

Area Plan Summary

Trout Brook - Lower Phalen Greenway

Addendum to The Comprehensive Plan for Saint Paul

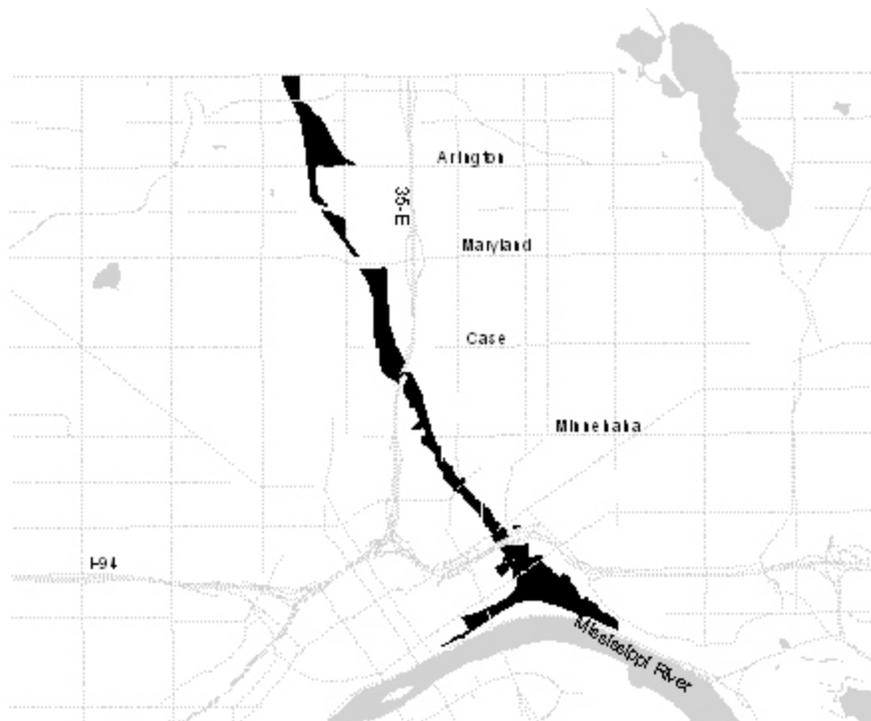
Recommended by the Parks & Recreation Commission - July 11, 2001

Recommended by the Planning Commission - October 5, 2001

Adopted by the City Council - October 24, 2001

*This summary appends to the Comprehensive Plan the vision and strategies of the **Trout Brook Greenway Plan** and the **Community Vision for Lower Phalen Creek**. Copies of the full-length plans are available for review at the Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development and the office of the Dayton's Bluff District 4 Community Council.*

Location



Goal/Vision

Reclaim former railyards in the Trout Brook corridor (Trillium Site) and the Lower Phalen Creek area and restore habitat and ecological health of the corridor and floodplain. Restore a portion of Trout Brook and wetlands in the greenway corridor and the Lower Phalen Creek site. Create trail and natural community connections from McCarrons Lake to the Mississippi River. Provide a

natural amenity to adjacent neighborhoods and Lowertown.

Specific Recommendations and Implementation Steps

Trails

1) Northern segment: McCarrons Lake to Trillium Site. The Trout Brook County Trail connects McCarrons Lake to the Arlington-Jackson Pond. From the pond, the proposed trail follows the west side of the pond and crosses the Northern Pacific RR tracks at Arlington Avenue (an existing, at-grade connection). From here, a ramp will be needed to connect the trail with the CP Rail bridge over Arlington Avenue. The proposed trail continues on the CP Rail right-of-way which runs on higher land south of Arlington and provides clear views of the original path of Trout Brook, the existing landscape, and ridge areas to the east and west that form the watershed. The CP Rail right-of-way provides a direct link without interruption to the Trillium Site. The track has been abandoned through the Trillium Site.

2) Trillium segment: Trails on the Trillium Site. A loop trail is envisioned, consisting of an upper trail on higher land along the western side of the site and a lower trail on the eastern side of the site. The upper trail will link the Trout Brook Trail at the north with the Gateway Trail to the south. Both trails can be fully accessible. The lower trail will follow the route of the restored creek. Access to the site from the adjacent neighborhood is proposed at Rose Street.

3) Middle segment: Trillium Site to Lower Phalen Creek Site, with connections to Fourth Street and Lowertown. The trail south of the Trillium Site would follow the Gateway Trail extension straight south along the 35-E access road, to Pennsylvania Avenue. From this juncture, the trail connects with the Capitol Area to the west, or joins the trail planned for the north side of Phalen Blvd. to the east. From the trail along Phalen Blvd. a ramp would allow trail users to descend from the bridge over the railroad tracks (near Williams Hill) to ground level. From here, the Trout Brook Trail would follow the wide open area that parallels the railroad corridor traveling to the south and east. The trail would then pass over Fourth Street on an abandoned railroad bridge (one of four railroad bridges crossing Fourth Street) and loop down onto Fourth Street. From Fourth Street, trail users could reach Lowertown to the west, or link to the trails on the Lower Phalen Creek Site to the east.

4) Southern segment: Lower Phalen Creek Site to Mississippi River, with connection to Swede Hollow Park and the Bruce Vento Regional Trail. From Fourth Street, the proposed trail will connect to Swede Hollow Park and the Bruce Vento Regional Trail, as well as to the Mississippi River via the Lower Phalen Creek site if possible. To reach Swede Hollow Park, the trail will loop over Fourth Street on an abandoned railroad bridge (not the same bridge used by the Trout Brook Trail) and pass under the I-94 bridges on land owned by Ramsey County Rail Authority, connecting to Swede Hollow Park and the parking lot on 7th Street. To reach the Mississippi River, the trail will pass under Kellogg Bridge and run along an existing gravel road toward Warner Road. To cross Warner Road and railroad tracks, a bridge is proposed. The bridge would descend on the river side of Warner Road onto the road embankment and would intersect with the Lower Landing Park trail at the circular observation deck.

