

**FINAL
CHAPTER 7
PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT / TRAILS PLAN**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Chaska has an extensive pedestrian movement/trails system that provides trail connections throughout the entire community. The trails system is comprised of three general trail types: regional, community and neighborhood. At the neighborhood level, the pedestrian movement/trails system includes sidewalks and pedestrian “backwalk” trails, which are somewhat unique to Chaska. In general, Chaska’s trails system is a combination of trails that traverse through the community’s natural landscape, particularly the creek ravines that drain to the Minnesota River, and trails that follow roadways. Appropriate to a river community, the overall trails system’s function is analogous to watershed tributaries feeding a major river with neighborhood trails feeding community trails, which then feed regional trails. The primary objective of all trail types is to provide safe and convenient travel routes for recreation or destination purposes while taking advantage of existing community natural resources and roadway systems. The City’s trails system is intended to encompass all residential areas, activity centers, and significant natural resource areas throughout the community.

II. PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the Pedestrian Movement/Trails Plan is to provide a comprehensive future vision for the pedestrian movement/trails system within Chaska, including classifications, guidelines and policies relative to the type, location and function of the various trails in the City. The 2030 Trails System Plan is intended to provide City Council, Commissions, City Staff and developers with detailed, quantifiable guidelines for achieving a unified trail system into the future, which will continue to serve both destination- and recreation-oriented users, and which will help foster an enhanced sense of community. The City’s 2030 vision for trails consists of a safe, convenient, connected, and enjoyable pedestrian movement/trails system throughout the entire community that contributes to the community’s unique sense of place.

Since the trails system is interconnected with the City’s parks & open space, land use, and transportation planning, this chapter is intended to align with these related chapters of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

III. 2030 COMMUNITY TRAILS SYSTEM PLAN MAP

Chaska's pedestrian movement/trail system has been taking shape since the City's inception and encompasses a variety of trail types that evolved during the City's various development periods. As part of Chaska's early development, provision was made for pedestrian movement via the traditional urban sidewalk system, which continues to serve most of downtown and lower Chaska. Downtown Chaska has sidewalks on both sides of each street. As part of the Jonathan New Town development in the early 1970's, a pedestrian "backwalk" trail system was put in place that separates walkways from streets. The "backwalk" system has continued to develop in many new Jonathan neighborhoods. However, some new Jonathan neighborhoods have been developed with walkways alongside of new sub-collector streets. In the Clover Ridge neighborhood, which developed over the past ten years, sidewalks are provided on one or both sides of streets in accordance with traditional neighborhood design principles. In neighborhoods outside of Jonathan, pedestrian movement is achieved via sidewalks located primarily along one side of sub-collector streets.

As described in Chapter 6, the City of Chaska owns a significant amount of natural open space throughout the City, which is primarily comprised of land within the East Chaska Creek ravine/drainage system and the Minnesota River Valley. Since the 1970s, when a substantial portion of this land was acquired by the City with the assistance of state and federal open space grants, the City has developed an extensive system of trails that traverse the natural areas of the creek ravines. The flood control project to reduce flood damage from the Minnesota River was completed in lower Chaska in 1998. As part of the flood control project, a trail was constructed on the levee and along the East Creek Channel Diversion structure.

In addition, as part of the Community Trail System, the City has typically installed trails along one side of all collector and arterial roadways to provide safe and convenient travel routes between destinations in the community, as well as within the City's extensive linear park/ravine system for recreation use. As property is platted and developed, the City will continue to require land dedication for the remaining segments of the City's 2030 Trail System.

The 2030 Community Trails System Plan Map (**Figure 7.1**) shows the existing trails system, as described above, as well as the planned future trail system. The map primarily shows community and regional trails but also shows pedestrian breakthrough trails in order to reflect neighborhood connections to parks and

open spaces. Neighborhood trails, including sidewalks and pedestrian backwalks, are not shown on the Community Trails System Plan Map. As key components of the City's trails infrastructure, the map also shows trailheads, underpasses, and bridges.

