



# Dakota County Veterans Memorial Greenway Interpretive Memorial Plan

Adopted by the Dakota County Board of Commissioners on July 18, 2023

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# I. FOUNDATIONS

## INTRODUCTION

Dakota County is home to more than 25,000 Veterans, people who have served in our nation’s military forces. This plan sets a framework for honoring Dakota County Veterans and sharing their stories along a five-mile greenway in northern Dakota County. As an interpretive memorial plan, the purpose is two-fold: 1) to honor and recognize the sacrifice made by Veterans and provide a place for healing (*memorial*) and 2) to provide stories that inform and inspire visitors about military service, whether or not they have previous understanding (*interpretation*).

*Facts and data* will provide context and spur further interest. *Stories* that capture the imaginations and touch the hearts of visitors will provide a window into the experiences of being a Veteran. A living history approach, with ongoing collection and sharing of new stories, will connect with visitors into the future. The Plan concepts will guide more detailed design and development of eight unique interpretive memorials along the greenway.

Memorials and interpretation can range from highly visible monuments to more subtle cues, such as dog tags hanging on a tree, and both can be equally moving. This plan works within this spectrum, and in harmony with the natural resource foundations of Dakota County Parks and Greenways, drawing from natural settings and matching these settings to the stories.

## GREENWAY BACKGROUND

The Veterans Memorial Greenway (previously master planned as the Rich Valley Greenway in 2017) is a proposed regional trail corridor, connecting Lebanon Hills Regional Park in Eagan to the Mississippi River Greenway in Inver Grove Heights.

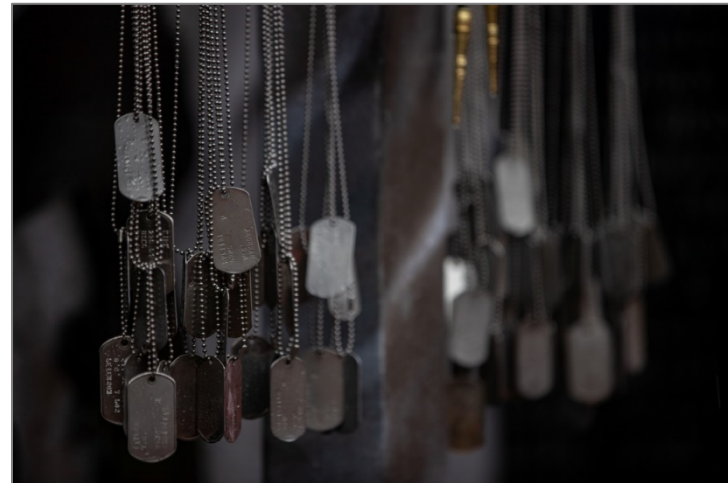
The County re-dedicated the Rich Valley Greenway as the Veterans Memorial Greenway to provide a unique way to honor the service and sacrifices made by our Veterans (County Board Resolution No. 19-678, August 20, 2019). Dakota County completed an engineering feasibility study of the route in January 2020. A Legislative request for \$5 million was granted in January 2020 to Dakota County to construct the greenway.



Korean War Memorial, Washington, DC

Photo: US Department of Defense (DoD), David Vergun, 2014

Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.



2/6 Remembers the Fallen, Marines Lost in Operation Iraqi Freedom

Photo: US Department of Defense, Lance Cpl. Jaqueline Arre, 2021

Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.

Eight interpretive memorials are proposed, to express Veteran stories through interpretive displays and landscape design. The greenway will include grade-separated crossings over TH 3 (South Robert Trail), under CSAH 71 (Blaine Avenue), and under US Highway 52, with interpretive memorials incorporated into their design.

The greenway provides opportunities to connect to activity centers, schools, and gathering spaces including Lebanon Hills Regional Park, Pinewood Community School, Lakeside Park, St. Thomas Becket Church, Southern Hills Park, Rich Valley Park, and the Mississippi River.

### **PLANNING PROCESS**

This Interpretive Memorial Plan was developed in tandem with final engineering design of the greenway in 2021 and draws from the Rich Valley Greenway Master Plan (September 2017), the Dakota County Greenway Guidebook (September 2010) and Dakota County Greenway Design Guidelines (August 2020). Previous plans and guides are available at [www.dakotacounty.gov](http://www.dakotacounty.gov), search greenway plans.

### **VETERAN ENGAGEMENT**

Veteran stakeholders provided the foundation of this Plan, through meetings of a Veterans Advisory Group, focus group conversations, and additional outreach. Engagement focused on identifying various storylines that Veterans want to share and formats for telling these stories.

Members of the Veterans Advisory Group generously participated in eight facilitated, online meetings between December 2020 and December 2021, to review the greenway route, identify major stories and themes, and identify locations for groupings of stories. The Group shared personal stories, which informed the Plan themes and stories; discussed interpretive methods and precedent/inspiration images; and guided the refinement of concepts and the plan. Focus group conversations with Black Veterans and Native American Veterans enriched interpretation opportunities and provided foundations for this Plan.

## **MISSION AND GOALS**

### **INTERPRETATION**

Interpretation is *"a purposeful approach to communication that facilitates meaningful, relevant, and inclusive experiences that deepen understanding, broaden perspectives, and inspire engagement with the world around us"* (National Association for Interpretation). To be effective, interpretation must be authentic, based on facts and personal experiences. It must also work for its audience -- too many words, irrelevant information, and technical language can turn people away.

### **PROJECT GOALS**

1. Recognize the service of Veterans of all backgrounds in a corridor where Veterans can recreate, heal, remember, and gather.
2. Tell the stories of Dakota County's Veterans, units, and military places, connecting these stories to Veterans' experiences across the country.
3. Inspire discovery and thought, encouraging visitors to ask new questions. Engage visitors through interactive displays that connect with diverse audiences and work with different learning styles.
4. Welcome people of all backgrounds, cultures, and physical abilities with enhanced accessibility and universal design.
5. Build partnerships with Veteran organizations and diverse communities to provide a dynamic experience, enriched by ongoing collection and sharing of stories that reflect a range of perspectives.
6. Create a cohesive experience, linking the corridor's natural resources and landscapes to Veteran stories and universal concepts.

### **DAKOTA COUNTY PARKS MISSION**

*To enrich lives by providing high quality recreation and education opportunities in harmony with natural resource preservation and stewardship.*



## AUDIENCES

Identifying audiences and understanding their needs and interests is key to developing an interpretive memorial plan.

**For Civilians:** demonstrate what people can achieve together and that one person can make a difference. For civilian visitors without a Veteran in their lives, “Think-Feel-Do” interpretation can offer:

- Greater knowledge about the sacrifices given by so many
- Pride, appreciation, and respect for Veterans and active service members
- Greater interest and curiosity about military service
- Inspiration do more, such as sending care packages to service members and supporting Veteran causes however they can

**For Veterans and Their Families:** offer stories that resonate with their experience and opportunities to contribute their voices, illustrating a range of personal impacts and experiences:

- Family
- Unity / Teamwork
- Friendship / Camaraderie
- Sacrifice / Trauma
- Discipline
- Loyalty
- Bravery / Valor
- Perseverance / Accomplishment
- Shared experiences
- Loss

## INTERPRETIVE MESSAGES

Interpretive messages reflect what members of the Veterans Advisory Group, Veteran focus groups, and others shared about their experiences. Messages across the greenway reflect these voices, representing different service branches, eras, genders, backgrounds, and cultural groups.

## INTERPRETIVE MEMORIAL PURPOSE

*The Veterans Memorial Greenway recognizes and honors Dakota County Veterans, expresses gratitude for their service, and shares their life-changing experiences.*

## STORYLINES

Four interrelated storylines organize stories along the greenway.

- 1. Who Veterans Are:** Veterans come from all walks of life, with lives outside of service:
  - Veterans as individuals from many backgrounds and cultures
  - Impacts of military service on families
  - Groups assisting Veterans and their families during and after service
- 2. Service Experience:** from oath-taking to active duty, Veterans have shared and unique experiences:
  - Oath of enlistment
  - Basic and specialized training
  - Service experiences – jobs, deployment in conflicts and peacetime
  - Branches of service
  - Places served
- 3. Turning Points:** Every Veteran has experienced major turning points in the course of their service, with life-changing events along the way:
  - Entering service, by draft or individual decision
  - Leaving service, transition to civilian life
  - Loss
  - Accomplishments
  - Reflections on what service meant
  - Gold Star families who have lost a family member in service
  - Missing in Action (MIA)/Prisoner of War (POW)
- 4. Military Places:** Dakota County has places that speak to a long connection with the military:
  - Military roads, sites, structures
  - Military units over time that included County residents
  - Veteran memorials

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## II. INTERPRETIVE PLAN

This chapter lays out recommendations for eight memorial locations, with suggested stories, interpretive memorial media, landscape designs, and activities. Three features—major greenway entry points, the basic memorial, and mile markers—enrich the visitor experience across the corridor. Detailed descriptions of and graphics for Memorials 1 through 8 present site-specific recommendations based on the recommended storylines.

### PLANNED INTERPRETIVE MEMORIAL LOCATIONS

Eight memorials were chosen with Veteran advisors, to harmonize storylines with compatible landscape qualities at each location.



Greenway Route and Memorial Locations

Memorial	Description	Location
1	Native American Veterans	Potential Property Acquisition West of Lakeside Park, Eagan
2	Gold Star Families	Lakeside Park, Eagan
3	Military Units and Flyers	Xcel Energy Westcott South Property Line, Inver Grove Heights
4	Support Organizations	Southern Lakes Park, Inver Grove Heights
5	MIA Prairie/Veterans as Individuals	Flint Hills Property, Inver Grove Heights
6	Places We've Served	Highway 71 Proposed Tunnel, Inver Grove Heights
7	In the Service/Main Memorial	Rich Valley Park, Inver Grove Heights
8	Dakota County Military Places	Highway 52 Proposed Underpass, Inver Grove Heights

### MAJOR GREENWAY ENTRIES

While visitors will be able to access the greenway from many locations, this plan identifies three major entry points: Memorial 1 (the west end at Dodd Road), Memorial 7 (Rich Valley Park ), and Memorial 8 (the east end at Highway 52). Each major entry will include a kiosk with a greenway map and a county map showing military-related places. Along the greenway, visitors will encounter interpretive memorials with rest areas, interpretation based on unique stories, and at some locations, charging for assisted mobility devices.



Rich Valley Park



Western Entry Location at Dodd Road



Eastern Entry Location Near Highway 52

## BASIC AND ENHANCED MEMORIALS

Development and installation of interpretive Veteran memorials are proposed to occur at two levels.

### Basic Memorial

The Basic Memorial is a starting place for the memorial experience and a consistent repeating element along greenway. Basic Memorials provide a place to stop, comparable in scale to the standard Dakota County "parklet" or "bench" node defined in the Dakota County Greenway Design Guidelines (August 2020).

Basic features may include small interpretive signs, wayfinding, kiosks, benches, drinking fountains/bottle fillers, and natural resources restoration. Some basic memorial locations may also include restrooms, parking, bike fix-it stations, and charging stations for mobility assistance devices. Interpretive options may include displays with Q-R codes linking to audio recordings through phones and mobile devices. The basic memorials are modular and can be adjusted in response to specific landscape characteristics.

Basic memorial improvements will be funded by Dakota County and developed with the greenway.

### Enhanced Memorial

Enhanced Memorials could include statues, plazas, interpretive graphic panels and larger interpretive signs, interactive features, and personal memorials. These installations will require non-County resources gained through fund-raising efforts, grants, and legislative requests led by Veterans organizations.

### Additional Memorials

In addition to the eight memorials identified in this plan, the Veterans Memorial Greenway can provide opportunities for collaboration with landowners on additional interpretation and memorials.



**Basic Memorial Concept:** Dense pergola slats provide shade and cover

## MILE MARKERS

At quarter-mile marks across the greenway, starting at the easternmost Memorial, a simple, upright mile marker includes distance in miles and kilometers. The markers could provide:

- Distance to the end of the greenway
- Upcoming memorial/interpretive moments (e.g., Gold Star Families, 1.5 miles ahead)

## MEMORIAL 1: NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS

**Location:** Between the westernmost end of the trail and Lakeside Park, on west side of the lake.



Aerial photo (left) and map (right) showing the location of Memorial 1: Native American Veterans



View at Memorial 1

©2022: Nearmap

**Memorial 1 Concept Plan: Native American Veterans**



Design concept to be developed in consultation with Native American Veterans. Concept as shown is contingent on acquisition of property currently held in trust. If full acquisition does not occur, the memorial would be sited along the northern border of the parcel in the area shown as the original trail alignment.

## **PURPOSE:**

Welcome visitors to the Greenway and introduce them to the stories of Native American Veterans. Dakota County recognizes Dakota Homeland and its location at the heart of Dakota people's cultural heritage.

## **Visitor Experience Narrative**

Entering the greenway from Dodd Road, visitors are welcomed at a small star and stripes plaza with an introduction to the greenway and an introduction to Native American Veterans. The enhanced memorial is near the western edge of a lake, with a small overlook and seating. Memorial and interpretive content will be developed with Native American Veterans to honor their service and tell their stories. A small parking area off of Dodd Road is proposed.

## **Subthemes**

*Who Veterans Are*

## **Opportunities**

Consultation with Dakota, Ojibwe, and other tribes, and Native American Veterans about Indigenous ways of honoring Veterans for final design.

## **Natural Qualities that Support this Memorial**

Near large mature trees, an elevated boardwalk or pier offers lake overlook views. Native plants significant to Native Americans are re-established.

## **BASIC MEMORIAL**

### **Interpretive Methods**

- **Small interpretive sign** with Q-R audio; transcripts online
- **Kiosk Panel**
- **Native plantings**

### **Small Interpretive Sign and Panel**

*Content:* Native Americans have served with distinction in every major U.S. military action from the Revolutionary War to today.

The US Department of Defense notes that Native Americans and Alaska Natives have one of the highest representation rates, serving at five times the national average.

Nearly 20 percent of Native American and Alaska Native service members are women, higher than all other groups.

In World War II, several Dakota tribes aided the code talker efforts. Code talkers with the 34th Infantry Red Bull Division deployed to North Africa and participated in attacks on Italy under heavy shelling. Three were captured and confined to Italian and German prison camps.

Within Native American communities, Veterans generally are held in very high esteem, similar to Elders.

The US military has a long tradition of honoring Native American warriors by naming their helicopters after Native American tribes, such as the Blackhawk, Apache, Lakota, and Chinook.



Members of the Standing Rock Nation in a blessing ceremony for a South Dakota Army National Guard UH-72 Lakota helicopter, June 10, 2012 Photo: South Dakota National Guard Sgt. Jacqueline Fitzgerald <https://www.defense.gov/News/Inside-DOD/Blog/Article/2052989/why-army-helicopters-have-native-american-names/>

*Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.*



Commemorative U.S. Medal Honoring Dakota Code Talkers.  
Photo: U.S. Mint

### Graphic(s)

Historical photos of Native American service members in uniform, at work or participating in a military event or ceremony.



Michael Cavalli in Mobile Radio Transmitter for 4<sup>th</sup> Psyops Group, Saudi Arabia, 1991  
Photo: courtesy of Michael Cavalli

### Audio

Audio from Native American Veterans on:

1. Why they served and their experiences, where they served, whether they served in peacetime or conflict, impacts to family, and accomplishments and losses.
2. How life changed after service, their reception by their community.
3. Reflections on what it meant to serve.

