

Mississippi River Regional Trail - Spring Lake Park Reserve
Public Open House No. 2 – April 17th, 2013
Spoken & Written
Comments Summary

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

- Private Property Concerns
 - One homeowner who lives on Hilary Trail in Hastings does not want his property affected by the trail alignment. He is not open to negotiating. His choice is to have the trail run along County Road 42.
 - A homeowner expressed that if the River (2a) alignment is chosen she would prefer that the trail is placed at least 250-300 feet from the fencing on her property. She would prefer the Upland (2c) alignment.
 - Some participants would prefer as little impact as possible to Hilary Path.
 - Some participants would like the alignment chosen based upon the least impact to private property owners.
 - Some participants felt that we should consider the most cost effective plan that minimizes impacts to private property owners the least.
 - Some participants were concerned with the River (2a & 2d) option because it would cut properties in half.
 - Some participants felt that building a trail along the River (2a & 2d) would destroy the privacy of properties along the trail.
 - Some participants felt that private land owners should be taken into consideration more during the planning process.

- User Concerns
 - Some participants want Dakota County to reconsider this project as they feel that the public does not use Spring Lake Park Reserve as a throughway.
 - Some participants wanted equine use to be considered for the Spring Lake Park Reserve due to the number of horse riders in the area.
 - Some participants felt that you would not be able to see the river from the River (2a) alignment option.
 - Some participants felt that none of the alignments will deliver river views at any time except the winter due to trees and elevations within the park.

- Environmental Concerns
 - Some participants recommend Upland (2c) over River (2a) alignment because there is less impact to the environment and wildlife in the area.
 - Some participants are concerned about how the construction of the trails will affect the wildlife and nature in the area.
 - Some participants were concerned with potential soil erosion, environmental damage, and potential archaeological impacts.
 - Some participants felt that the Upland (1b) alignment would have the least impact on private land and that it should also consider following the existing woods south along the fringe to reduce impacts on trees and wildlife in addition to being cheaper.
 - Some participants felt that the Upland (2c) would have the least amount of wildlife impact and the woods around the River (2a & 2b) are very steep and used by lots of wildlife. Please leave this area wild. The woods around these areas are shrinking. Please have some thoughts about how this will impact the animals that have very little space left. The reason this area is so beautiful, is because it is wild and a home for many animals.

- Some participants felt that the Upland (2c) is preferred over the River (2a) because of expense, wildlife impacts, and natural resources of the preserve. They felt that to get river views on the River (2a) alignment that trees would need to be removed thereby further degrading the natural makeup of the preserve. Also, River (2a) would displace the soft-surfaced cultural trail planned for the preserve.
 - Some participants felt that Upland (2c) alignment should be selected because it has no poor impacts on the environmental column in the evaluation matrix.
 - Some participants were concerned with the River (2a & 2d) alignments proximity to the natural springs and protected vegetation.
- Master Plan Compatibility Concerns
 - Some participants approve of the Upland (2c) alignment but they would like changes made. They would like the trail by the Volkert property to go north to river trail and then make connections there.
 - Some participants recommended that the western portion of Upland (1b) alignment should go through the prairie grass and link to restrooms directly.
 - Some participants believe that if the River (2a) alignment is chosen then the master plan should be updated.
- Support for Trails Comments
 - Some participants believe that the Spring Lake Park alignment will be an important and beautiful connection for the Mississippi River Regional Trail. When connected to Hastings, the trail will impact the downtown in a positive way.
 - Some participants want the trail built and believe that it is good for the families in the community.
 - Some participants felt that either the River (1a) or River (2a) alignment should be implemented.
 - Some participants felt that the Modified Rock Cut (3c) alignment appeared to be a good compromise.
- Public Use of Money
 - Some participants are wondering if the tax payers in Dakota County are aware of the alignment options. They are concerned that the taxpayers do not know what the plans are and how the project is being paid for.
 - Some participants were impressed with the Mississippi River Trail plans and supported the acquisition of easements to complete the trail as good as possible given the budgets and timelines. As taxpayers they would support an increase in trail construction budgets and feel that it is worthy of more tax.
 - Some participants like the Upland (1a) alignment best. Even though it is more expensive, it would provide an excellent relationship with the river and less impact on the retreat center.
 - Some participants expressed concern with spending money on the River (2a, 2d) alignment because it is a higher cost option and the users will not have a river view.
 - Some participants shared that they want the project completed at the lowest cost to the public.
 - Some participants shared that to save money on maintenance and operation costs it may be best to close the trail from November until May.
 - Some participants want to make sure that the property that is being purchased for this alignment is bought at fair market value.
 - Some participants felt that all of the trail options were invasive to property owners and too expensive to build.
 - Some participants really appreciated the cost effectiveness of the Upland (1b) alignment option.
 - Some participants agreed with the staff recommendation for the Upland (1b) and Modified Rock Cut (3c) alignment option because it was the most cost effective and best balance of tradeoffs for the MRRT and other elements of the park.

- Miscellaneous Comments
 - Some participants expressed that the Modified Rock Cut (3c) looks like a good compromise.
 - Some participants would prefer that there was no bike trail.
 - Some participants prefer the Upland (1b) alignment verses the River (1a) alignment. The preference is to not go through the wooded area closer to the river.
 - Some participants prefer the River (2a+2d) alignments as their first choice.
 - Some participants would like to see the trail open to equine use.
 - Some participants felt that using County Road 42 for the bicycle path is the best choice and that the road should be closed for local traffic only.
 - Some participants felt that Upland (2c & 2e) were the most cost effective options in segment 2.
 - They felt that the old archery range through the wooded area as being a beautiful walk and varied enough for bikers as well. Going through the open land (1a) is “okay”, but doesn’t show the diversity that this land has to offer.
 - Some participants felt that the Upland (1b), River (2a & 2d), and Modified Rock Cut (3c) offered the best alignment selection.

- Safety Concerns
 - Some participants expressed that Upland (2c) alignment would be more accessible to emergency vehicles in case of fire or other emergency.
 - Some participants felt that the Upland (1b) option is safer for kids.