Water Resources

5) Restore a portion of Trout Brook and wetlands on the Trillium site. Water from the Arlington-Jackson pond will be piped to the north end of the Trillium Site, via a new 15" pipe that follows the existing storm sewer easement. The water will “daylight” in a small wetland, then flow as the restored Trout Brook through a series of small pools and riffles to the Sims-Agate Pond at the south end of the site. Surface water from the neighborhood to the west of the Trillium site will outlet into a series of wetlands at the south end of the Trillium Site, then flow into Sims-Agate pond which outlets into the storm sewer system.

6) Restore springs emerging from the base of the Mounds Park bluffs into a riparian wetland habitat. This recommendation is contingent on the results of a Restoration and Remediation Plan addressing contamination of the Lower Phalen Creek site.

7) Channel a remnant of Trout Brook at Fourth Street. Build a channel to collect water seeping from the railroad bridges on the north side of Fourth street. From the channel a trench or pipe can carry the water under the roadway and allow it to cascade into the canal on the south side of Fourth Street.

Habitat and Natural Communities

8) Planting throughout the corridor should emphasize species that provide food, cover, nesting habitat, and other needs for birds, migratory birds especially, and other species that use the corridor. Restoration is proposed to include prairie, woodland, and wetland plant communities. Restoration of natural communities should represent native vegetation, consider the long-term ownership and maintenance available, provide for a variety of educational opportunities, complement the activities proposed for the site, and be compatible with the soil and moisture conditions on the site.

Learning Opportunities

9) Environmental learning opportunities on the Trillium Site. Learning opportunities on this site include wetland and creek ecology, water quality, and water flow; plant community restoration and progress; bird watching along the upper trail; interpretation of the geologic history of the watershed; and interpretation of the human history of the area.

10) Environmental and historical learning opportunities on the Lower Phalen Creek Site. Learning opportunities on this site include interpretation of bird migration, bluff geology, cave formation (Carver’s Cave, Montana Bill’s Cave), natural springs, watershed function, drainage to the river, the history of the Mississippi River floodplain, history of Phalen Creek, stone-lined canal on Fourth Street, and railroad bridges, including the historic East Seventh Street stone arch bridge.

City Action

To encourage implementation of this vision, the City of Saint Paul should endeavor to include in its budget and program priorities the following activities. More detail about each proposed action is included in the *Trout Brook Greenway Plan* or the *Community Vision for Lower Phalen Creek*

and should be reviewed by the appropriate City staff.

- 1) Acquisition of Land and Easements identified in the *Trout Brook Greenway Plan* and *Community Vision for Lower Phalen Creek*.
- 2) Complete a current topographic survey (1 or 2 foot contours) of the entire corridor.
- 3) Complete Phase II soils and contaminants analysis at Trillium Site for proposed land use.
- 4) Complete engineering analysis for restoration of water features and development of trail components.
- 5) Discussions with Railroad companies regarding trail options south of the Trillium Site, and restoration of plant communities in railroad right-of-way.
- 6) Coordinate development of plans with agencies and abutting landowners, and obtain necessary permits.
- 7) Together with Lower Phalen Creek Project Steering Committee
 - a) prepare Master Plan amendment to the Bruce Vento Regional Trail Plan for City and Metropolitan Council approval,
 - b) determine costs of Restoration & Remediation Plan and Natural Resource Management Plan for Lower Phalen Creek site, and
 - c) prepare Restoration Plan.
- 8) Seek funding for completion of infrastructure and amenity investments needed to implement the *Trout Brook Greenway Plan* and *Community Vision for Lower Phalen Creek*.

Parks & Recreation Commission Findings

The Parks & Recreation Commission concurs generally with the vision and recommendations of the *Trout Brook Greenway Plan* and *Community Vision for Lower Phalen Creek* and endorses this Area Plan Summary as the guide for future park improvement work in the Trout Brook - Lower Phalen Greenway.

Planning Commission Findings

The Planning Commission finds the Area Plan Summary for the Trout Brook - Lower Phalen Greenway consistent with the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan and recommends the adoption of the Area Plan Summary as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission further finds that a connection from the Trout Brook - Lower Phalen Greenway to the Mississippi River is important and should be pursued. Future design stages for implementing the greenway should also consider restoring an additional segment of open channel in the Greenway corridor between the new Phalen Blvd. and Fourth Street.

Planning Process

The *Community Vision for Lower Phalen Creek* is the result of a community planning process initiated by the Friends of Swede Hollow, that grew out of efforts to improve Swede Hollow Park and the Lower Phalen Creek corridor. Between 1996 and 2001 more than 20 organizations participated in creating the *Community Vision for Lower Phalen Creek*, with funding from McKnight Foundation and Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation.

The *Trout Brook Greenway Plan* was prepared with the assistance of a planning grant from DNR Metro Greenways. A Task Force was convened by the St. Paul Planning Commission to assist in the preparation of the Plan between November, 2000 and May, 2001. A Technical Advisory Committee also advised the preparation of the Plan.

A 40 Acre Study for the entire Greenway was initiated by the Planning Commission in September, 2000. The 40 Acre Study must be completed by September, 2003.