may see the return of the Bobolink and other rare species. Thank you for consideration of these comments.

<sup>1</sup> 2013 Dakota County Resident Survey, Report of Results,

<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/government/analysis/residentsurvey/documents/2013residentialsurvey.pdf>,

viewed 2/17/15.

<sup>2</sup> MN DNR, Parks and Trails Legacy Plan, Public Expectations for Minnesota’s Parks and Trails Legacy, 2011.

Metropolitan Council, Parks and Trails Legacy Projects for FY 2016-17.

<sup>4</sup> MN DNR, Forest Legacy project, Effects of Forest Fragmentation, <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestlegacy/fragmentation.html>

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5 The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, All about birds, <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/bobolink/lifehistory>, viewed 2/25/15.

Wright, John	2/24	My name is John. I grew up in Eagan, going all over Lebanon Hills. I love that we have a place like this in our community, and feel it's an important thing to preserve for so many reasons. Please do all you can to make sure it remains untouched the way it is.
Young, Cat		Phone Comment: I am strongly against the plan. No paved trails. Need dirt as the best trail alternative.
Young, Cheryl	2/25	Hi Nancy, I am resident of the Parkcliff area. I am against the cost of paving and maintaining paths through the park. I love the natural beauty as is. Please keep our parks beautiful!!! No to paved paths. Thanks for your consideration.
Young, Jane		Phone Comment: Ask the Board not to support the Master Plan. It will wreck the wilderness and once it's gone, it is gone forever.
Young, Terry		Phone Comment: I am 80 years old and go down to the park. I like the unpaved paths and money should be spent in other areas.
Zacher, Sarah	2/18	I read with interest Maryann Passe's op-ed in the StarTribune dated 2/17/15. As a resident of the City of Eagan, I couldn't agree more with Ms. Passe. I grew up in South Minneapolis and upon my move to Eagan, I was thrilled with the Lebanon Hills park system and its natural environment. There was nothing like it in the city. My family enjoys hiking the trails in this beautiful, natural environment. I think the last thing we need is more paved trails that will destroy the natural landscape and future costly maintenance. I would urge you to preserve and protect this wonderful natural resource for the citizens of Dakota County and visitors to the Lebanon Hills Park system.
Zeches, Barb	2/23	<p>After reading the 46 page report to the Dakota County Board from the Citizens Panel I have the following comments. Lebanon Hills park is a unique park in the Dakota County Park system. People love this park because it provides a place where you can truly get close to nature. I know because I marvel at it's beauty every time I am there. At the same time I see that it is a park that needs some help in order for it to remain a special place for generations to come. I do not feel that every park in Dakota County has to provide all activities. Currently, Lebanon Hills supports a wide variety of recreational opportunities: easy walking, hiking, running, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, fishing, swimming, picnicking, camping, horse back riding, and education via the Visitor Center and signage. It is known for its trails! My understanding is that most of the funds for your proposed development will come from state Legacy funds and federal Alternative Transit funds. If you truly want to create a "Legacy" then putting a 6 mile, 10 foot wide trail through the middle of the park is not what Lebanon Hills needs at this time. As noted by the Citizen's Panel, the vision is to balance the recreational use of the park with natural resource stewardship. Without "Stewardship" there will be no park to enjoy. The first order of business should be to ensure viability of the natural species (plants and animals) by removing buckthorn, and restoring prairies and wetlands. As for a connector trail, this should happen on the perimeter of the park. The roads around the park for the most part already provide the ability to safely get to the various trailheads, picnic areas and Visitor Center. I am also concerned that in the future Dakota County will not be able to maintain what they build. I agree that we should make the park accessible to those with disabilities and that can be accomplished by creating some ADA trails around Holland Lake, McDonough Lake and in the vicinity of the Visitors Center or other areas that do not cut through the middle of the park. In addition to stewardship of the park, focus should also be put on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education - This is the perfect park to teach young and old about nature. I think Lebanon Hills provides a unique opportunity because much of the park has remained untouched by development.</li><li>• Community - I am pleased that the Citizen's Panel covered this. With help from those that appreciate what Lebanon Hills provides we can continue to have this park as an urban retreat, a great outdoor recreation experience, a resilient natural place, a four season recreation area</li></ul>

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with a strong sense of place and community.

What makes Lebanon Hills special is that it provide a natural retreat in the city. Citizens do not need to travel far to get there. Please continue to preserve the "Forever Wild" feel of this park.

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Zellmer, Rick 2/23 I am a resident of Eagan, live on the northern boarder of Lebanon Hills Regional Park, and have enjoyed the park's natural state for 18 years. I have shared many great times and memories with my children and would like to do the same with my grandchildren. I do not support the proposed Master Plan by Dakota County. Please leave the park as is!

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Zens, David and Janet 2/18 Your plan to transform Lebanon Hills is a grave mistake. The rustic beauty of this park is a real treasure of nature. Frequently we visit the park to enjoy the raw beauty and take our grand daughters birding. Engaging the younger generation in the outdoors is hard enough. To destroy this option is a serious mistake. Should you proceed with this folly, there is no turning back. Please reconsider and keep this park as it stands for future generations.

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Zielinski, John 2/7 I am contacting you to state that I am against the currently proposed Lebanon Hills Master Plan. Lebanon Hills does not need additional paved trails. Keep the park as a mostly soft trail park, promoting its more natural state and use. Eagan and Apple Valley have extensive sidewalk paved surfaces for everyone to use. We do not need to destroy part of nature within the jewel of Dakota County. Additionally we do not need to add more maintenance costs in the future due to the addition of paved trails. Please take the bold step and say no to paved trail development within Lebanon Hills.

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Zingle, Sandy 2/25 My name is Sandy Zingle. My husband Mark and I live in Park Cliff, boarding Lebanon Hills Park. That is the only area we have left that has not been destroyed by people. We lost the fight to keep the golf course, so that open space is now filled with houses. We find it so sad that people feel a need to "mess" with only a few of the awesome green areas left in city living. This would just be another nail in the coffin as far as we are concerned and another reason on our list of why we would probably look to move out of this area after living here over 30 years. People in power over us have taken it upon themselves to destroy what has made our lives so enjoyable for so long. We feel helpless, hopeless, and surrounded by people who think the best way to do things is to cover everything natural, green and God given. Time to move on and find a place where people still care about such things. Thank you for your time

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