### ENHANCED MEMORIAL

#### Interpretive Methods

- Flags
- Commemorative Posts (18)
- Pergola or Commemorative Structure
- Lake Pier
- Bench with QR audio

All enhanced memorial elements will be developed in consultation with Tribes and Native American Veterans.

#### Flags

- Tribal flags

#### Commemorative Posts

- Inscribed posts or elements designed in consultation with Tribes and Native American Veterans, reflecting their preferences on ways to honor Veterans.

#### Commemorative Structure

- Located in the woods near the lake offers seating and a place to reflect.

## MEMORIAL 2: GOLD STAR FAMILIES

Location: Lakeside Park, Egan



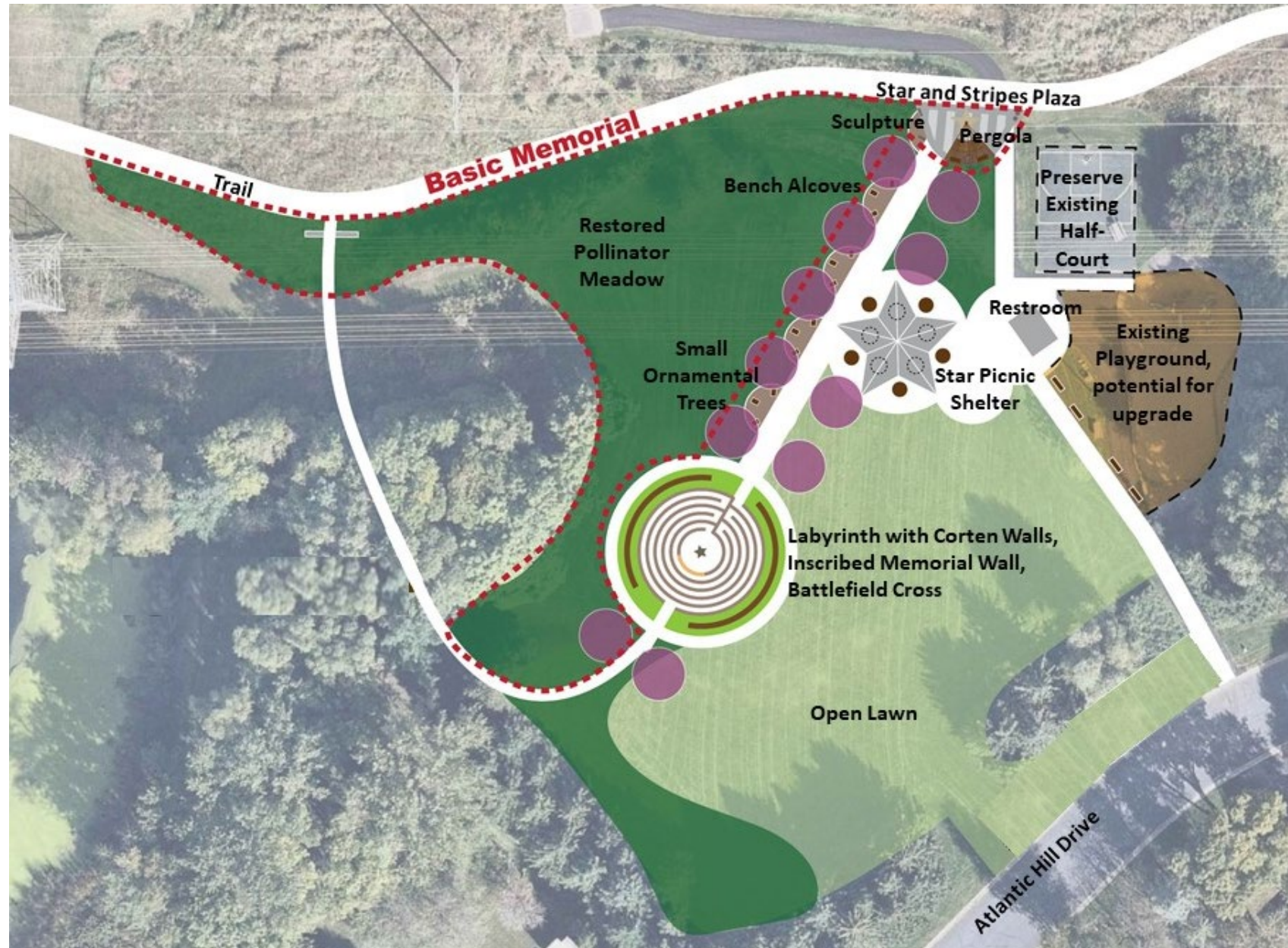
Aerial photo and map showing the location of Memorial 2, Gold Star Families



Views of Lakeside Park in Egan: Open meadow (left) and existing access trail along the north edge of the park (right)



Memorial 2: Gold Star Families Concept Plan



## PURPOSE

Introduce visitors to Gold Star Families who have lost a family member in service. Provide Gold Star Families a place for reflection and gathering.

## Visitor Experience

Visitors reach a welcoming kiosk and plaza at Lakeside Park, which has a pond, mature trees, open field, and playground. Visitors learn what it means to be a Gold Star Family. A trailside sculpture, perhaps with Gold Stars turning into birds and flying away, provides a place for visitors to leave dog tags. The trailside area invites visitors to explore the memorial, moving through contemplative spaces and gently active areas.

A star-shaped shelter provides for small gatherings and picnics. Along a meadow, a tree-lined path with small bench alcoves leads to a labyrinth memorializing the loss that many have experienced. Labyrinth ground surfaces (varied materials, colors, or textures) improve accessibility for all abilities. A sloping, metal wall surrounds the labyrinth, providing screening and a palette for figures or text. A battlefield cross centered in the labyrinth has a monument inscribed with names of Dakota County Veterans.

## Storyline

### Turning Points



Gold Star Pins presented to Gold Star Families.

Photo: U.S. Department of Defense, Kevin Gadde

Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.

## Opportunities

- A small parking lot for small group gatherings and working with the City of Egan on park improvements, such as a military-themed play area.

## Natural Qualities that Support this Memorial

- Lake, woods, and prairie loop offer nature immersion. Pond and restored meadow, work with the City to improve lake quality

## BASIC MEMORIAL

### Interpretive Methods

- **Small interpretive sign** with Q-R audio; transcripts online.
- **Interpretive panel** about Gold Star Families
- **U.S and Gold Star Flags** or flag-inspired art

### Small Interpretive Sign

*Content:* Gold Star Families

- History: Gold Star Families are spouses, children, parents, siblings, or others whose loved one died in military service. The Gold Star symbol dates to the beginning of U.S. involvement in World War I in 1917.
- How to honor Gold Star Families and their loved ones: saying their names, asking about how they lived, remembering their sacrifice.
- Quotations: *"The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. The strength of our Soldiers is our families. The Army recognizes that no one has given more for the nation than the families of the fallen."*  
<https://www.army.mil/goldstar/>
- The last Sunday of September is Gold Star Mothers and Families Day, and April 5 is Gold Star Spouses Day.

### Graphic(s)

- Contemporary photo of gatherings during Gold Star Spouses Day

### Audio

Song: "When the Little Blue Star in the Window Has Turned to Gold." Lyrics by Paul B. Armstrong, music by Henri Klickmann.

<https://levysheetmusic.mse.jhu.edu/collection/097/172>

### Panel

*Content*

- That life-changing moment begins with a knock at the door. Two people in dress uniforms, one a chaplain. Notification of death by telegram or script. *"The commandant has entrusted me to express (his/her) deep regret that your (son, daughter, mother, father), (name), (died/was killed in action) in (place) on (date). The commandant extends (his/her) deepest sympathy to you and your family in your loss."*

- Each blue star on a service flag represents an active duty service member. If they die in service, the blue star is replaced with a gold star, letting the community know that a member died serving their country.
- Information about support for Gold Star families.

#### *Graphic(s)*

- Photos of blue star service flags and gold star flags at residential homes
- Photo of military gun salute at funeral
- Image of a military family notification letter

#### *Audio*

- Audio and personal stories from Gold Star families.
- Content to be developed with the Gold Star families.

### **ENHANCED MEMORIAL**

#### **Interpretive Methods**

- **Gold Star sculpture** a place to leave dog tags (L)
- **Labyrinth with Monument** (E, F, G)
- **Battlefield cross** (E)
- **Personal memorial options:** pavers, benches, trees

#### **Gold Star Sculpture**

##### *Content*

- The honor no one wants and the loss that can never be filled.
- Gold Star Families deserve honor for the sacrifice of their loved one.

#### **Labyrinth with Monument**

##### *Content*

- This memorial is dedicated to those who died while serving.

#### **Battlefield Cross**

##### *Content*

- The soldier's battlefield cross is the field tribute to the fallen. The helmet and dog tags represent the fallen soldier, their name never to be

forgotten. The inverted rifle with bayonet signals a break in the action to pay respects. Worn combat boots symbolize the final march of the soldier's last battle. They have given all that was asked.

#### **Personal Memorials**

- Inscribed Pavers (4x8 inches) with three lines: name, rank and service branch, and years served or name of conflict while serving.
- Bench inscriptions may have space for more information than pavers, depending on bench style.

#### *Content*

- This memorial is to the women and men who answered the call to serve their country and to always remember their service and sacrifice.



Lance Corporal Daniel R. Olsen, killed in action April 2, 2007, Iraq  
Photo: provided by Gwen and Wayne Olsen, Gold Star Parents



Memorial 2, Gold Star Families: Trail and Labyrinth Overview Looking North



Memorial 2, Gold Star Families: Labyrinth Exterior with Inscriptions



Memorial 2, Gold Star Families: Gold Star Trailside Area Looking South from the Trail (left) and Bench Alcoves along Walkway to Labyrinth (right)

### MEMORIAL 3: MILITARY UNITS AND FLYERS

**Location:** Highline Corridor along southern edge of Excel Energy Property, Inver Grove Heights

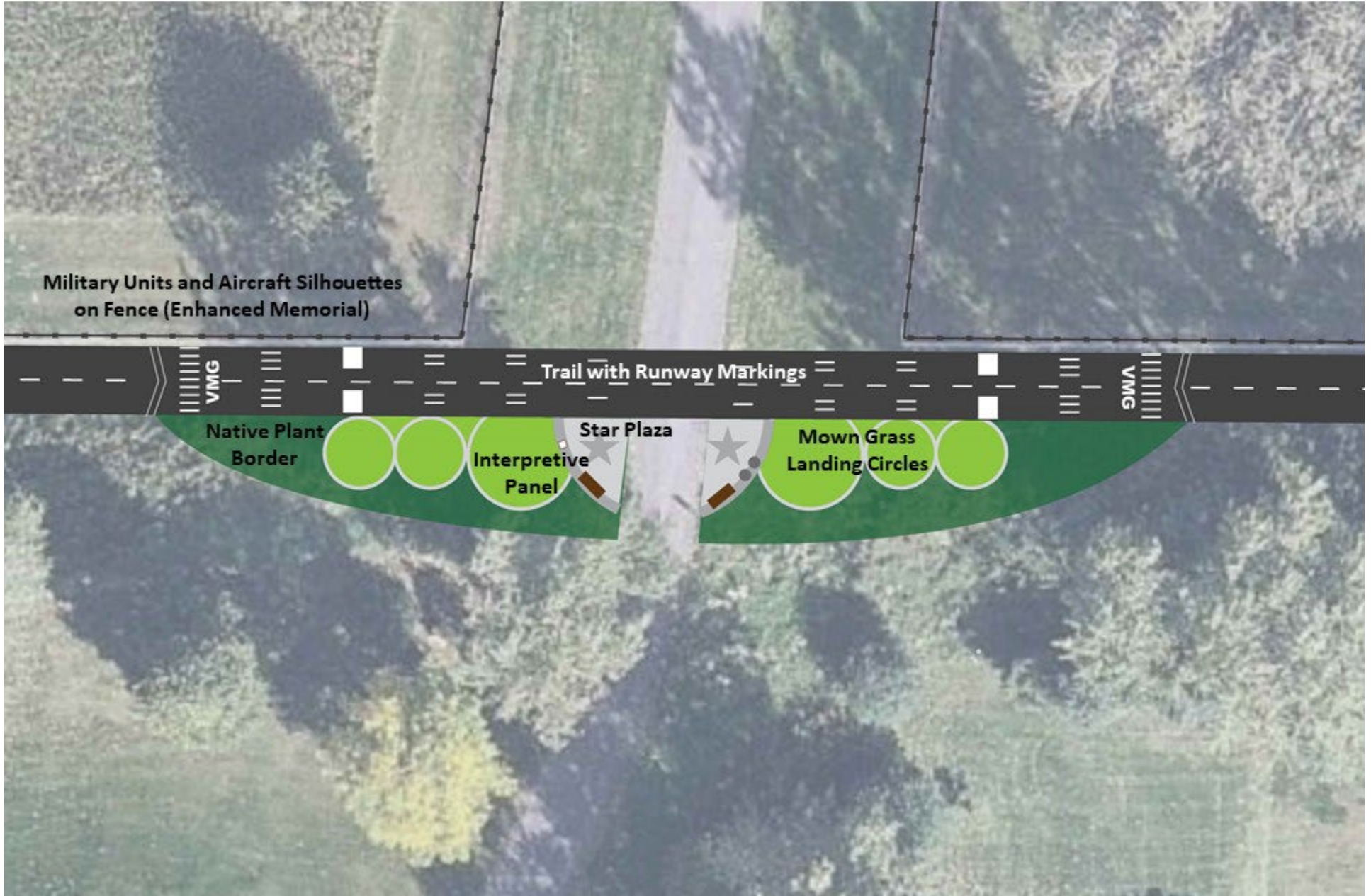


Aerial photo and map showing the location of Memorial 3



Views at Memorial 3: fence and tree line on Xcel Energy property (left) and water tower (right)

Memorial 3 Concept Plan: Military Units and Flyers



## PURPOSE

Inform visitors about Minnesota military units that have included Dakota County residents and connect visitors to Dakota County's aviation-related military history. More than 25,000 Veterans have resided in the county.

## Visitor Experience

Traveling east, a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge over Robert Trail (Highway 3) is dedicated to a notable military unit from Minnesota, such as the Civil War 1st Minnesota Volunteers or the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Red Bulls.

At Memorial 3, visitors see “runway” white hash marks and large numbers on the trail, commemorating Minnesota military aviation units. Large grass circles are adjacent to the trail. Silhouettes of Veterans from different eras, service branches, and genders stand at attention. Small interpretive panels honor the history of Veterans in the county and “Flyers.”

## Storylines

*Service Experience*

*Military Places*

*Who Veterans Are*

## Opportunities

- Consult with Xcel Energy on fence upgrades for memorial display. Consult with the Air National Guard Museum, Holman Field (rotary wing) and Camp Ripley (WW2 aviators).

## Natural Qualities that Support this Memorial

Tall pollinator-friendly plantings surround the plaza, in contrast with the mown grass circles.

