

CENTRAL GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY STUDY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD ENDS JULY 1

YOUR VOICE IS NEEDED

2008	2012	2013	2015	2017	Going Forward
County Board adopts the 2030 Parks System Plan, which envisioned Lebanon Hills as the Hub of Dakota County's paved Greenway [bike trail] Network.	Several bike trail master plans have been approved, and are planned to link in or near Lebanon Hills. To complete the vision of the Parks System Plan, the Board directs staff to update the 2001 Lebanon Hills Master Plan.	People learn of the new vision for Lebanon Hills and, for a two-year period, strongly and consistently opposed the concept of a paved, end-to-end connector trail through the park.	In March, the Board adopted the 2015 Master Plan update with a significant change: <i>"The paved Connector Trail is not to serve as a segment of the Greenway Network."</i>	As a result of this change, a Study was authorized to evaluate and designate Greenway paved trail connections around Lebanon Hills. This Study is complete and is now available for public review.	<i>What will be our Legacy for Lebanon Hills... Will the Board stay true to their word? Or will the controversial Connector Trail become a main segment of the Greenway Network?</i>

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

1. The controversial Connector Trail through the park is clearly shown as a segment of the Greenway bike trail network.
2. The Study proposes to re-name the currently existing system of bike trails around Lebanon Hills as the "linking route" and the controversial Connector Trail will be the "recreation route".
3. Signage will be used to direct bicyclists to the linking route along Cliff Rd., Dodd Rd., McAndrews Blvd., and Johnny Cake Ridge Rd. Some segments along this route will need to be completed to fully establish a safe route.
4. The Connector Trail through Lebanon Hills will be designed to encourage slower speeds, which might discourage some higher-speed cyclists from riding through the park.

REALITY CHECK

- *This violates the 2015 Master Plan which states "The paved Connector Trail will not serve as a segment of the Greenway Network."*
- *This conflicts with the 6-1 vote by the Dakota County Board (March 2015) that the Connector Trail is not to serve as a segment of the Greenway network. Commissioner Gerlach was the single vote against this idea.*
- *There is no timeline for completion of these segments; it is expected that they will be incorporated into road projects if/when that takes place. Nothing prevents the controversial Connector Trail from being constructed first.*
- *There is nothing to eliminate the potential for higher-speed cyclists or other wheeled recreation from using the route through the park. Design criteria for the Connector Trail (if constructed) will be at the discretion of the County Board.*

TAKE ACTION – MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

- Submit comments to: John Mertens, Dakota County Senior Planner: john.mertens@co.dakota.mn.us
- Copy Dakota County Board of Commissioner: board@co.dakota.mn.us
- Copy or call your elected Commissioner:

Find contact info at www.co.dakota.mn.us/Government/Board/Pages/default.aspx

Suggested comment to include with your personal message:

The approved Lebanon Hills Master Plan clearly states that the Connector Trail is not part of the Greenway network. I appreciate the County Boards decision on this, and I support completion and establishment of the Greenway Network around Lebanon Hills prior to any further action on the Connector Trail. I do not support a paved trail through Lebanon Hills serving as a segment of the Greenway network in any capacity.

Greenway Networks provide non-motorized transportation corridors for commuting cyclists. Greenway trails are typically built as "multi-use", meeting criteria for ADA compliance and also meeting criteria for 20-mph bike speeds. When constructed through natural areas, these extensive construction projects can be detrimental to the surrounding landscape, as evidenced recently at Spring Lake Park Reserve.