The 2030 Community Trails System Plan Map contains a number of future trails with the most significant additions including, but not limited to, the following:

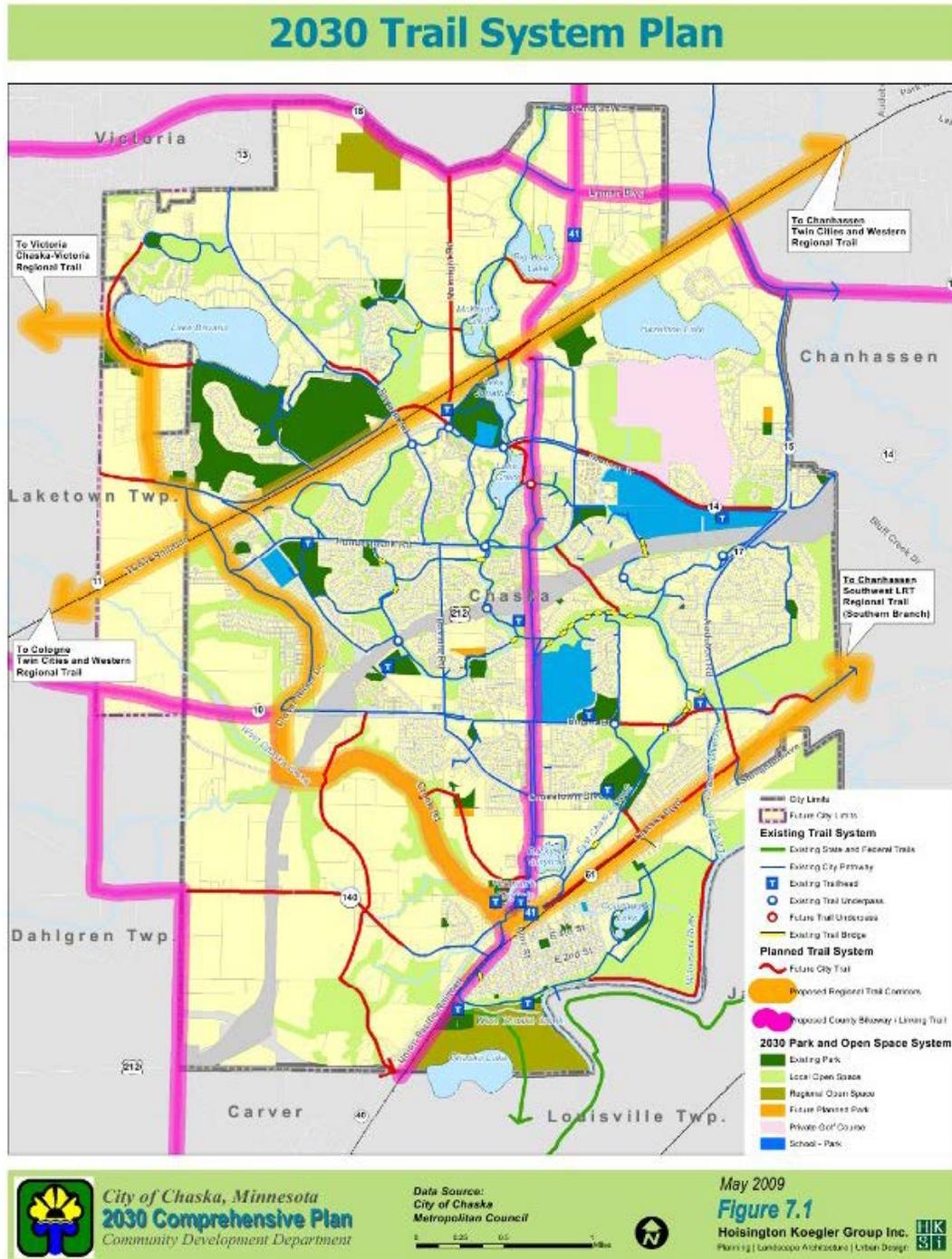
- Roadway trail along McKnight Road between 82nd Street and Pioneer Trail;
- Trail crossings of the TC & W Railroad corridor;
- Greenway trail around the west side of Lake Bavaria, connecting the existing Town Course trail to the future Lake Bavaria Community Park and the existing trail in the new Chevalle neighborhood;
- Completion of greenway trail loop around Lake Grace;
- Future trail connecting between Cortina Woods neighborhood north of new Highway 212 to East Creek Canyon neighborhood south of the highway via an underpass;
- Greenway bluff trail connecting Schimelpfenig Park to the Moers/Hammers Park to the future trail in the Creek Road corridor;
- Greenway trail along the Minnesota River;
- Highway 140;
- North-south trail from Engler Boulevard to CSAH 61 (old Highway 212) in the SW Chaska growth area.