## BASIC MEMORIAL

### Interpretive Methods

- **Small interpretive signs** with Q-R audio
- **Kiosk Panel** with greenway map, armories in the county
- **Official name of memorial bridge** (dedicated a Minnesota military unit)
- **Memorial “Landing Circles”**
- **Runway Paint Markings on Trail**

## Small Interpretive Sign

### Minnesota 1<sup>st</sup> Volunteers

#### Content

- In April 1861, Minnesota's governor immediately promised President Lincoln a regiment of 1,000 volunteer soldiers. The 1st Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiment were the first troops offered to fight for the United States during the Civil War.
- The 1st Minnesota fought at Bull Run, the Peninsula Campaign, Antietam, and Gettysburg.
- At Gettysburg (July 1863), the 1st Minnesota halted a Confederate assault, helping save the Union line and win the battle. In less than 24 hours, 64 men (out of about 335 in the regiment) were killed and 160 wounded. The casualty rate of 82 percent is believed to be the highest suffered by any Union regiment in a single action in the entire war.
- Three monuments at Gettysburg commemorate their steadfast bravery.



Memorial to the 1st Minnesota Volunteers at Gettysburg

#### Graphic(s)

- Historical photos of 1st Volunteer Infantry Regiment
- Battle maps of Bull Run, Peninsula campaign, Antietam, and Gettysburg where the MN 1st fought





First Minnesota Volunteers in Minneapolis  
 Photo: Dakota County Historical Society

**Small Interpretive Sign: 34th Red Bulls**

*Content*

- The West St. Paul Armory houses the 2-135 Infantry, A Company of the National Guard 34th Red Bull Infantry Division. In World War II, the 34th served in North Africa and Italy. Today, citizen-soldiers are regularly mobilized and deployed, providing combat and support teams.
- County residents continue to serve locally, nationally, and overseas.

*Graphic(s)*

- The Red Bull shoulder insignia



34th Red Bull Deployment Ceremony, September 20, 2018, St. Paul, Minnesota  
 Photo: US Department of Defense, Sgt. Sebastian Nemec, National Guard  
 Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.

**Memorial Landing Circles and Runway**

- Grass circles represent training airfields used by WWII V-5 Navy Cadets.
- Trail hash marks and end of runway numbers are a tribute to flyers.

*Content May Include*

- Grass circles allowed landing into the wind from any direction. President George H. W. Bush trained in the Twin Cities as a V-5 Cadet.
- The three air wings in MN: 133rd Airlift Wing, St. Paul (C-130s); 148th Fighter Wing, Duluth (F-16s); 934th Airlift Wing, Minneapolis (C-130s).

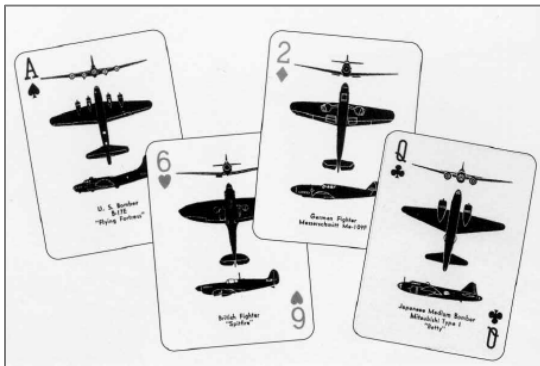
### Graphic(s)

- Maps or photos of grass airfields and the base at Fleming Field.



133<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Family Day, St. Paul, MN with Block-50, F-16, C-130 Hercules, B-25 Mitchell, and P-51 Mustang. Photo: US Department of Defense, Tech, Sgt. Amy Lovgren, August 20, 2016

*Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.*



1943 Airplane Spotter playing cards helped identify enemy and Allied aircraft

Photo: Dakota County Historical Society

## ENHANCED MEMORIAL

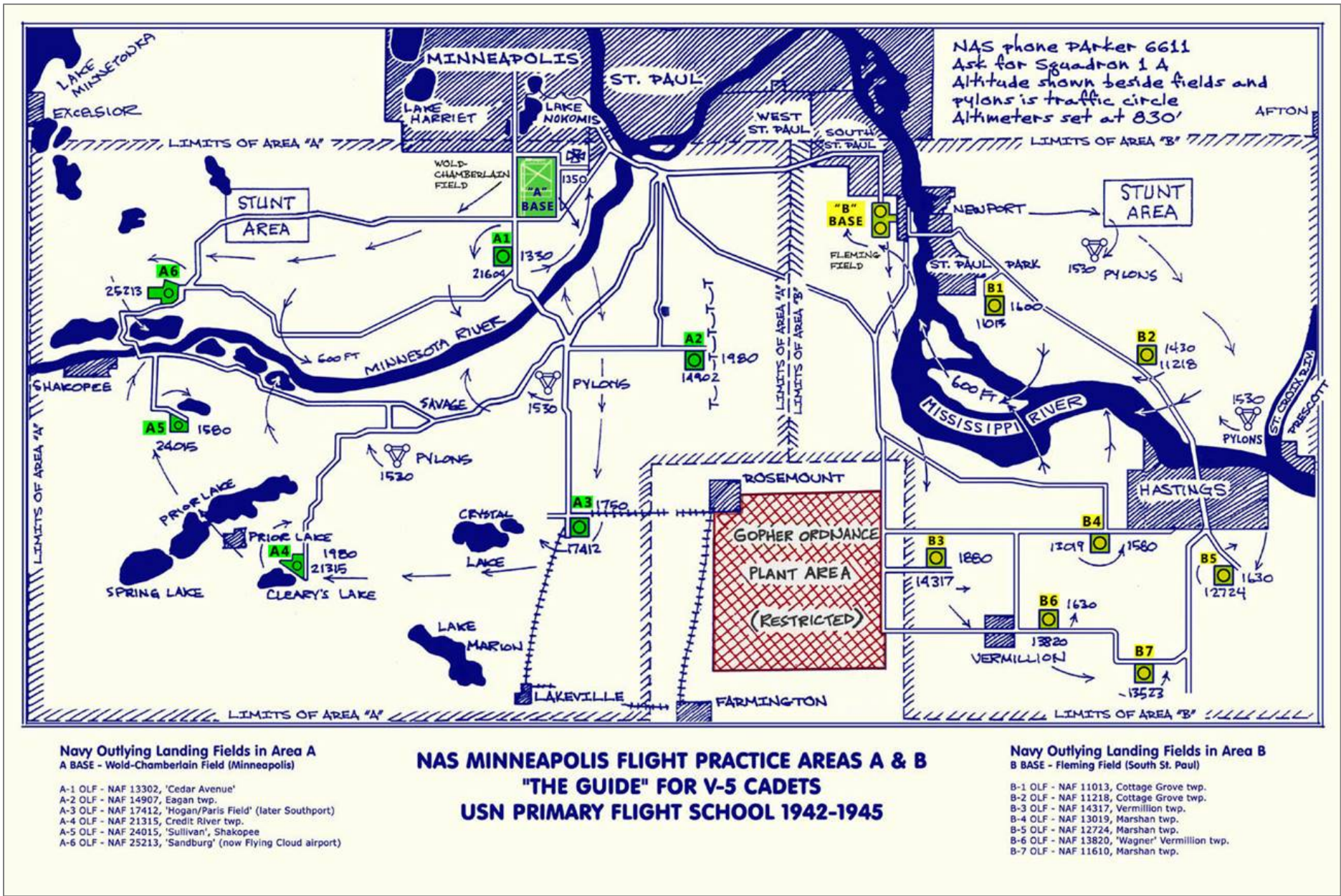
### Interpretive Methods

- **Silhouettes of service members**
- **Silhouettes of military aircraft flown by Minnesota units**
- **Additional small signs (2)**

### Silhouettes

#### Content

- Up to 12 individual silhouettes in metal, representing different eras, branches, genders, and ranks and identified by a small 5x7 inch graphic. Eras could include the Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam, Persian Gulf War, Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan.
- Panel with information about figures: rank, job, era, service branch
- Military aircraft profiles on site fencing, as permitted by Xcel Energy.



World War II-era Navy V-5 Cadet Flight Training Map with training bases, routes, and grass landing circles

## MEMORIAL 4: VETERAN SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

**Location:** Southern Lakes Park, Inver Grove Heights

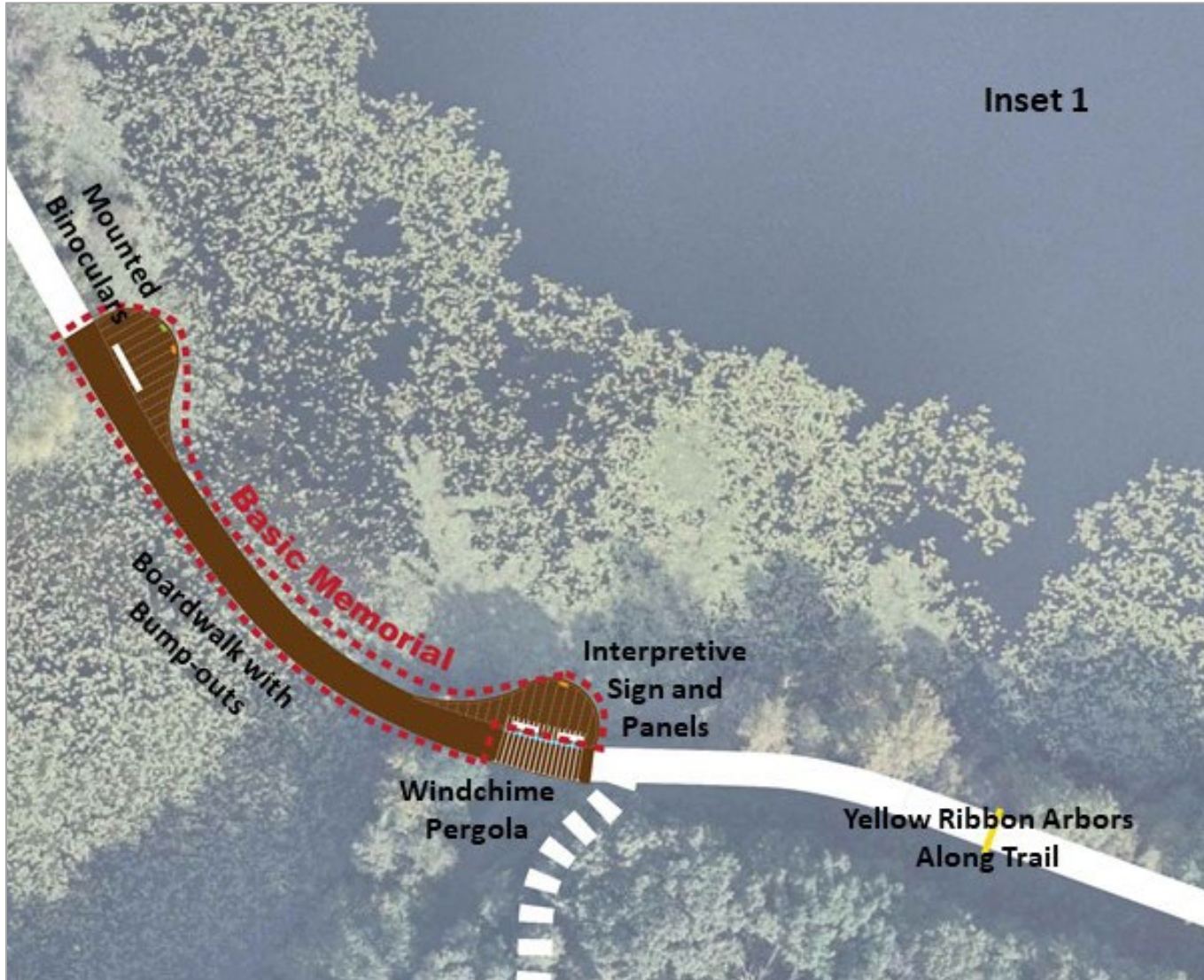


Aerial photo and map showing the location of Memorial 4 at Southern Lakes Park



Views of the Memorial 4 location at Southern Lakes Park: lake in winter (left) and existing woodland path (right)

Memorial 4 Concept Plan: Veterans Support Organizations



## **PURPOSE:**

Introduce visitors to Veterans' support organizations and provide a place for quiet reflection.

## **Visitor Experience**

As visitors step onto the boardwalk, chimes catch a breeze and ring softly, inviting them to slow down and look. A view of the pond, a comfortable bench, and a chance to relax invite visitors to pause and reflect. Etched into the boardwalk railings or on small panels along it are the names of Veteran support groups in Dakota County. As the boardwalk transitions to paved trail, visitors pass under a series of yellow-ribbon arbors with Veteran-support messages to and along Cliff Road.

## **Storyline**

*Who Veterans Are*

*Turning Points*

## **Natural Qualities that Support this Memorial**

Quiet shaded boardwalk amid mature native trees offers water views and healing in a natural setting.

## **BASIC MEMORIAL**

### **Interpretive Methods**

- **Small interpretive sign and kiosk panel** with Q-R code audio; transcripts available at a Veterans Memorial Greenway website.

### **Small Interpretive Sign (and Kiosk Panel)**

*Content:* Veterans Support

- Veterans support organizations have supported Veterans and their families during and after service.
- Dakota County Veterans Services assists Veterans and their families in navigating processes for state and federal benefits and understanding resources available from a variety of programs.
- Veterans Service Organizations support Veterans and their families through scholarships, housing, mental and physical health support, transition back to civilian life, and more. Visitors learn how they can make a difference for Veterans and their families.

## *Graphic(s)*

- Contemporary photos of a veterans group attending a service organization event, such as a picnic near a Veterans housing complex.
- Logos of service organizations

## *Audio*

- Audio and personal stories from Veterans Advisors.
- The impact of Veterans services. Content to be developed with Dakota County Veterans Services.

## **ENHANCED MEMORIAL**

### **Interpretive Methods**

- **Windchime Pergola**
- **Yellow Ribbons and Yellow-Ribbon Arbor**
- **Interpretive panel mounted to railing**
- **Mounted binoculars**

### **Windchime Pergola**

- Wooden pergola with protective roof overlooking the water offers a place to rest and reflect.
- Low tone metal or wooden chimes are integrated into the pergola wall.

### *Interpretive Content*

- Nature and chimes promote calm and encourage quiet reflection.

### **Yellow Ribbons and Yellow-Ribbon Arbor**

- Yellow ribbons: Visitors are invited to tie yellow ribbons to show support for Veterans.
- A yellow-ribbon arbor conveys Veteran-support messages, such as ways to honor or support Veterans or express appreciation for their service.

## Panel

### Content

- Everyone needs help sometimes. After service, Veterans and their families may need support for employment, education, mental and physical health, and housing.
- "**Beyond the Yellow Ribbon**" is a Minnesota-grown effort to support military families and returning soldiers. Neighbors help neighbors however they can. How visitors can help Veterans or their families.
- "**Fort Minnesota**" builds on the "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" network of communities to envision all of Minnesota as a base of support. The program is especially important for National Guard members, who do not have the services of a military base to fall back on.