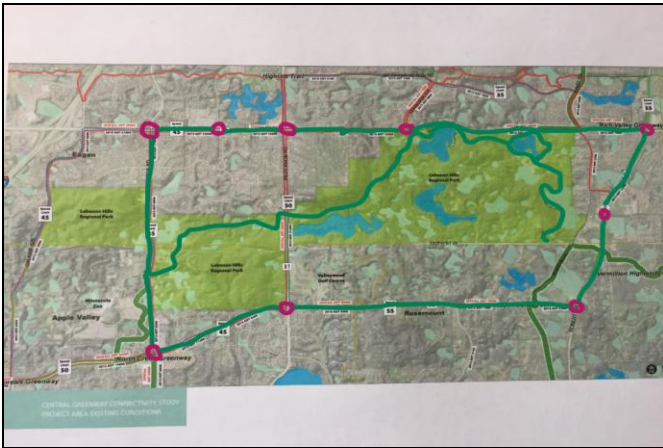


Figure 1: Greenway Network proposed by the Study includes the Connector Trail.

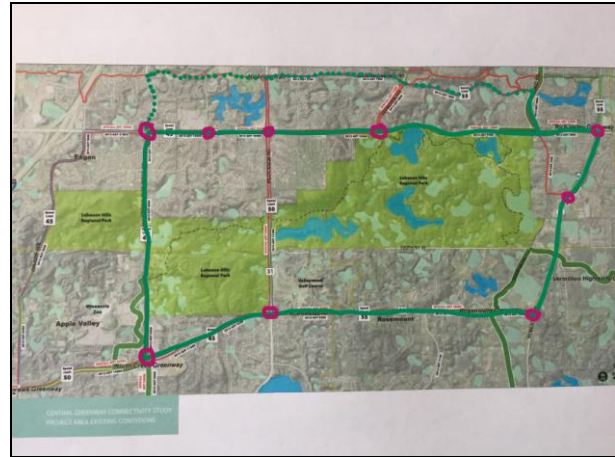


Figure 2: Greenway Network, our proposal, excluding the Connector Trail.

Our Proposal: Establish the Greenway Network around, not through, Lebanon Hills

- If the Study is approved without change (see *Figure 1*), then the Connector Trail will clearly be a segment of the Greenway, in violation of the approved 2015 Master Plan.
- However, if the linking route is completed and established around Lebanon Hills (see *Figure 2*), then plans to improve accessibility and provide a comparable experience can be reconsidered without a multi-use, end-to-end trail through the park:
 - The Lebanon Hills Master Plan Update was required to complete the vision of the Greenway Network. At that time, the Connector Trail was proposed (1) to serve as a main segment, or hub, of the Greenway Network, and (2) to increase accessibility for elderly and disabled.
 - The Board-approved change, that the Connector Trail is not to serve as a segment of the Greenway network, provides a reason to pause and re-consider the goal to increase accessibility in a manner that is best for Dakota County taxpayers and park visitors, and for the natural resource base of Lebanon Hills.
 - This change would require an amendment to the Master Plan – which is a viable option.
 - ***This option is dependent on the Board's direction with the Central Greenway Connectivity Study.***
- For bicyclists and other wheeled recreation, there will be an established route to get from one side of the park to the other, without going through the park. In addition, as best stated by Commissioner Egan, the County is providing for those needs with their 200+ mile Greenway Network. No one will be lacking for paved trails if the Connector is not built as a thoroughfare.

Did you know...?

Many people have expressed real concerns over safety when combining two-way bike traffic with pedestrians, dog-walkers, and mobility-disabled people. If the Study is approved without change, and the County Board authorizes construction of the Connector Trail, the paved trail will be 8-foot wide and 6 miles long (not a loop), for two-way cyclists, rollerbladers and other wheeled recreation, combined with children, adults, elderly and disabled people, and dog-walkers – all on a single trail.

Wilderness in the City supports a pedestrian-oriented vision that improves accessibility to nature, especially for people who have one or more physical challenges, so they may enjoy a comparable experience with able-bodied visitors to this urban wilderness. Our new vision is in contrast to the current vision of a multi-use bike trail which poses a serious risk of accidental injury or harm when cyclists and other wheeled recreators collide with pedestrians.

To learn more, or to get involved, please contact us at wildernessinthecity@gmail.com or 651-271-1257.