The Proposed Regional Trail Corridors shown on the map, which are identified in the Metropolitan Council's *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, include the following:

- Southwest LRT Regional Trail (South Branch)
- Chaska-Victoria Regional Trail
- Twin Cities & Western Railroad Regional Trail

The Proposed Carver County Bikeways/Linking Trails shown on the map, which are identified in the *Carver County 2030 Trail and Bikeway System Plan*, include the following:

- County Road 18 Corridor
- Highway 41 Corridor
- County Road 11 Corridor
- County Road 10 Corridor 9 (west of Clover Ridge Drive)



- Figure 7.1 -
[\(Click Here to View Full-Sized PDF\)](#)

In addition, the *Carver County 2030 Trail and Bikeway System Plan* also proposes a Destination Trail (in Rail-to-Trail Setting) for the Union Pacific Railroad line between Highway 41 and Downtown Carver, which is shown on the map. The County's Plan also proposes two Destination Trails (in a Conservation Corridor setting): 1) Chaska-Victoria Connection Trail, and 2) the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Trail as a connection between the existing Southwest LRT Regional Trail in Chanhassen and the Chaska-Victoria Connection Trail.

IV. TRAIL TYPES

Chaska's Pedestrian Movement/Trails System includes the following trail classifications:

- A. *Regional Trails*
 - Federal
 - State
 - Metro
 - County
 - o Destination (in Conservation Corridor setting)
 - o Destination (in Rail-to-Trail setting)
 - o Linking Trail
 - o Bikeway
- B. *Community Trails*
 - Greenway (recreation emphasis)
 - Roadway (destination emphasis)
- C. *Neighborhood Trails*
 - Sidewalk
 - Backwalk
 - Breakthrough

Approximately 90 miles of community trails exist at year-end 2008, including greenway (recreation) and roadway (destination) trails. The roadway trails are bituminous while the greenway trails are either bituminous or ag lime. Most of the greenway system is intended to be bituminous surface in future.

All of the trails identified herein are for walking/jogging/hiking purposes. Most of the community and neighborhood trails are also for non-motorized bicycling. In

addition, some of the greenway trails may be used for cross-country skiing, and some regional trails are designated for horseback riding. Trails exclusively for cross-country skiing and for snowmobiling are not identified in this plan.

A. REGIONAL TRAILS

Regional trails are those owned and maintained by Carver County, Metro, State and Federal agencies. The following existing and proposed regional trails are relevant to Chaska's trails system. Most of these were also discussed briefly in Chapter 6. (See **Figure 7.1**)

1. Minnesota Valley State Trail & Recreation Area

The Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) has developed a comprehensive trail system plan for the Minnesota River Valley from Ft. Snelling to LeSueur, a distance of 72 miles. The first section of a hard surfaced trail was developed on the former Milwaukee Railroad right-of-way between the Courthouse area in Chaska and Murphy's Landing in Shakopee, a distance of about five miles. Unfortunately, the rail bridge across the Minnesota River deteriorated to the point where it was removed by the DNR in 1997. The existing state trail consists of a paved trail from Murphy's Landing west to the Nyssen's Lake area just southeast of Chaska on the south side of the river. The trail then extends westerly to T.H. 41 bridge, approximately one half mile south of the Minnesota River (border of Chaska) and then veers south along the river eventually connecting to Carver and Belle Plaine. The T.H. 41 bridge includes a trail that connects Chaska's river levee trail system to the Minnesota Valley State Trail system. Directly south of Chaska across the Minnesota River, the MN DNR has developed hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking and snowmobiling trails from Chaska upriver to Belle Plaine.

2. Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

As described in Chapter 6, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) consists of eight (8) wildlife refuge units totaling approximately 13,500 acres. The Chaska Lake Unit is located in the extreme southwest part of Chaska, south of the levee and west of T.H. 41, and stretches south into the northeast part of the City of Carver. The unit is approximately 600 acres in size. The Chaska Lake NWR is directly south of both Athletic Park and Winkel Park. The primary objective is to preserve and protect wildlife and wildlife habitat and to provide opportunities for wildlife-oriented recreation and education. The Chaska Lake Trail is a 1.7 mile unpaved trail that is accessed via a trailhead at Athletic Park in

Chaska and connects to the riverfront park in Carver. Just to the south of the Chaska Lake Unit are the Louisville Swamp Unit (2,600 acres) and the Rapids Lake Unit (1,500 acres).

3. Hennepin County Rail Trails

The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) acquired two abandoned rail lines in the early 1990's for a potential Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) use. The lines originate in Hopkins as two branches of a triangle; the north branch extending westerly through Minnetonka and Excelsior to Victoria, and the south branch (former C & NW Railroad) extending southwesterly through Eden Prairie and Chanhassen to Chaska. Both of these routes are considered to be long-range LRT projects. In the interim, an agreement between HCRRA and the Three Rivers Park District allows the right-of-way to be used for "temporary" aggregate lime regional trails. These two trail segments were constructed in the mid-1990's. The Cities of Chaska and Chanhassen financially participated in constructing the portion of the south branch trail between Bluff Creek Road in Chanhassen to CSAH 61 (old Highway 212) in Chaska.

The two trails have become very popular and receive extensive use although the lack of a connection to Chaska's trails has limited use of the segment west of Bluff Creek Road. Due to their popularity, considerable discussion has occurred about linking the two trails by providing the triangle's third leg between Victoria and Chaska. **Figure 7.1**, 2030 Community Trails System Plan, designates a regional trail corridor about seven miles in length between Chaska and Victoria, but does not identify a specific alignment. Carver County completed a trail master plan for the Chaska-Victoria Connection Trail in 2006. The need for such a regional trail connection is indicated but additional study and coordination between the Chaska, Victoria, Carver County and Metro Council is needed to bring the trail concept to fruition.

4. Metro Council Proposed Regional Trails

The Metropolitan Council adopted the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* in June 2005 which is the metropolitan system plan for regional recreational open space. Local comprehensive plans are required to conform to this regional system plan. Trails with relevance to Chaska are:

Southwest LRT Regional Trail (South Branch), which is a proposed extension of the existing Southwest LRT Regional Trail at its current terminus in Chanhasen to downtown Chaska;

Chaska – Victoria Regional Trail, which is a proposed connecting trail between the two branches of the Southwest LRT Regional Trail, and also providing a connection from downtown Chaska to downtown Victoria, Carver Regional Park Reserve, and the proposed Highway 5 Regional Trail;

Twin Cities & Western Railroad Regional Trail, which is a proposed regional trail that would follow the existing active railroad corridor if there is a change in the status of the use of the tracks;

Chaska's Trails Plan recognizes these existing and proposed regional trails and identifies connections between the community and regional trail systems.

5. Carver County 2030 Trail and Bikeway System Plan

In past years, Carver County has been relatively inactive in the provision of pedestrian and bike trails along county roadways. However, the County's Comprehensive Plan update effort in 2008 includes a county-wide Trail and Bikeway System Plan that is intended to seamlessly connect the County's trail and bikeway system with the regional and local trail systems. This plan consists of four types of trails:

- Destination Trail – paved trail in a Conservation Corridor setting that serves pedestrians and bicyclists;
- Destination Trail – paved trail in a Rail-to-Trail setting that serves pedestrians and bicyclists;
- Bikeway – on-road bike lanes or shoulders that serve bicyclists but not pedestrians;
- Linking Trail – paved trail within roadway right-of-way that serves pedestrians and bicyclists.

Specific trail corridors proposed in *the Carver County 2030 Trail and Bikeway System Plan* were described earlier in this chapter (Section III).

B. COMMUNITY TRAILS

Two types of community trails have been identified within the City: community greenway and community roadway trails.

The Community Greenway System primarily parallels the watershed system of East Chaska Creek leading to the University of Minnesota Arboretum. Other greenway segments exist or are proposed as shown on the trail maps herein. The Community Greenway System interconnects most of the City's major public facilities and activity centers.