### Graphic(s)

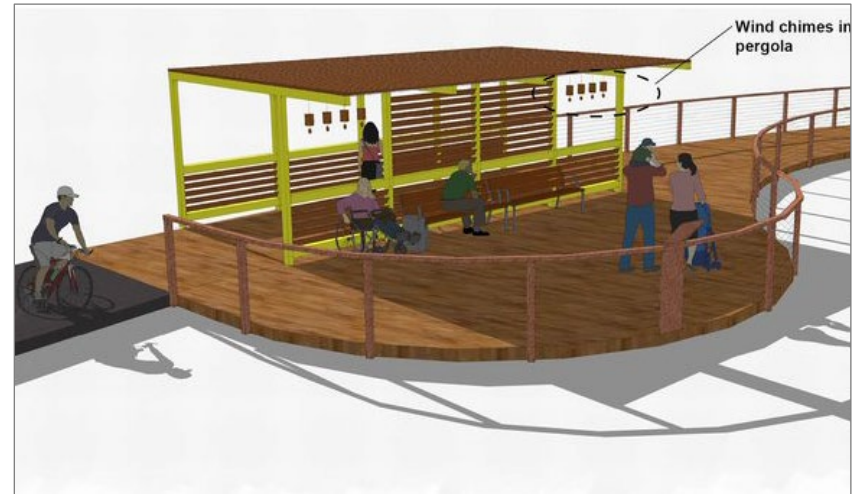
- Photo of yellow ribbons being tied on trees.

### Audio

- Audio and stories from Veterans and responses to questions:
  1. What Veterans organizations are you involved with and what are some of the impacts they've had in your life?
  2. What advice would you give to people who want to show their support for Veterans but don't know where to begin?



Memorial 4 Veterans Support: Concept of Yellow Ribbon Arbors Along Trail



Memorial 4 Veterans Support: Pergola on Boardwalk



I-35W Bridge lit yellow after Governor Dayton proclaimed Minneapolis a Yellow Ribbon City, 2013. Photo: U.S. Department of Defense, Staff Sgt. Paul Santikko.

*Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.*

## MEMORIAL 5: MISSING IN ACTION PRAIRIE, PATH OF SERVICE

**Location:** Flint Hills Resources property east of Akron Avenue north of Cliff Road



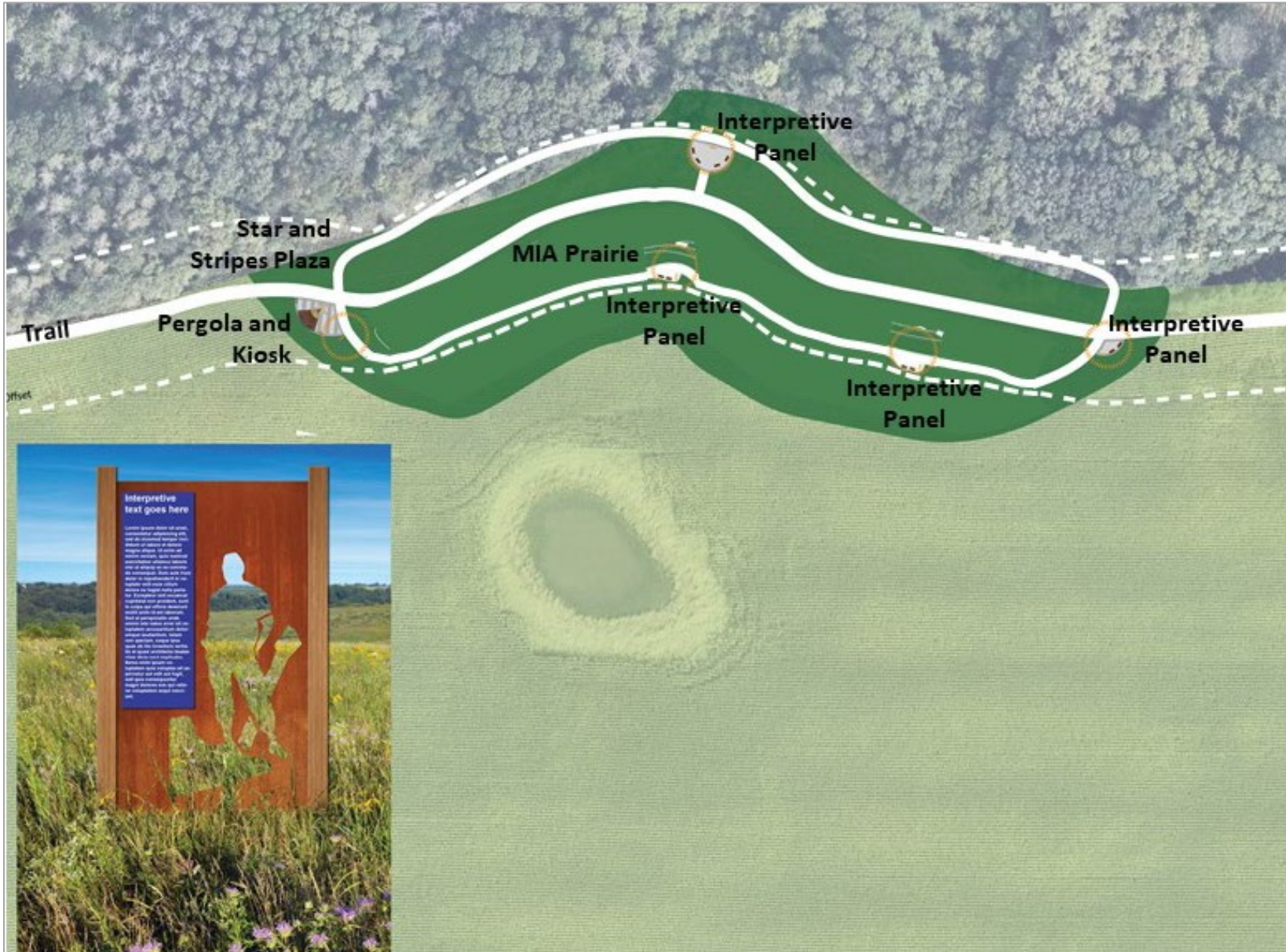
Aerial photo and map showing the location of Memorial 5



View eastward toward the Memorial 5 location



Memorial 5 Concept Plan: Missing in Action Prairie/Path of Service



## PURPOSE

Introduce visitors to Dakota County Veterans as diverse individuals and share stories about life before, during, and after service. Honor those missing in action.

### Visitor Experience

Visitors arrive where farmed fields meet forest, with a restored prairie south of the trail honoring those Missing in Action. A strolling loop encircles the trail and prairie, with benches and panels that share Veterans' stories about why they served, their time in the service, and lives after service. Messages reflect the diversity of Veterans in terms of gender, race, background, age, and physical ability. Veterans share stories in their own words, connecting with Veterans and non-Veterans.

### Storylines

*Turning Points*

*Who Veterans Are*

*Service Experience*

### Opportunities

- Regular gathering of Veteran stories on Veterans Day, Memorial Day, or Independence Day for future updates. Responses may be edited for length and would be published only with consent.

### Natural Qualities that Support this Memorial

Meandering trail along woodland edge and a restored prairie with scattered memorial boulders nestled in the grasses offers immersion in contrasting natural settings.

## BASIC MEMORIAL

### Interpretive Methods

- **Small interpretive sign with audio** (Q-R code); transcripts online
- **Kiosk** interpretive panel
- **MIA Prairie**, with option for personal field boulder markers

### Sign and Kiosk

*Content: Who Veterans Are*

- Every Veteran's story is unique.

- Veterans represent all genders, races, ethnicities, and backgrounds; serve in different military branches, and have lives outside of service.
- Whether serving a few years or many, Veterans experience challenges and accomplishments in service. Some are life-changing and leave a lasting impression. Others are memorable; few are entirely forgettable.

### Graphic(s)

- Photos of Veterans doing everyday activities in service
- Photos of Veteran celebration events like Memorial Day

### Audio

- Stories from Veterans, what they learned and achieved in the service.

*Content: Missing in Action-MIA*

- Some service members never return home. While many killed in action are buried in cemeteries overseas, many are never found.

### Graphics

- Images of historic telegrams sent by military officials to families of MIA service members
- Maps showing theaters of war with MIA service members, e.g., South Pacific in WWII, or Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War.



Meuse Argonne Cemetery in Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, France, where more than 14,000 U.S. service members from World War I are buried.

Photo: U.S. Department of Defense, Sgt. Daniel Friedberg, September 18, 2018.

*Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.*

## ENHANCED MEMORIAL

### Interpretive Methods

- **Five audio benches** along the strolling loop, paired with panels
- **Interpretive panels** on why they served, life in and after service
- **Options for personal memorials:** pavers, benches, field boulders

### Station 1 Panel and Bench: Why We Served

#### Content

- In addition to the draft, people enter service for different personal reasons, from family traditions to events like Pearl Harbor and 9/11.
- The military institution draws some. For others, it's the call to serve, or something they always knew they would do. Some may seek honor and respect, structure, and discipline, or to escape negative environments. Professional development, job stability, and benefits are important for some who choose to serve. Adventure and travel draw others.

#### Graphic(s)

- Photos of military personnel enlisting, boot camp, etc.
- Photos of people recorded in the audio tracks.

#### Audio (one or two benches)

- Stories from Veterans about why they served.



Lone Sailor Statue, Pearl Harbor Visitor Center, HI, 2017

Photo: U.S. Department of Defense, Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Somers Steelman

*Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.*

### Station 2 Panel and Bench: Service Experience

#### Content

- Dakota County Veterans have served on the ground, in the air, and under the ocean. Whether at jobs dangerous, exciting, grueling, or mundane, Veterans did their duty.



Pararescue Jumper Training, North Atlantic near the Azores, 2021. New York Air National Guard members participate in a NATO search and rescue exercise. Photo: U.S. Department of Defense, 106<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing/Public Affairs. *Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.*

#### Graphic(s)

- Historic and modern photos of people at their military job or station.
- Photos of people recorded in the audio tracks.

#### Audio (one or two benches)

- Stories from Veterans on their service experiences, where they served, what they did, and whether they served in peacetime or conflict.

### Station 3 Panel and Bench: Effects on Family

#### Content

- Veterans are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, daughters, and sons. Family members may not be enlisted, but service affects their lives.
- Deployed service members may be absent for long periods from family routines, holidays, celebrations, and major family events.

#### Graphic(s)

- Historical and modern photos of military personnel with family.
- Photos of people recorded in the audio tracks.

#### Audio (one or two benches)

- Personal stories from Veterans on the impacts of service to their family: positive and negative, and short- and long-term impacts.



133<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing welcomed home by family after a six-month deployment, St. Paul, MN, March 6, 2020. Photo: U.S. Department of Defense, Tech. Sgt. Amy Lovgren. Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.

### Station 4 Panel and Bench: Leaving Military Service

#### Content

- Some Veterans serve one tour of duty, others for 20 years or more. Transitioning back to civilian life is not always easy and requires planning as service members bring their military career to a close.

#### Graphic(s)

- Photos of military personnel and people recorded in the audio tracks.

#### Audio (one or two benches)

- Veteran reflections on how life changed, lifelong habits acquired from their military service, how they were received by the community.

### Station 5 Panel and Bench: Reflections of Service

#### Content

- Service never ends for some Veterans. They've made life-long friends, had life-changing experiences, and continue serving in civilian life.

#### Graphic(s)

- Photos of people recorded in the audio tracks .

#### Audio (one or two benches)

- Stories from Veterans on what it meant to serve.



WWII Veteran/Honor Flight visitor to the World War II Memorial in Washington DC, 2010. Photo U.S. Department of Defense, Sgt. Shawn Miller. Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.

## MEMORIAL 6: PLACES WE SERVED

**Location:** Proposed underpass at Rich Valley Boulevard, south of St. Patrick's Cemetery and Rich Valley Park, Inver Grove Heights

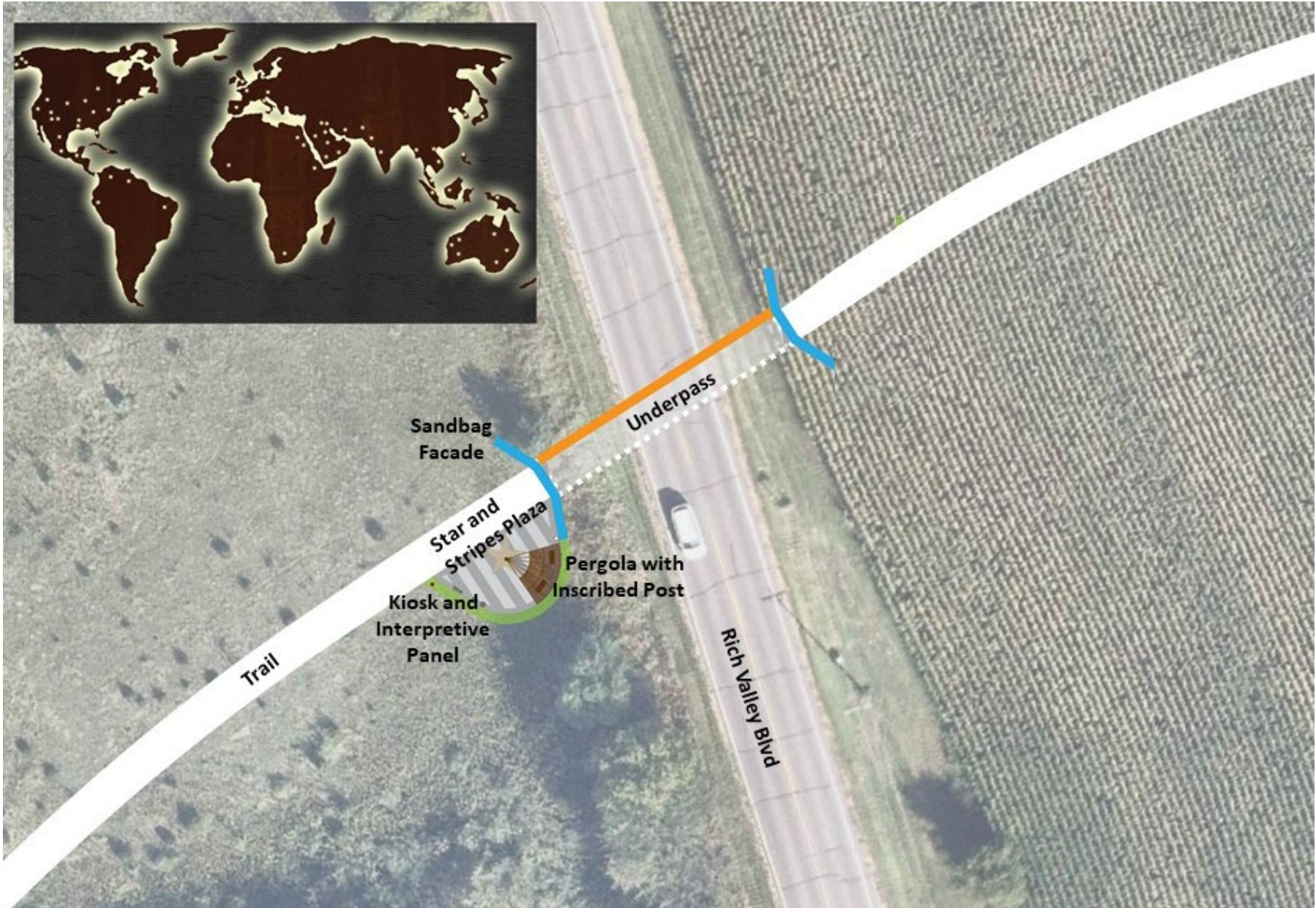


Aerial photo and map showing the location of Memorial 6



Views of the Memorial 6 location: meadow west of the road (left) and Rich Valley Blvd (right)

Memorial 6 Concept Plan: Places We Served



## PURPOSE:

Inform visitors about where Dakota County Veterans have served around the world and share experiences of service in distant places.