The primary objective of the greenway trail system is to provide for multi-use recreational travel while encompassing the community natural resource system as addressed in the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan. Border plantings identifying the public-private boundary should also be part of any greenway trail system. Relative to the City's natural terrain, the greenway trail system will connect community activity centers and trip generators in addition to providing a means of travel for the destination oriented user whenever possible.

The Community Roadway Trail System includes on-road trails (i.e., Pioneer Trail) and off-road trails (i.e., Highway 41); however, the preference is for the latter. Community Roadway Trails will be installed along one side of all collector and arterial roadways.

The primary objective of the community roadway trail system is to provide for safe destination oriented travel. The roadway trail network also serves activity centers and trip generators.

C. NEIGHBORHOOD TRAILS

As discussed earlier, the type and location of neighborhood trails has varied during different eras of Chaska's development. Although the old town concept of providing sidewalks on both sides of all streets was not practical in typical cul-de-sac based subdivisions of the 1990s, the increasing popularity of new urbanism type developments would facilitate the provision of sidewalks on both sides of streets. The provision of sidewalks should be determined based on the type of development, pedestrian needs, and proximate trail connections to each subdivision.

It is also recognized that the Jonathan vehicle/pedestrian total separation concept, featuring backwalks and breakthroughs, is neither necessary nor practical in the absence of a homeowner's association. Additionally, greater emphasis should be placed on making streets more pedestrian friendly, which further reduces the total reliance on backwalk trails.

For clarification purposes, certain terms as used herein are defined below:

Pedestrian Backwalk: A pedestrian trail within a neighborhood typically located between rear lot lines. In essence, backwalks are a substitute for sidewalks along streets and are designed to separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic to the extent possible.

Pedestrian Breakthrough: A short pedestrian trail between residential lots, which accommodate desired pedestrian movement within neighborhoods, not accommodated by sidewalks along sub-collector streets, or by local access streets. Breakthroughs also provide access to adjacent or proximate destinations such as parks and community trails.

The following policies attempt to provide a neighborhood pedestrian movement system that incorporates some features from both old town and Jonathan, as well as from the earlier mid-Chaska subdivisions, which did not provide any sidewalks.

The policies recognize the use of low volume, local access streets for pedestrian movement, but they require sidewalks on one side of sub-collector streets for safety, leisure and destination purposes. Pedestrian breakthroughs are required where sidewalks and local access streets do not accommodate desired pedestrian movement. The policies do not differentiate between moderate priced or upscale neighborhoods regarding provision of sidewalks.

Standards / Guidelines for Designating Residential Sub-Collector Streets

The following standards and guidelines shall be used as a basis for identifying sub-collector streets in existing neighborhoods and new subdivisions at the time they are submitted for review and approval. The premise is that by identifying sub-collector streets at an early stage of subdivision review, and by requiring sidewalks along all sub-collector streets, the process of designing a neighborhood pedestrian movement system will be easier, more objective and non-controversial.

In most cases, the criteria below are not meant to be absolutes; rather, they should be treated as guidelines. It is not necessary for a sub-collector street to meet each of the criteria.

Residential sub-collector streets have some or all of the following characteristics:

- 1) Carry residential through traffic generated by tributary local streets;
- 2) Carry residential through traffic between adjacent neighborhoods;
- 3) Carry through traffic, which does not have origin or destination within the neighborhood;
- 4) Connect to minor arterial or collector streets;
- 5) Are over 1,200 feet in length;
- 6) Carry over 500 trips per day on some portion of the street;
- 7) Have relative continuity within a neighborhood as opposed to cul-de-sacs or short loop streets; and/or
- 8) Carry significant school children traffic.

D. EQUESTRIAN TRAILS

Horse stables exist within the rural, northwest part of the City where a substantial number of horses are currently kept. Some equestrian trails exist north of the TC & W Railroad. Some of these trails are within the City's linear park system and some are on private property by informal agreement.

As mentioned earlier, the MN DNR has developed an extensive system of equestrian trails within the Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area across the river and south of Chaska. This system is intended to be expanded in the future.

It is the intention of the City of Chaska to preserve and enhance permanent horse trails in the northwest part of the City. This will be consistent with maintaining the Chaska Greenbelt identity and will preserve a popular form of recreation for the citizenry.

V. TRAIL POLICIES

Policies: Regional Trails

- 1) Support continued improvements to the MN DNR's Minnesota Valley State Trail on the south side of the Minnesota River, including safe and convenient connections to the T.H. 41 bridge trail for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- 2) Support continued improvements to the USFWS Chaska Lake Trail within the Chaska Lake Unit of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, including development of a future bridge crossing of the creek and trailhead at Winkel Park.
- 3) Support the interim use of the former C & NW Railroad right-of-way as a regional trail (Southwest LRT Regional Trail), except in the downtown area.
- 4) Partner with the City of Victoria, Carver County, and Metro Council to develop a Chaska-Victoria Regional Trail connecting the two branches of the Southwest LRT Regional Trail, thereby connecting Carver Regional Park Reserve to the Minnesota Valley State Trail and completing a loop regional trail system connecting Hopkins, Victoria and Chaska.
- 5) Where appropriate, regional trails should connect with the Community Trail System; however, the use of the connecting regional and community trails should be compatible. For example, regional agencies should not indicate a snowmobile trail leading to the City limits if snowmobiles are not permitted in that part of the City.
- 6) Support Carver County's development of the *Carver County 2030 Trail and Bikeway System Plan* by establishing agreed upon roles and responsibilities with Carver County in planning, designing, funding, developing and maintaining the identified linking trail and bikeway corridors in the County's Plan.
- 7) Partner with Carver County, Metro Council and local communities to establish agreed upon roles and responsibilities for planning, designing, funding, developing and maintaining a potential regional trail in the TC & W Railroad corridor.

Policies: Community Trails

- 1) Continue to plan and install a pedestrian and bike trail system throughout the Linear Park System depicted on the 2030 Park & Open Space System Plan Map (**Figure 6.1**).
- 2) Provide pedestrian accessibility to the Linear Park System from proximate residential areas as well as from appropriate commercial, industrial and public areas.
- 3) To the extent possible, trail crossings of minor arterial roadways and some collector streets should be grade separated or should occur at signalized intersections for safety purposes.
- 4) Wherever possible, roadway trails should be physically separated from the street pavement by a safe distance — in the range of seven (7) to 12 feet, and also be located in full view of roadway motorists.
- 5) Optimize reuse of the recently abandoned Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way for providing convenient links within the Community Trail System.
- 6) Provide community greenway trails and trailhead facilities in the Chaska Greenbelt to enable public access to natural resource corridors within the Greenbelt, at such time that these areas develop with residential conservation/cluster development.

Policies: Neighborhood Trails

- 1) It is the policy of the City of Chaska that safe and convenient internal pedestrian circulation shall be provided as an integral part of the design of new residential areas.
- 2) Neighborhood pedestrian circulation systems serve a wide variety of purposes including the following:
 - a) to help achieve unified, cohesive neighborhoods and enhance Chaska's sense of neighborhood and community,
 - b) to promote social interaction among neighborhood residents,
 - c) to provide leisure walking/jogging opportunities,

- d) to provide pedestrian access to neighborhood parks, adjacent community trails, nearby community park and recreation facilities, other public/semi-public facilities, and other similar destinations within convenient walking distance, and
 - e) to provide safe walking opportunities in areas of moderate to high vehicular traffic volumes — generally over 300 trips per day.
- 3) Within all new non-Jonathan neighborhoods, five-foot wide concrete sidewalks shall be provided along both sides of all residential local streets and, to the extent possible, shall form a continuous walkway system by connecting to other neighborhood or community trails.
 - 4) Within Jonathan neighborhoods, pedestrian backwalks may be provided in place of sidewalks along residential local streets, as desired by the Jonathan Association; however, where such backwalks do not provide for a reasonable level of personal safety, then traditional sidewalks described in (3) above should be installed.
 - 5) Pedestrian backwalks will not be required in non-Jonathan neighborhoods unless a homeowner's association exists for ownership/maintenance purposes, or unless unusual circumstances dictate the use of such backwalks.
 - 6) Sidewalks will typically not be required along local streets, in recognition of their low traffic volumes and their non-continuous nature; however, in certain cases, such sidewalks may be required in order to achieve continuity in the walkway system, or to provide access to adjacent or proximate destinations.
 - 7) Pedestrian breakthroughs may be required between lots in order to provide access to proximate destinations such as parks and community trails. New residential areas should be designed to avoid pedestrian breakthroughs to the extent possible.
 - 8) Depending on the varied characteristics of each development, new subdivisions will be reviewed on an individual basis regarding the specific makeup of the required internal pedestrian circulation system.