## Visitor Experience

Visitors see an underpass façade resembling sandbags. A world map shows that Dakota County Veterans have served around the world. Panels describe mapped places, ask visitors where they or family members have served, and share stories about serving in distant places as well as close to home.

## Storylines

*Service Experience*

*Who Veterans Are*

## Natural Qualities that Support this Memorial

Surrounding open space with expansive view of the wooded hill to the west. Prairie plantings along plaza.

## BASIC MEMORIAL

### Interpretive Methods

- **Sandbag façade**
- **Small interpretive sign** with Q-R code audio; transcripts online
- **Official name** of underpass that recognizes where Veterans have served

### Sandbag Façade

#### Content

The underpass entry façade represents fortification sandbags, etched with names of wars and notable military actions. For some, these may be places where they served or someone they know did, evoking strong memories.



Sandbag Façade

Events that brought U.S. service people to distant places could include:

- Civil War (1861-1865): Battle of Gettysburg, July 1-3, 1863; Battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862
- WWI (1917-1918): Battle of Cantigny, May 28, 1918
- WWII (1941-1945): Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941; Iwo Jima, February 19-March 26, 1945; D-Day, June 6, 1944
- Korean War (1950-1953): Battle of Chosin Reservoir
- Vietnam War (1955-1973): Tet Offensive, January-September, 1968 (phase 1: January-March; phase 1: May-June; phase 3: August-September); Operation Bolo, January 1967
- Persian Gulf War (1990-1991): Operation Desert Storm, January 17-February 28, 1991-
- Operation Restore Hope (Somalia, 1992-1993): Battle of Mogadishu, December, 1992
- Operation Uphold Democracy (Haiti, 1994-1995)
- Bosnian War (1994-1995)
- Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan, 2001- 2021): Battle of Sangin, November 2010
- Iraq War (2003-2011): Second Battle of Fallujah, November-December, 2004

Peacekeeping, disaster response, and humanitarian missions will also be etched into the sandbag façade and could be organized by timeframe, location, or military and non-military deployments. Another set of etched names or a small panel highlights coalition and allied forces that supported US military personnel serving around the globe.

### Small Interpretive Sign

*Content: Places We Served*

Dakota County veterans have served on every continent, close to home or on the other side of the world, in familiar or alien landscapes.

*Graphic(s)*

To be determined

### Audio

Audio and personal stories from Veterans on where they served (U.S. or overseas), and what was memorable. How coalition forces or local support affected their time overseas.



Girl trying out the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Band member's baritone horn, Al Kut, Iraq  
Photo: US Department of Defense, Tech. Sgt. Thomas Coney, 2009  
Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.

## ENHANCED MEMORIAL

### Interpretive Methods

- **World map** showing where County Veterans have served
- **Additional small interpretive sign:** where Veterans have served

### Small Interpretive Sign

#### Content

Veterans have served around the world, in conflicts, wars, peacekeeping, disasters, and humanitarian missions. Local coalition forces provide support with language translation, and knowledge of local customs and geography.

#### Graphic(s)

To be determined

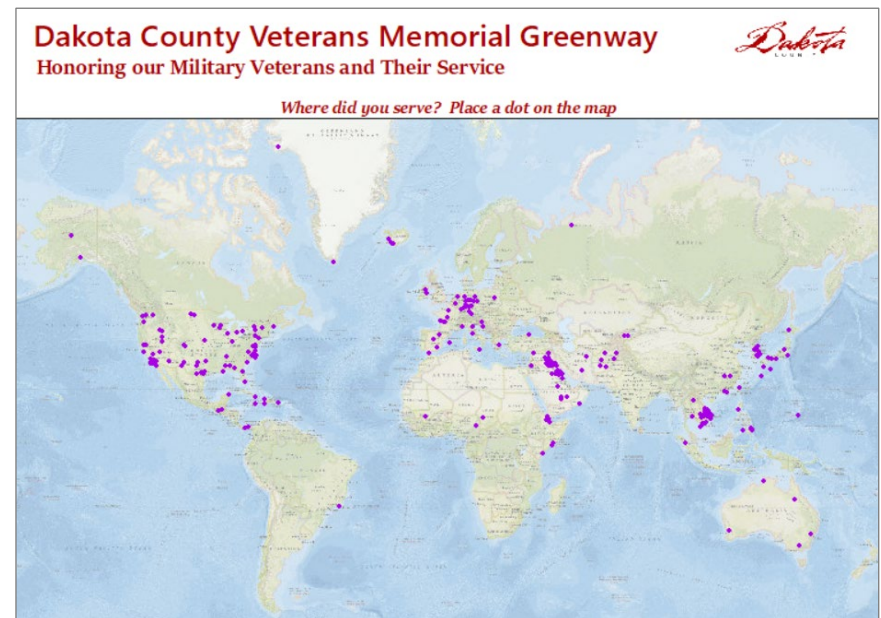
#### Audio

Audio and personal stories from Veterans about service, from daily life to how their service influenced their life today.

### World Map

#### Content

Dakota County Veterans have served in around the globe in times of peace and war. Veterans visiting the 2021 Dakota County Fair identified where they served on a world map, including the following locations:



2021 Dakota County Fair Interactive Map



## MEMORIAL 7: IN THE SERVICE

**Location:** Rich Valley Park southwest corner, Inver Grove Heights

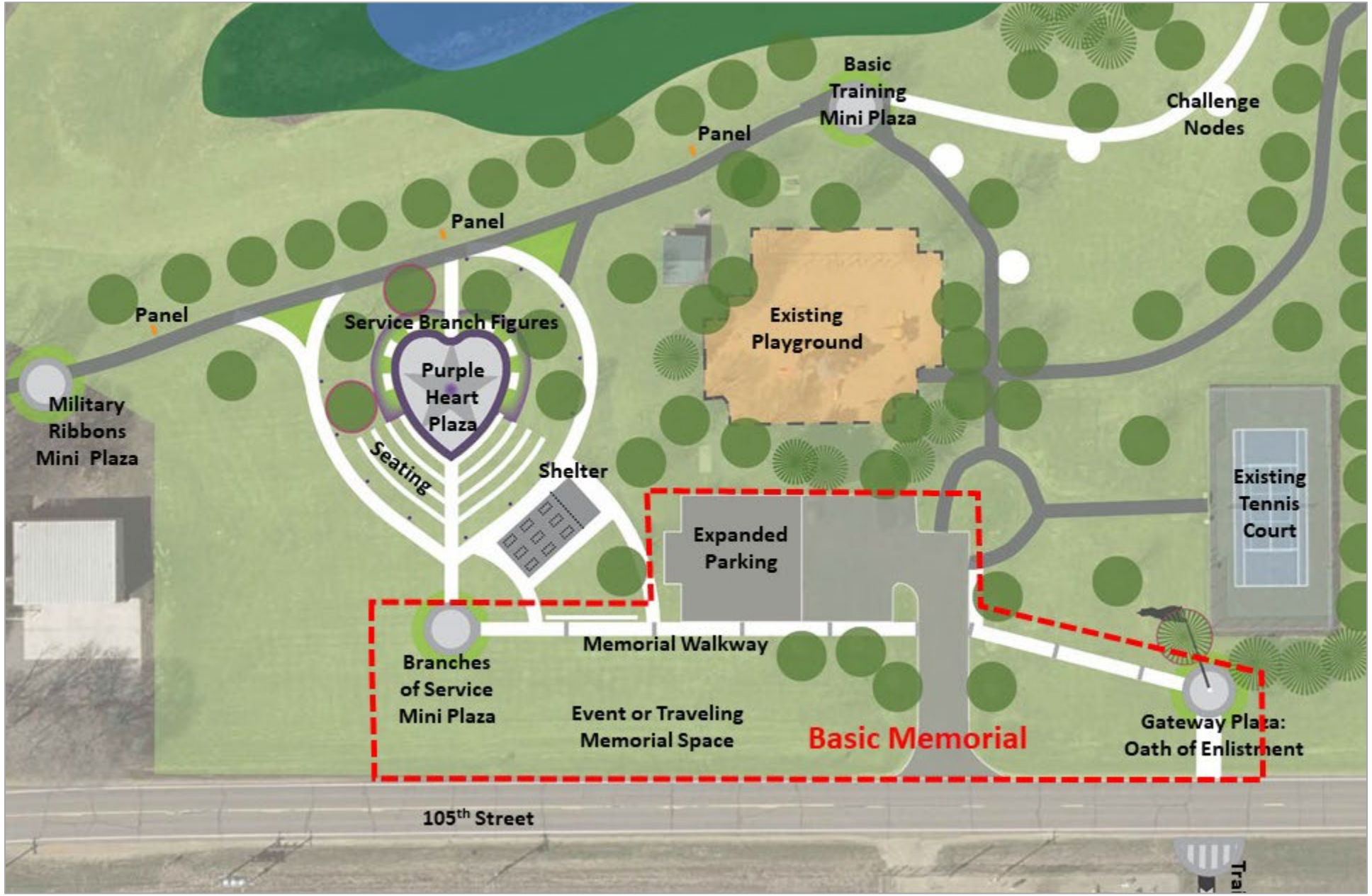


Aerial photo and map showing the location of Memorial 7



Views at Memorial 7: southeastern park entry and playground (left) and pond (right)

Memorial 7 Concept Plan, In the Service: Rich Valley Park



## PURPOSE:

Welcome visitors to learn about Veterans and County military connections. Honor Veterans and express gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

## Visitor Experience

Visitors to Rich Valley Park find athletic fields, parking, rest rooms, and other amenities. A spur trail through an allée of flags connects to the main greenway. Rich Valley Park is proposed as the main memorial for gathering, ceremonies, and sharing Veterans' experiences. The Purple Heart plaza honors the oldest US military medal awarded those wounded or killed in service, and has a fountain, seating, statues, flags, and stone markers. Panels illustrate basic training, military jobs, and service medals. A lake walk extension features a challenge course. Space for outdoor traveling exhibits supports the dynamic nature of this memorial.

## Subthemes

*Who Veterans Are*

*Service Experience*

## Natural Qualities that Support this Memorial

Scenic pond overlook offers a place for contemplation. Varied park trees and a largely bluegrass landscape are appealing for gatherings and picnics.

## BASIC MEMORIAL

### Interpretive Methods

- Kiosk with map at the main trail/spur trail intersection
- **Small interpretive sign** with Q-R audio, spur trail / or Gateway Plaza
- **US and Minnesota Flags (or Flag-themed art) and Trail Markings**
- **Small Gateway Plaza and West Mini Plaza**
- **Memorial Walkway** linking Gateway Plaza and West Mini Plaza

### Small Interpretive Sign

#### Content

- Overview of service branches and description of flags/art on spur trail

#### Graphic(s)

- Historical and modern photos of military personnel

#### Audio

- Veterans' stories about their branch, what they did, where they served



Memorial 7 overview showing main trail, connecting spur, and memorial.



Intersection of main trail and spur, looking toward Rich Valley Park

### Kiosk

#### Content

- Dakota County's military connections
- Veterans' service stories and invitation for Veterans to add theirs

#### Graphic(s)

- Veterans Memorial Greenway map and County map of military places

### Gateway Flag and Trail Markings

- U.S Flag or flag-themed art at first node in park
- Pavement chevrons at ends of the spur trail

### Small Gateway Plazas *(Content for west Plaza under Enhanced Memorial)*

- Oath: *"I, \_\_\_, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God."*

### Memorial Walkway

Pavement pressings: service branch seals, Veteran quotes, or phrases that may be unknown to civilians, such as "15 minutes prior to 15 minutes prior," "Check your six," "Full battle rattle," "Good initiative, bad judgement," and more.

## TRAILHEAD IMPROVEMENTS

Two major amenities are proposed to be added after initial trail construction, working with the City of Inver Grove Heights: a small addition to the parking lot off 105<sup>th</sup> Street, and a picnic shelter/restroom building.



Conceptual drawing of the proposed shelter building.



Veterans Memorial (Purple Heart) Plaza at Rich Valley Park

## ENHANCED MEMORIAL

### Interpretive Methods

- Purple Heart Memorial Plaza
- Gateway Plaza Interpretation
- Mini plazas
- Interpretive panels
- Lake loop connections and challenge course nodes
- Options for personal memorials: pavers and benches
- Allée of flags or flag-themed art on spur trail

### Purple Heart Memorial Plaza

The focal area is the Purple Heart Plaza, with an embossed star in the center and a fountain level with the surface, operated as desired. At night, the fountain and solar paving material surrounding the heart-shaped plaza glow with a soft purple light. The upper heart is surrounded by interpretive memorial markers and statues, backed by trees and perennial plantings with purple blooms. Rows of seating face the southern edges of the heart plaza.

### Plaza-Service Branch Stone Markers and Dakota County Connections to Branches of Service

#### Content

- *Army*: oldest military branch, protects U.S. security and its resources.
- *Marine Corps*: often first on the ground in combat situations.
- *Navy*: delivers combat forces, maintains security in the air and at sea.
- *Air Force*: protects U.S. interests with a focus on air power.
- *Space Force*: defends U.S. interests on land, in the air, and from orbit with advanced technology.
- *Coast Guard*: maritime force with military, law enforcement, humanitarian, regulatory, and diplomatic capabilities.

#### Graphic(s)

- Branch of service seals

### Plaza-Service Branch Figures

- Six service branch figures, reflecting gender and ethnic diversity.



"Three Servicemen" sculpture, National Vietnam Memorial, Washington DC

Photo: U.S. Department of Defense, Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Michael J. Carden

Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.

### Plaza-Flags

- U.S., State of Minnesota, six service branches, and MIA/POW.



Veterans Memorial (Purple Heart) Plaza, Looking Northeast

## Panel on Basic Training

### Content

- Veterans' stories about basic training, the transformative and memorable first step in military service and military careers.



Marine Recruit in Basic Training, Parris Island, SC, 2016  
Photo: U.S. Department of Defense, Lance Cpl. Dylan Walters

### Graphic(s)

- Photos of basic training, graduation ceremony

### Audio

- Stories from Veterans on what they learned and are proud of achieving.

## Panel(s) on County Veterans and Units (at shelter building)

### Content

- General John W. Vessey, Jr., born in Lakeville, is Minnesota's most decorated veteran. From 1939-1985, he held seven commands, served in three wars, received nine awards, and earned seven rows of battle decorations and campaign ribbons. A former member of the 34<sup>th</sup> Red Bull Infantry Division, Vessey became the tenth Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1982.
- US Army Ranger Corporal Benjamin Kopp: The 21-year-old from Rosemount saved six comrades when his regiment came under insurgent fire in Afghanistan, 2009. Kopp was hit and did not survive. His heroism continued through tissue and organ donations to 60 people. The County Road 46 bridge over US Highway 52 memorializes Kopp.
- US Army Chief Warrant Officer Dennis Groth: During the Vietnam War in 1968, the 21-year-old from Rosemount was killed when his MedEvac

helicopter crashed after dropping off a wounded soldier. The County Road 42 bridge over US Highway 52 memorializes Groth.