- 9) The provision of neighborhood trails shall be the financial responsibility of the developer and shall not be credited against the park land/fee dedication responsibility. The premise is that neighborhood trails are primarily a transportation system as opposed to being part of the park system.
- 10) Expand the Community Roadway Trail System through Downtown Chaska to provide safe, efficient and convenient bike routes into and through downtown, including the consideration of bike lanes on designated streets. These routes should be determined in conjunction with the establishment of a Downtown Chaska Master Plan.
- 11) The City Council shall have discretionary authority to require neighborhood trails where deemed necessary or desirable to carry out the above policies.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

Chaska's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) identifies the five-year plan for constructing additional community trails and is updated annually.

Design standards for trail construction are found in Chapter 7 of the City of Chaska Engineering Guidelines. Design details are found in Section 5 of the City of Chaska Standard Detail Plates.

A. REGIONAL TRAILS

In general, regional trail responsibilities for acquisition, development and maintenance will be with agencies outside the City of Chaska. Certain instances may occur where cooperative-type ventures may benefit the City and should be pursued at the City Council's discretion.

Regional trail acquisition, development and maintenance funding assistance may be cause for City officials to examine and encourage their inclusion as part of the City system, i.e. the Chaska-Victoria Regional Trail that will connect the two branches of the Southwest LRT Regional Trail, as well as the Minnesota Valley State Trail to Carver Regional Park Reserve. **Figure 7.1** shows the proposed future regional trail corridor between Chaska and Victoria that may include portions of the City's trail system, such as the existing trail along Clover Ridge Drive. The specific alignment, construction and maintenance responsibility needs

to be determined jointly by the multiple agencies involved, including Carver County, the Metropolitan Council and the City.

Other trail types, which may be better classified as regional in the future, could eventually include the City's levee system trail connecting the Chaska Lake Unit of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge to the Minnesota Valley State Trail System at T.H. 41 and potentially the Southwest LRT Regional Trail, and a future city trail proposed along the north side of the Minnesota River.

B. COMMUNITY TRAILS

Responsibilities for acquisition, development, and maintenance vary between the Community Greenway System and the Community Roadway System.

Acquisition of the Community Greenway System will continue to be the responsibility of the City's CIP. Development and maintenance are also City responsibilities. This procedure is the same as that which the City has been pursuing to date and which best guarantees uniformity and usability of the greenway system.

Where Community Roadway Trails are designated on State or County right-of-way, City officials should make every effort to pursue cost-sharing options with those jurisdictions. New developments adjacent to collector or arterial streets should continue to pay their proportionate share of roadway trails, as has been the past practice.

Actual acquisition and development responsibilities are to be addressed in the CIP. Timing of construction will depend upon:

- 1) connection to trip generators or residential areas;
- 2) major roadway projects; and
- 3) grants.

C. NEIGHBORHOOD TRAILS

The acquisition and development of the neighborhood system of sidewalks and backwalks will be the responsibility of the developer separate from the park dedication responsibility. Maintenance responsibility for sidewalks will be with the lot owner, and the backwalk system will be with the homeowners' association or lot owner in that order. The City will not pursue backwalk systems in areas where a homeowners' association does not exist.

This Trails System Plan is intended to be a guide by which City officials can address trail inclusion as part of the overall Capital Improvement Program, and by which City staff can start an organized process by which they may incorporate trail inclusions as part of any new development. The City's vision for trails consists of a safe, convenient, connected, and enjoyable pedestrian movement/trail system throughout the entire community that contributes to the community's unique sense of place.

The City's prior commitment to linear considerations, as evidenced by the approximately 2.5 square miles of existing park/open space, is sufficient reason to continue to promote pedestrian and leisure travel. This, coupled with the existing sidewalk system, Jonathan Trail System, University of Minnesota Arboretum, Minnesota River Valley Trail, the Hennepin County rail trail system, and the Chaska Lake Wildlife Refuge system is added rationale for actively promoting pedestrian opportunities.