- Private Joseph Marthaler: killed in action at Iwo Jima in 1945 while serving in the US Marines in World War II. The Highway 52 bridge over Wentworth Avenue was dedicated to Marthaler in 2021.
- Major Mary Diffley, WWII
- Lance Cpl. Daniel R. Olsen, killed in Iraq in 2007.
- The 34th Infantry Red Bull Division.

### Graphic(s)

- Photos of General Vessey, US Army Ranger Corporal Kopp, US Army Chief Warrant Officer Groth, and Marine Private Marthaler.

### Audio

- To be determined

## Panel(s) on Military Jobs

### Content

- From agriculture to computer science, the military offers learning, training, and professional development. Military jobs can be unique to service or much the same as civilian jobs.



The submarine USS Helena leaving San Diego Harbor.  
Photo: U.S. Department of Defense, PA3 Mary Larkin Jones, 2006.  
*Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement*

### Graphic(s)

- Photos of military personnel at their duty post.

### Audio

- Stories from Veterans on military job training they received.

### Panel on Women in the Military

#### Content

- The role of women in the U.S. military has evolved over the century, from limited, prescribed roles to full engagement. Women represent 16 percent of U.S. enlisted forces and 19 percent of the officer corps today.

#### Graphics

- Historic and contemporary photos of women service members showing the evolution of their roles.

#### Audio

- Stories from women Veterans from different eras, speaking to the work that they performed, barriers they faced, and their accomplishments.



Vietnam Women's Memorial, Washington DC, 2013

Photo: U.S. Department of Defense, Lisa Ferdinando

Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.

### Panel(s) on Service Branches and Medals

A large interactive panel helps visitors identify service branches, awards, commendations, and information conveyed by medals and ribbons.



#### Content

Show and describe military ribbons, insignias, and medals.

- *Purple Heart*: Instituted in 1782 as a medal of honor, it is now given to soldiers who receive significant injuries or die in the line of duty.
- *Medal of Honor*: Highest award for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty.
- *Distinguished Service Cross (DSC)*: Second highest decoration awarded to Army members for extraordinary heroism.
- *Navy Cross*: Second highest decoration awarded to Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard service members for extraordinary heroism.
- *Air Force Cross*: Second highest decoration awarded to Air Force service members for extraordinary heroism.
- *Silver Star*: The third highest combat decoration that may be awarded for gallantry in action.
- *Bronze Star*: Awarded for heroic achievement, heroic service, meritorious achievement, or meritorious service in a combat zone.
- *Legion of Merit*: Given to US service members as well as foreign military and political figures for exemplary service and achievement.
- *Prisoner of War Medal*: Authorized in 1985, awarded to any US service member taken as a prisoner of war on or after April 5, 1917.



*Graphic(s)*

Photos of military ribbons and medals

*Graphic(s)*

“Reading the Fruit Salad” is a lift-and-drop interactive display of medals and ribbons on a dress uniform with identification of each underneath. Fruit salad” refers to medals and ribbons on a dress uniform.



Purple Heart Medals (right). Photo: U.S. Department of Defense  
*Note: use of DoD visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.*

**Allée of Flags**

- Flags or flag-themed art: six service branches (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard), and an MIA/POW flag.

Flag etiquette: In a group of flag staffs, the American (US) flag should be at the center and the highest point. When other flags are flown on the same staff, the US flag must be at the top.

**Lake Loop Connection with Challenge Course Nodes**

New trail connections complete a lake walking loop. A new trail segment on the southeast side of the lake provides an opportunity to build from the Basic Training panel at “P,” with small nodes that include challenge exercises, such as climbing, crossing, or jumping activities *(to be further developed with Veterans and Inver Grove Heights Parks staff)*.



New trail segments (shown in white) complete a lake loop

**Personal Memorials** (location to be determined)

- **Inscribed Pavers** (4x8 inches) with 1) name, 2) rank and service branch, 3) years served or name of conflict while serving.
- **Bench Inscriptions** similar to the pavers may have space for more information depending on bench style.

*Content*

The memorial paver area could include a dedication, such as: *“This Veterans Path of Honor is dedicated to the women and men who answered the call to serve their country. Remember always their service and sacrifice.”*

## MEMORIAL 8: DAKOTA COUNTY MILITARY PLACES

**Location:** end of 105<sup>th</sup> Street and northward to proposed underpass of Highway 52, Inver Grove Heights

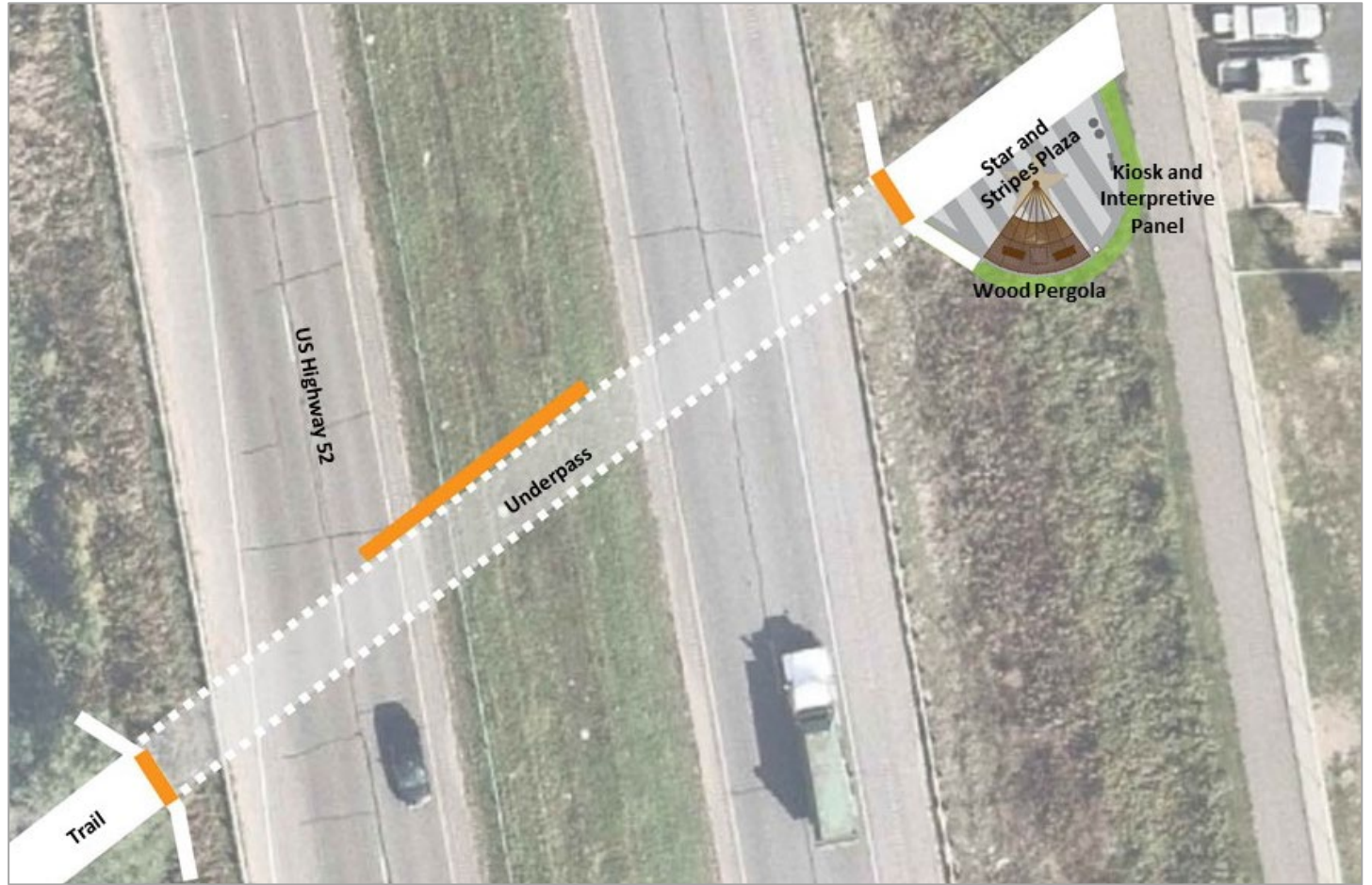


Aerial photo and map of the Memorial 8 location



Memorial 8 View at the end of 105th Street

Memorial 8 Concept Plan: Dakota County Military Connections



## PURPOSE:

Welcome visitors and connect them to Dakota County's military places. Introduce visitors to the Veterans Memorial Greenway overall theme: recognizing and honoring Dakota County Veterans, expressing gratitude for their service, and sharing their life-changing experiences.

## Visitor Experience

Visitors approaching the greenway—on foot, bicycle, or assisted mobility device—find a kiosk, interpretive features, flags or flag-themed art, and standard trail amenities such as benches and wayfinding. Graphic panels show maps of the greenway and military-related places in Dakota County.

## Subtheme

*Military Places*

## Opportunities

- Memorial 8 connects to the Mississippi River Greenway.

## Natural Qualities that Support this Memorial

The rural open space setting in a subtle valley offers a sheltered area, buffered from the freeway. Small prairie restoration areas near the plaza.

## BASIC MEMORIAL

### Interpretive Methods

- **Small interpretive sign** with audio; transcripts available online.
- **Kiosk** with greenway map and County map showing military-places.
- **Official name of underpass that honors Veterans**

### Small Interpretive Sign

*Content:* **B-52 crash** in Inver Grove Heights (1958)

- During the Cold War, on September 16, 1958, a US Air Force B-52 bomber crashed during a training mission out of Loring Air Force Base in Maine. The crash site is just north of the greenway.
- The giant plane, traveling 600 miles per hour at an altitude of 36,000 feet, started breaking apart in the air. It crashed in flames and exploded as it hit the ground, ripping a gash 300 feet long by 15 feet deep in a farmyard and setting the farm buildings ablaze.

- The crash killed seven of the eight crew members. The co-pilot survived by ejecting and parachuting from the plane. Eight members of the farm family were injured.

### Graphic(s)

- Historical photos of a B-52 in the air and the crash aftermath
- Map showing the crash site and "You Are Here" location.
- Image of the crash site memorial.



*An aerial photo shows the still smoking Kahl farmhouse and the five craters at the impact point just east of Highway 52. From "On Final", March 2003.*

B-52 Crash Aftermath, Inver Grove Heights, 1958  
Photo: Dakota County Historical Society

### Audio

- Audio from Veterans, residents, and county staff.

### *Additional Content*

**Nike Missile Battery MS-40** in Castle Rock Township (1959-1972). This Cold War-era air defense missile site was one of four protecting the Twin Cities from cardinal directions in the event of an attack. Missiles had a 90-mile range and could carry nuclear payloads. The site is decommissioned.



Nike Battery, inside the pit (left) and surface view with elevator doors closed (right). Photo: U.S. Library of Congress, Historic American Engineering Record, Andrew Baugnet

**Hastings Veterans Home** is one of two care facilities operated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Minnesota. The Hastings facility houses up to 200 Veterans at a range of care levels.



F-16 Fighting Falcons from the MN National Guard 148<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing fly over the Hastings Veterans Home to honor health care and essential workers in the pandemic, May 2020. Photo: U.S. Department of Defense, Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Ben Houtkooper.

### **Kiosk**

#### *Content*

- Dakota County's military places: roads, events, memorials, and infrastructure.
- Veterans' stories about service and its impact on their lives. Veterans are invited to consider adding their voices.
- **Rich Valley Boulevard** is part of the historic Mendota-Wabashaw Road that connected Mendota to Wabasha. Surveyed by John S. Potter in 1850, it was one of five federal military roads in the Minnesota Territory and was primarily used for commercial purposes and mail.
- Navy "Listening Station" Satellite Observation

#### *Graphic(s)*

- Veterans Memorial Greenway map with a "You are Here" marker
- Dakota County map with military-related places.

### **ENHANCED MEMORIAL**

#### **Interpretive Methods**

- **Large Interpretive Panel**

#### *Content*

#### **Dodd Road**

- Dodd Road is one of the oldest roads in Dakota County.
- Five military roads proposed for the Minnesota Territory in the 1850s connected forts. and served Euro-American settlers. The Mendota-Big Sioux Road connected to the Missouri River, through Rock Bend (now St. Peter). Captain William B. Dodd founded Rock Bend and wanted a reliable, all-weather route from Rock Bend to Mendota and St. Paul.
- Using private funding in 1853, Dodd and a 11-person team built Dodd Road in 109 days from St. Paul to Rock Bend. In 1853, Dodd Road was absorbed into a federal military road from Sioux City, Iowa, to Mendota.

#### *Graphic(s)*

- Historical photos and maps of military roads in Dakota County.

**Gopher Ordnance Works (GOW):** near Rosemount, built in 1942-43 to manufacture smokeless gunpowder. With two power plants and 850 buildings, GOW employed about 3,000 employees. It operated briefly before the government closed it in 1945 at the war's end.

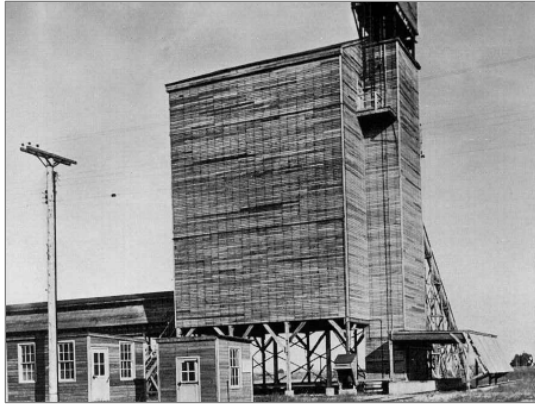


Figure 1 Completed blending tower at the Gopher Ordnance Works  
Photo: Dakota County Historical Society

**Port Cargill in Savage:** during World War II, Cargill constructed a port on the Minnesota River to produce supply tankers and towboats for the US Navy.

**The Mendota Bridge** opened November 8, 1926, dedicated to the Gopher Gunners of Minnesota's 151<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery who died in World War I.

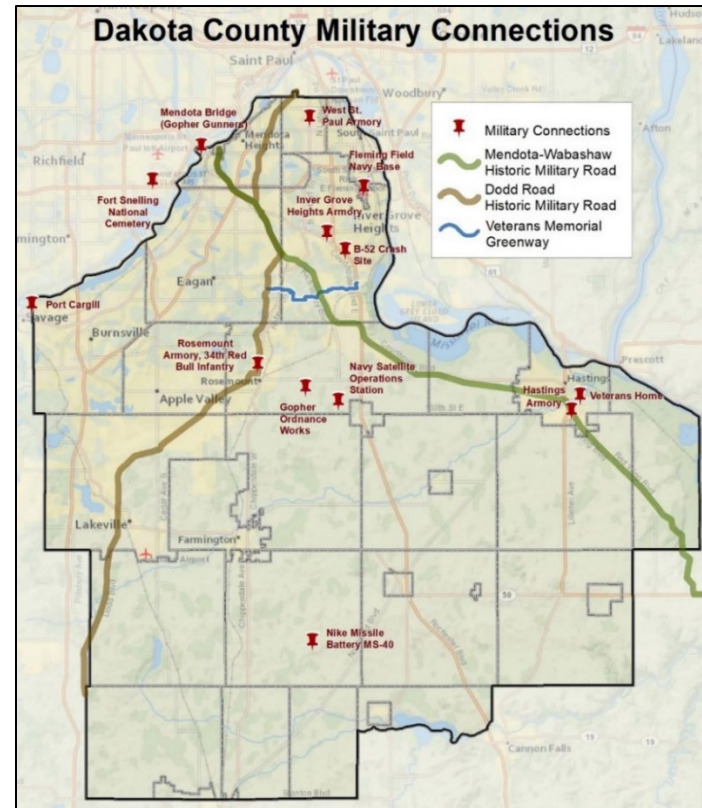


Port Cargill Navy ship passing under the Mendota Bridge  
Photo: Dakota County Historical Society

**Veteran Cemetery Memorials:** cemeteries near the greenway with Veteran memorials.



Grave of Thomas McDonough, Civil War Veteran, St. Patrick's Cemetery, Inver Grove Heights near Rich Valley Park. Photo: Dakota County staff



Map of Military Places and Connections in Dakota County

### III. IMPLEMENTATION

This Plan sets forth a vision for interpretive memorials for the Veterans Memorial Greenway—clear enough to identify major storylines that are important to tell, but flexible enough to be adapted, as needed, in full design and buildout. Before interpretive memorial elements can be built, a more detailed production design process will refine elements in this plan to buildable features with all graphics and text needed to tell the stories. This will produce exact interpretive content and construction documents with specifications for fabricating panels, sculptures, and other media. As with development of this plan, Veterans will be a primary source of information and advisors in production design.

As approved by the County Board of Commissioners, implementation will rely on combination of County-derived funding and external funds obtained through grants and other fundraising activities. Basic Memorial elements generally will be built with construction of the greenway, proposed to occur in three segments (Central, West, then East). The picnic shelter and bathroom building proposed for Memorial 7 in Rich Valley Park would be a typical County cost or cost-share with the City of Inver Grove Heights, but likely would be built after initial construction of the greenway and other basic memorial elements. The Enhanced Memorial interpretive elements will be built over time as non-County funding sources are committed.

#### COST ESTIMATES

Preliminary cost estimates are provided for each of the eight memorial concepts, which will be refined with detailed design. “**Basic Memorial**” elements are standard amenities that the County typically provides, would be built with the greenway, and would be largely funded by Dakota County. Costs for the Basic Memorials are separated into interpretive memorial elements and typical site furnishings that can be adapted to convey the overall Veterans memorial theme. Several nodes are identified where there would be an option to include a custom pergola, shown in the concept drawing to the right.

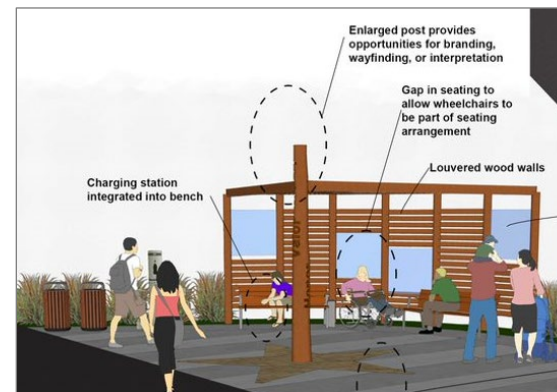
The estimates for “**Enhanced Memorials**” include larger installations that surpass typical greenway amenities and require supplemental non-County funds obtained through grants and private fundraising efforts. When

possible, Enhanced Memorials should use hardscapes and low-maintenance and vandalism-resistant materials to reduce ongoing maintenance and replacement costs.

Cost estimates are preliminary and will be refined during production design. Estimates include a standard 20 percent contingency amount.

#### ADDITIONAL NOTES:

**Wooden Pergola with Inscribed Live Wood Post:** this Basic Memorial element is shown in graphics throughout this plan and is a custom item comparable to artwork. The preliminary cost for the pergola and inscribed live wood post is estimated at \$85,000, more than typical trailhead amenities for County greenways. For “Basic” estimates, a premade standard bench with a built-in shade structure, estimated at \$10,000, was substituted. The pergola is included, as-estimated, in “Basic-Custom” costs.



Wooden Pergola with Inscribed Wood Post

**Charging Stations:** to serve visitors who rely on rechargeable mobility devices, this plan recommends charging stations at several locations. These stations should offer some cover from the elements.

**Bid-Alternate Proposals:** should be requested in the bidding process, for items such as the pergola and live post. Costs can fluctuate and some vendors may be able to provide a structure comparable to the pergola at lower cost.

## MEMORIAL 1: NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS

**Standard Site Furnishings:** *provided as part of greenway construction*

- Monument sign
- Star and stripes colored concrete
- Double-sided kiosk
- Mobility device charging
- Bike repair station
- Paired trash and recycling
- Landscaping, including plants significant to Native Americans

### **Basic Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$9,000**

- Interpretive panel for kiosk
- Small interpretive sign with Q-R code for audio content

### **Enhanced Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$196,000**

- Lake Pier
- Inscribed posts (18)
- Additional bench, Q-R code audio
- Wood pergola
- Tribal flags

### **Interpretive Cost Estimates for Memorial 1**

**Basic and Enhanced \$205,000**

## MEMORIAL 2: GOLD STAR FAMILIES

**Standard Site Furnishings:** *provided as part of greenway construction*

- Star and stripes colored concrete
- Drinking fountain/bottle filler
- Electric charging outlet for mobility devices
- Bike repair station
- Paired trash and recycling
- Landscaping

### **Basic Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$24,000**

- Interpretive sign with Q-R code for audio content
- Stand-alone Interpretive Panel
- Flags (U.S., Gold Star Families) or flag-themed art

### **Enhanced Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$817,000**

- Walkways and crushed limestone seating alcoves with star benches
- Small parking lot, stall striping, curb and gutter, sign
- Star-shaped picnic shelter and picnic tables (10)
- Restroom building
- Labyrinth with battlefield cross, memorial wall, and Corten walls
- Forest path gateway art
- Playground enhancement (*potential future project with City of Eagan*)
- Landscaping
- Stars to Birds Sculpture (*cost TBD*)

### **Interpretive Cost Estimates for Memorial 2**

**Basic and Enhanced \$841,000**



### MEMORIAL 3: MILITARY UNITS AND FLYERS

*Standard Site Furnishings: provided as part of greenway construction*

- Star and stripes concrete paving
- Paired trash and recycling
- Double-sided kiosk
- Landscaping

#### **Basic Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$14,000**

- Interpretive signs with Q-R code for audio content
- Interpretive panel for kiosk
- Runway paint markings

#### **Interpretive Cost Estimates for Memorial 3**

**Basic and Enhanced \$174,000**

- Crosswalk markings
- Bridge Dedication

#### **Enhanced Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$160,000**

- Silhouettes of military figures over time and aircraft
- Small interpretive signs

### MEMORIAL 4: VETERANS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

*Standard Site Furnishings: provided as part of greenway construction*

- Paired trash and recycling
- Double-sided kiosk

#### **Basic Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$9,000**

- Interpretive sign with Q-R code for audio content
- Interpretive panel for kiosk

#### **Interpretive Cost Estimates for Memorial 4**

**Basic and Enhanced \$108,000**

- Boardwalk bump out
- Benches

#### **Enhanced Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$99,000**

- Windchime pergola
- Interpretive panel
- Mounted binoculars
- Yellow Ribbon arbors

### MEMORIAL 5: MISSING IN ACTION PRAIRIE/PATH OF SERVICE

*Standard Site Furnishings: provided as part of greenway construction*

- Star and stripes concrete paving
- Paired trash and recycling
- Double-sided kiosk
- Landscaping

#### **Basic Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$9,000**

- Interpretive sign with Q-R code for audio content
- Interpretive panel for kiosk

#### **Interpretive Cost Estimates for Memorial 5**

**Basic and Enhanced \$193,000**

- Prairie restoration
- Standard benches
- Charging station (solar bench)
- Shaded Bench structure

#### **Enhanced Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$184,000**

- Strolling loop with alcoves around MIA Prairie
- Benches with Q-R audio (5)
- Large interpretive panels (5)

## MEMORIAL 6: PLACES WE SERVED

**Standard Site Furnishings:** *provided as part of greenway construction*

- Star and stripes concrete paving
- Paired trash and recycling
- Double-sided kiosk
- Landscaping
- Underpass (sandbag façade)
- Standard benches
- Charging station (solar bench)
- Shaded Bench structure

### Basic Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$3,000

- Interpretive sign with Q-R code for audio content

### Interpretive Cost Estimates for Memorial 6

Basic-Low and Enhanced \$30,000

### Enhanced Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$27,000

- World map of places served
- Sandbag façade inscriptions (cost TBD)

## MEMORIAL 7: IN THE SERVICE

**Standard Site Furnishings:** *provided as part of greenway construction*

- Monument sign
- Star and stripes concrete paving
- Double-sided kiosk
- Landscaping
- Bike Fixing Station
- Standard bench
- Charging station
- Drinking Fountain

**Note: Trailhead** (built later, includes picnic shelter with restroom, parking, and additional visitor amenities): **\$695,000**

### Basic Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$25,000

- Interpretive panel for kiosk (south node), interpretive sign
- Chevron markings on spur trail
- Flag (Gateway node in park) or flag-themed art
- Memorial messages on walkway (content development)

### Interpretive Cost Estimates for Memorial 7

Basic and Enhanced \$1,169,000

### Enhanced Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$1,144,000

- Purple Heart Plaza: lighted fountain, solar border, seating, sculptures (6)
- Lake loop walkways
- Landscaping
- Interpretive panels (3) and signs with audio, chalk wall, obstacle course
- Additional flags (6 to 10)

## MEMORIAL 8: DAKOTA COUNTY MILITARY PLACES

**Standard Site Furnishings**

- Monument sign
- Star and stripes paving
- Charging outlet
- Drinking fountain
- Paired trash and recycling
- Bike fixing station
- Landscaping
- Shaded bench structure

### Basic Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$9,000

- Interpretive sign with Q-R code for audio content
- Interpretive panel for kiosk

### Interpretive Cost Estimates for Memorial 8

Basic and Enhanced \$19,000

### Enhanced Interpretive Memorial Elements: \$10,000

- Large panel, map of military sites

## SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATES FOR THE EIGHT MEMORIALS

Memorial	Basic	Enhanced	Total
1: Native American Veterans	\$9,000	\$196,500	\$205,000
2: Gold Star Families*	\$24,000	\$817,000	\$841,000
3: Military Units and Flyers*	\$14,000	\$160,000	\$174,000
4: Veterans Support Organizations	\$9,000	\$99,000	\$108,000
5: MIA Prairie/Path of Service*	\$9,000	\$184,000	\$193,000
6: Places We Served*	\$3,000	\$27,000	\$30,000
7: In the Service	\$25,000	\$1,144,000	\$1,169,000
8: Military Places*	\$9,000	\$10,000	\$19,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$102,000</b>	<b>\$2,637,000</b>	<b>\$2,739,500</b>

\*Concept includes option for custom pergola (estimated cost of \$85,000 not reflected in totals)

Revision to the original memorial and greenway plans reduced basic memorial costs by \$33,000 through consolidation of memorials. Overall construction costs were reduced by removal of neighborhood gateway at Tofte Lane (Memorial 3) and removal of east plaza at the Rich Valley Underpass (Memorial 6).

## FUNDING-BASED OPTIONS AND FUNDRAISING

Basic and Enhanced Memorials reflect Dakota County’s typical practice in funding greenway trails, trailhead improvements, corridor natural resource improvements, and other amenities. Additional information is available in the Dakota County Greenway Design Guidelines, August 2020:

[GreenwayDesignGuidelines.pdf \(dakota.mn.us\)](https://www.dakota.mn.us/greenway-design-guidelines)

This Plan looks to Veteran organizations and groups for enhanced memorial concept refinement, fundraising, and management of memorials over time. Fundraising could involve authoring grant and Legislative requests, addressing how gifts are used, potential sponsorships, and identification of a fiscal agent for external non-public funds.

Dakota County will maintain an active role throughout the completion and operation of the Veterans Memorial Greenway. With the unique nature of this project and a desire to coordinate with Veterans and others in fully realizing the Plan vision, definition of Veterans’ and the County’s roles will be important. Potential roles are suggested in the following table.

Potential Role	Standard Memorial	Enhanced Memorial
Convener of Veterans (501c3, appointed committee, other)	County	Veterans, with County assistance
Public fundraising	County	Veterans
Private fundraising	N/A	Veterans
Design/construction management	County	To be determined
Fiscal agent	County	To be determined
Volunteer coordination	County	Veterans and County
Program events with cities and Veterans	County	Veterans and County
Ongoing information updates at memorials	County	Veterans

The Dakota County Board will review and approve all enhanced memorial proposals, including capital investment and ongoing maintenance responsibilities. The County Board may direct that all enhanced memorials with a public art component be reviewed by the Dakota County Public Art Citizen Advisory Committee.

## PROGRAMMING

The Veterans Memorial Greenway provides corridor-wide programming opportunities with Veteran-partner organizations:

### Gathering Veterans Stories

Gathering stories from Dakota County Veterans on an ongoing and regular basis, with focused engagement with Veterans at Veterans Day, Memorial Day, and/or Independence Day celebrations. Veterans could send in written or recorded responses to questions for future memorial updates. Responses may be edited for length and published only with express consent.

### Veteran Tours

Connect with Veterans organizations that host and organize tours with Veterans and/or to Veteran Memorials.

### Virtual Story Wall

A virtual story wall, with photos, names, and a brief story contributed by families would be accessed with a QR code. The featured stories could change over time or be compiled periodically in connection to Memorial Day or Veterans Day.

### Walks

Fundraising walks for Veteran-related groups and other causes could be organized by Veterans. The Greenway could also be a venue for Veteran and other walking clubs, as a place to meet, connect, and exercise.

### Veterans' Gatherings and Ceremonies

Rich Valley Park (Memorial 8) provides space and amenities to hold gatherings as well as ceremonial events, as permitted by and in coordination with the City of Inver Grove Heights Parks Department.

Smaller gatherings may be of interest to Veterans at Lakeside Park (Memorial 2) in Eagan. Permission from the Eagan Parks Department will be necessary. Since group parking is not available at this location, arrangements could be made with nearby churches for occasional events.

## Traveling Exhibits

Coordinating traveling exhibits to be hosted at Rich Valley Park (Memorial 8). Examples of potential traveling exhibits:

- Vietnam Traveling Memorial: <https://www.vvmf.org/The-Wall-That-Heals/>
- Korean War Traveling Memorial: <http://www.freedomsneverfree.com/traveling-memorials.html>
- Traveling memorial for 4,500 + service members killed in conflicts following 9-11: <https://www.vetsau.com/memorial>



Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall in Austin, Texas  
Photo: US Department of Defense, April 16, 2011, Sgt. Melissa Bright, Texas Military Dept.

## OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

As with other regional greenways, Dakota County will maintain the trail and basic memorials, and prepare a natural resources management plan for the greenway. Veteran groups are anticipated to have the lead role in maintaining enhanced memorials, in coordination with the County and City partners. Veterans may wish to organize in a 501 c3 to coordinate activities for greenway fundraising and operations.

Routine greenway maintenance covered by Dakota County includes winter tasks (e.g., snow and ice removal), summer tasks (e.g., mowing and crack repair) and year-round tasks, estimated as follows for the five-mile corridor:

Tasks	Annual Cost per Mile	Annual Total Cost
Winter	\$1,052	\$5,260
Summer	\$1,112	\$5,560
Year-Round	\$1,880	\$9,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,044</b>	<b>\$20,220</b>

An annualized 20-year replacement cost (deferred maintenance) is an additional \$9,504 per mile based on a typical 10-foot-wide regional trail.

## OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE FOR BASIC MEMORIALS

As designed, the basic memorials are similar to the County's existing greenways that have neighborhood gateways, wayfinding, interpretation, and bench nodes. Annual maintenance and operation funding are comparable to estimates in the original master plan (formerly the Rich Valley Greenway).

This plan recommends flags, including the U.S., State of Minnesota, Gold Star, military service branches, and other flags. Flag replacement likely will need to occur annually, to maintain flags in proper and respectful condition. Flag replacement will add \$1,000 - \$2,000 to the annual Parks and Greenways operational budget.

Lowering flags to half-mast at the order of the Governor or President is observed at all county buildings, including service centers and libraries. The addition of flags at multiple locations along the greenway would require appropriate management and may present an opportunity for engaging

volunteers. Another option would be to fly the flags only on special days or incorporate flag-inspired art elements in place of flags.

## OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE FOR ENHANCED MEMORIALS

The enhanced memorial concepts in this plan will require additional operation and maintenance funding. To minimize these expenses, enhanced memorials should be designed according to the following guidelines:

- Memorials and seating areas should use hardscapes and durable materials (e.g. limestone boulders, paver stones, decorative concrete, Corten steel) to the greatest extent possible
- Landscaping maintenance costs should be minimized through the use of native or perennial plants that reduce maintenance needs.
- Vandal resistant materials and coatings should be used.
- Sculptures and statues should be durable and weather resistant.

All enhanced memorial proposals will need review and approval by the County Board for consistency with these design guidelines. Estimates of annual operation and maintenance costs should be provided with all enhanced memorial proposals. On a case by case basis, the County Board may require that a stewardship fund proportional to the maintenance costs of the memorial be established to help defray the annual cost of maintenance for the enhanced memorial. As a condition of approval, the County Board may require an agreement with the enhanced memorial sponsor or volunteer organization to share in annual operation and maintenance costs.

## VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteerism is a powerful way to accomplish the work of public service and engage communities at the same time. Dakota County's volunteer program has grown over the past decade to include opportunities in many County program areas, including 4-H, community corrections, emergency response and disaster relief, environmental protection, the Historical Society, library system, parks, and public health. The County volunteer program works with County departments and non-County organizations, adding new opportunities as they arise. [Volunteer & Internship Opportunities | Dakota County](#).

Volunteerism will play a strong role in realizing this plan, for memorial development and operations over the long-term. The roles of volunteers (groups and individuals) will need to be clearly defined, especially in relation to the Enhanced Memorials.

## COORDINATION

Dakota County will continue to coordinate with Veterans, Veteran organizations, and community partners throughout production design, fundraising, construction, programming, and the long-term operation of the Veterans Memorial Greenway. Coordination will be vital for continuing collection, curation, and sharing of Veteran stories, to maintain a dynamic and fresh approach to the interpretive memorials.

**VETERANS:** an estimated 25,000 Veterans live in Dakota County.

## VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS

Many Veteran organizations have missions and goals addressing a broad range of issues, such as policy, companionship and camaraderie, housing, education, health, family support, and transitioning back to civilian life. The following list includes some of these organizations and may not be complete.

**American Legion:** chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic Veteran organization, the American Legion focuses on service to veterans, service members and communities. The Legion has evolved from a group of war-weary veterans of World War I into one of the most influential nonprofit groups in the United States. Today, membership stands at nearly 2 million in more than 13,000 posts worldwide. <https://www.legion.org/>.

- Apple Valley Post 1776: [American Legion Post 1776 – Serving Veterans Since 1976](#)
- Burnsville Post 1700
- Eagan-Daniel R. Olsen Post 594: [Home > Daniel R Olsen Post 594](#)
- Farmington Post 189
- Lakeville-John Vessey Post 44
- Rosemount Post 65
- South St. Paul Post 481
- West St. Paul Post 521: [West Saint Paul Legion | Facebook](#)

**American Women Veterans Foundation:** strives to serve, honor, and empower women from all branches of service with a continued sense of pride and community service to reach their full potential and contribute as they always have, in making America stronger. AVW works in increasing awareness of the contributions of women in service and advocates for effective policies. Future programs include outdoor retreats focused on overcoming personal and physical obstacles, education programming, and transitional housing. <http://americanwomenveterans.org/home/>

**Dakota County Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Network:** is a comprehensive program that creates awareness for the purpose of connecting service members and their families with community support, training, services, and resources. More information is online, including information on Yellow Ribbon Communities within the county:

<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/HealthFamily/VeteransServices/YellowRibbon/Pages/default.aspx>

- Apple Valley Beyond the Yellow Ribbon
- Burnsville Beyond the Yellow Ribbon
- Eagan Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Organization
- Farmington Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Network
- Inver Grove Heights Beyond the Yellow Ribbon
- Lakeville Beyond the Yellow Ribbon
- Mississippi River Valley Beyond the Yellow Ribbon
- Northern Dakota County Beyond the Yellow Ribbon

**Dakota County La Société des 40 et 8 Chevaux (The Forty and Eight):** an independent honor society of Veterans and service members committed to upholding and defending the Constitution of the United States, promoting the well-being of veterans, their widows, widowers and orphans, and actively participating in selected charitable endeavors, including programs that promote child welfare and nurses training.

<https://www.fortyandeight.org/>

**Dakota County Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 492:** VVA provides Vietnam War Veterans a community of fellowship based on shared experiences, hopes, and needs. Outreach programs address issues related to Agent Orange, homelessness, PTSD, substance abuse, educational advancement, POW/MIA, and more. [Vietnam Veterans of America \(vva.org\)](http://vietnamveterans.org)

**Disabled American Veterans, Minnesota (DAV-MN):** A membership organization made up exclusively of Minnesota men and women disabled in our nation's defense, with the mission of fulfilling the promises to the men and women who served. DAV-MN assists Veterans with navigating the benefits claim processes, transportation, securing basic items such as clothing and household goods, and outdoor recreation opportunities to connect Veterans with Minnesota's natural resources. DAV-MN also advocates for legislative measures that improve the lives of disabled Veterans. <http://davmn.org/>

**Every Third Saturday:** works within the community to provide clothing, supplies and financial services to Veterans in need – fostering hope and supporting post traumatic growth. <https://everythirdsaturday.org/>

**Grace After Fire:** started in 2002, their mission is empowerment of women Veterans through knowledge, insight, and self-renewal. <https://www.graceafterfire.org>

**Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA):** serves post 9-11 Veterans with rapid assistance and advocacy. IAVA's top six issues include suicide, burn pits and toxic exposures, modernization of federal services, women Veteran, alternative therapies, and education benefits. <https://iava.org>

**Mendota American Veterans (AMVETS):** founded in 1944 and chartered by an act of Congress, AMVETS exists to enhance the quality of life for all veterans, their families and survivors and has more than 250,000 members nationwide. [AMVETS National Headquarters - A Veteran Service Organization](#)

**Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), South St. Paul Chapter 5:** "The Purple Heart is the only decoration that attests, without question, to the bearer having been in combat. It is one for which an individual cannot be recommended, it can only be earned." MOPH programs include work with schools to promote American history; youth activities through ROTC/JROTC; the Purple Heart Trail Program creating a symbolic and honorary system of roads, highways, bridges, and monuments in tribute of service members who have been awarded the Purple Heart medal. [Military Order of the Purple Heart Minnesota \(purpleheartmn.org\)](#)

**Minnesota Armed Forces Service Center (AFSC):** After her son – Naval Aviation Technician Petty Officer R. "Scott" Purdum – died in Vietnam, Maggie Purdum founded the Armed Forces Service Center on November 22, 1970, as a tribute to all those who serve. The AFSC is an "all-free" stop located at the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport for active-duty military personnel and their dependents and Reservists, National Guardsmen and Military Retirees, and their dependents. Since October 2006, AFSC "Troop Greeters" have welcomed more than 334 Military charter flights (over 89,000 combat troops) and over 1,110 military charter buses (around 46,000 troops). <https://www.mnafsc.org/service-organizations-2/>

**Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans Assistance (MACV):** established in 1990, MACV provides housing, employment, and legal aid service, with a focus on ending Veteran homelessness. <https://www.mac-v.org/>

**Minnesota Grant Watch, Veterans Grants:** a consolidated site for grant opportunities related to Veterans <https://minnesota.grantwatch.com/cat/38/veterans-grants.html>

**Minnesota Military Family Foundation:** provides timely financial assistance to deployed and currently serving Minnesota military personnel and their families (including active duty, national guard and reserve components, across all services) who have a financial crisis that is not supported by existing state or federal programs. <https://minnesotamilitaryfamilyfoundation.org/>

**Minnesota Veterans 4 Veterans Trust Fund:** a group of Minnesota Veterans focused on addressing the unmet needs of Veterans and their families. Leadership includes Minnesota representatives of the American Legion, Disabled Veterans of America, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, and Veterans of Foreign Wars. <https://www.mnv4v.org/>

**Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA):** a congressionally chartered veterans service organization founded in 1946, PVA has developed unique expertise on the special needs of Veterans who have experienced spinal cord injury or dysfunction. Programs include assistance with navigating benefits, information on spinal cord injury, sports and recreation opportunities, accessible home design, and advocacy for Veterans with disabilities. <https://pva.org/>

**Project Got Your Back:** seeks to optimize Veteran well-being and ensure connection. <https://projectgotyourback.org/>

**Student Veterans of America (SVA):** leads service, research, programs, and advocacy for veterans in higher education. SVA operates an immersive Leadership Institute and has awarded more than \$2 million in scholarships since 2008. <https://studentveterans.org>

**Team Red, White, and Blue:** provides assistance for active duty service members transitioning out of the military, with inclusive opportunities to connect through physical and social activity. Volunteers host regular fitness activities, social gatherings, and community service events, and facilitate strong local connections with members and organizations within the community. <https://www.teamrwb.org/>

**Team Rubicon:** serves communities by mobilizing veterans to continue their service, leveraging their skills and experience to help people prepare, respond, and recover from disasters and humanitarian crises. <https://teamrubiconusa.org>

**Teet It Up for the Troops:** addresses the needs of service members returning home through programs addressing family and caregiver support, PTSD and traumatic brain injury treatment, suicide prevention, golf and sports rehabilitation, employment, and housing/homelessness prevention. <https://teetitupforthetroops.org/>

**Thanks: Minnesota Military Appreciation Fund:** a statewide fundraising initiative by the citizens of Minnesota for Minnesota military personnel and their families. Launched in August of 2005, MMAF is a non-partisan, non-political, 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. The mission of MMAF is to say “thanks” to Minnesota service members and their families who are making sacrifices in defense of our freedoms in combat zones around the world. MMAF provides cash grants to Minnesota service members who have served in a combat zone since September 11, 2001. <http://www.thankmnttroops.org/>

**United Heroes League (UHL):** based in Hastings, Minnesota, UHL keeps military kids active and healthy through sports while their parents serve our country. UHL has helped over 50,000 military families keep or start their kids in sports. UHL offers free sports equipment, game tickets, cash grants,

skill development camps, and special experiences to military families across the US and Canada. <https://unitedheroesleague.org>

**Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW):** a nonprofit Veteran service organization comprised of eligible veterans and military service members from the active, guard and reserve forces. The VFW traces its roots back to 1899 when Veterans of the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippine Insurrection (1899-1902) founded local organizations to secure rights and benefits for their service. Many arrived home wounded or sick, with no medical care or Veterans' pension, and they were left to care for themselves. Some of these veterans banded together and formed organizations that would eventually unite and become the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Today, membership stands at more than 1.5 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary. <http://www.vfw.org>

- Farmington VFW Sypal Lundgren Post 7662: [Farmington VFW Sypal Lundgren Post #7662 - Home | Facebook](#)
- Hastings VFW Lyle Russell Post 1210
- Rosemount VFW Post 9433: [Rosemount VFW Post 9433 , Rosemount MN](#)
- South St. Paul VFW Post 295

## VETERAN AGENCIES

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs:** federal agency with primary responsibility for serving U.S. Veterans, with records, benefits, health care, education assistance, disability compensation, and rehabilitation. <https://www.va.gov>

**Minneapolis Veterans Affairs Health Care System (VAHCS):** part of the federally-operated health care system providing hospital and clinical primary care, mental health care, and specialty care. VAHCS offers foster home care and a range of social programs and services to Veterans.

**Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs:** operates Minnesota's five state Veterans Homes and assists Minnesota's 308,000 Veterans and their dependents to obtain the benefits and services provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://mn.gov/mdva>



**Dakota County Veterans Services:** is the County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO), providing benefit counseling and assistance for veterans or their families filing claims for state and federal benefits. The county also assists Veterans and their families with a variety of other programs and provides referrals to community resources. [Veterans Services | Dakota County](#)

## **GOLD STAR FAMILIES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Minnesota National Guard Gold Star Family Support:**

<https://ngmnpublish.azurewebsites.us/>

### **Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs (MDVA) Gold Star Family**

**Program:** The goal of the Gold Star Family Program is to honor the legacy of every fallen Minnesota hero, while supporting the needs of their families. This is accomplished by a unique set of Gold Star Family services that include support, benefits, and resources. Since unresolved issues and questions can surface months or years after a family's loss, MDVA Gold Star Family services are available for as long needed.

<https://mn.gov/mdva/resources/familyassistance/goldstarfamilies.jsp>

**American Gold Star Mothers-MN Chapter:** founded in 1928, AGSM is an organization of mothers who have lost a child in service. AGSM members volunteer in many aspects of the community, honor those lost, and assist Veterans. <https://www.goldstarmoms.com/>

## **CITY PARTNERS**

**The City of Eagan:** Elected and appointed officials and staff from Parks, Public Works, Community Development, and other departments. Ongoing coordination with Eagan will be needed for further design, construction, and operations.

**The City of Inver Grove Heights:** Elected and appointed officials and staff from Parks, Public Works, Community Development, and other departments. Ongoing coordination with Inver Grove Heights will be needed for further design, construction, and operations.

Dakota County typically enters into Joint Powers Agreements (JPA) with cities for greenway development across city property, including city parks. JPAs generally address cost sharing and easements for construction. Greenway operations and maintenance costs (OM) are typically addressed through supplemental maintenance agreements (SMA) to the JPA that identify city and county roles in ongoing maintenance and future reconstruction needs. SMAs usually assign the following roles to Dakota County:

- sweeping, snow removal, and ice control
- vegetation management and plantings within the trail clear zone
- erosion control
- utilities within permanent easements related to the trail
- maintenance, repair, and replacement of greenway-related structures in the trail corridor, including signs, fences, walls, drinking fountains, kiosks, and other site furnishings
- graffiti control and removal
- maintenance, repair, and replacement of trail or boardwalk surfaces

Cities are generally responsible for:

- City signage
- City storm sewer lines that pass under the greenway
- Lighting in city parks
- Maintenance within city parks consistent with city practices
- Connecting trails

Arrangements for trailheads with bathrooms and picnic shelters within city parks can vary based on the partner needs, but generally involve some shared responsibilities for ongoing maintenance.

Dakota County and its partner cities share responsibility for enforcement of relevant state statutes and city and county ordinances related to the greenway.