

THUD Community Project Information – Bruce Vento Regional Trail

Project Name:

Bruce Vento Regional Trail extension from Buerkle Road to County Road J in Gem Lake, White Bear Lake, White Bear Township, Vadnais Heights, and Ramsey County, Minnesota in Minnesota's 4th Congressional District.

This project request will provide final design and construction documents for the last two undeveloped segments of the Bruce Vento Regional Trail for a multi-modal bituminous trail, at-grade and separated trail crossings, concrete, retaining walls, landscaping, restoration, signage, and amenities.

- Bruce Vento Regional Trail Extension Segment 1: 2.7-mile segment from Buerkle Road to the intersection of Hoffman Road/Highway 61.
- Bruce Vento Regional Trail Extension Segment 2: 3.3-mile segment from Whitaker Street to County Road J.

General description of the project and why it is needed:

This project request will provide final design and construction plans for a six-mile alternate regional trail alignment that is mainly outside of rail property on public land and will complete the last two undeveloped segments of the Bruce Vento Regional Trail from Buerkle Road to County Road J in the cities/township of Gem Lake, White Bear Lake, White Bear Township, Vadnais Heights in Ramsey County, Minnesota.

Completing final design and construction documents will allow these last two segments to be shovel ready projects for implementation. This will complete a major gap in the Regional Bike Transportation Network and United States Bike Route 41 (USBR 41), provide critical connections to a proposed arterial bus rapid transit (BRT), and provide a multi-modal trail that does not exist today for pedestrian and bicycles in northern communities within Ramsey County.

What are the benefits of this project and why is it a priority?

Project improvements will provide significant multimodal access for residents within northern Ramsey County and the State of Minnesota with completion of a six-mile major gap in the Regional Bike Transportation Network and United States Bike Route 41 trail.

Significant barriers will be eliminated from heavy industrial/office land use and major vehicular transportation routes, provide a multi-modal trail that does not exist today, and critical connections to a proposed arterial bus rapid transit (BRT).

Direct benefit of project activities will connect two Above Average Population Areas of People of Color and Poverty, and substantial concentrations of youth, elderly, and residents with disabilities for increased access to multi-modal transportation facilities, schools, places of work, shopping, and local/regional park and trail facilities.

The trail will provide connections to other regional and local trails such as the Highway 96 Regional Trail, Lakes Links Regional Trail, Gateway Regional Trail, planned South Shore Trail, and future connection to the proposed Hardwood Creek Regional Trail extension in Washington County at County Road J.

The trail will connect populations south of the trail project for the southern St. Paul segment of the existing Bruce Vento Trail which extends through highly urban and concentrated areas of poverty making it a regionally important connection that will directly benefit diverse populations more distant than those directly adjacent to the corridor area.

Amount requested for the community project:

The amount requested for completion of final design and construction documents is \$1,300,000.

Total project cost.

The total cost to complete final design/construction plans for the remaining segments of Bruce Vento Regional Trail is \$1,300,000 and will allow these last two segments to be shovel ready projects for implementation. Total funding costs for implementation have not yet been determined and will be implemented under a future request or other funding sources.

- Completion of Final Design and Construction Documents: \$1,300,000.

Cost for construction activities are not included in this request and may be requested in future federal funding opportunities. Anticipated cost for construction is estimated at \$15,260,000 - \$16,200,000.

- Segment 1 Estimated Construction and Construction Engineering Cost: \$7,060,000
- Segment 2 Estimated Construction and Construction Engineering Cost: \$8,200,000 – \$9,200,000

Can the project obligate all appropriated funds within 12 months after enactment? If not, what would be the expected date of obligation?

Yes, the project can obligate appropriated funds within 12 months after enactment.

Estimated start and completion dates.

Project activities anticipated to be completed in FY 2022.

Has the request been submitted to another Subcommittee or Committee this fiscal year? If yes, which one(s)?

No

Does the project have other public (federal, state, local) and/or private funds committed to meet match or cost-share requirements for costs related to construction, operations, and maintenance? If so, what is the source and amount of those funds?

Other sources of funds that may fulfill total project cost-share matches may be obtained from Metropolitan Council TAB Regional Solicitation, County Capital Improvement Funds, State of Minnesota Parks and Trail Legacy Amendment funds.

This project does have other public funds committed to schematic, preliminary and portions of final design for segments 1 and 2.

- Segment 1: This segment of trail has final design completed at approximately 80% and has been funded with State of Minnesota Parks and Trail Legacy Amendment Funds in the amount of \$562,000.

- Segment 2: This segment of trail will have schematic and 20% preliminary plans completed in December 2021 and is currently being funded with State of Minnesota Parks and Trail Legacy Amendment Funds in the amount of \$200,000.

Does the project require an environmental review? If so, what is the status and/or outcome of the environmental review and NEPA category of action (if applicable)?

This project would complete a project memorandum and would fall under Categorical Exclusion category.

Type of project eligible under 23 USC 133(b):

Bike/Pedestrian

Where is the project in the construction process?

Final Design, Right of Way

- Segment 1: Final Design and Right of Way is at 80% completion
- Segment 2: Schematic and 20% preliminary plans will be completed in December 2021.

Was the project on a State, tribal or territorial Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) or a metropolitan transportation improvement plan (MTIP) as of 12/31/2020? If yes, please provide a link to the plan.

No

Please provide the STIP or TIP ID Number and specify which plan (ex. North Carolina STIP, New York Metropolitan Transportation Council TIP) the ID number comes from.

N/A

Please provide a history of federal funding for the project, if any. Include both formula funds and any discretionary grants.

N/A

If the request does not fully fund the project, describe where the remaining funding comes from to complete the project.

This request will fund final design and construction documents for segments 1 and 2 of the Bruce Vento Regional Trail extension from Buerkle Road to County Road J.



City of White Bear Lake

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April 1, 2021

Office of Betty McCullom (MN-04)
Congresswoman Betty McCullom
661 LaSalle Street, #10
Saint Paul, MN 55114

RE: Community Project Funding Request – Bruce Vento Trail

Dear Congresswoman McCullom:

This letter is to share our support for Ramsey County Parks and Recreation's community project funding request of \$1.3 million for design / constructions engineering work for the Bruce Vento Regional Trail extending from Buerkle Road to the intersection of Hoffmann Road/ US Highway 61 in the City of White Bear Lake.

The 13-mile planned regional trail corridor extends from the east side of downtown St. Paul to the north County line in White Bear Township spanning through the cities of Saint Paul, Maplewood, Vadnais Heights, Gem Lake, White Bear Lake and White Bear Township. The Ramsey County portion of the regional trail between Larpentuer Avenue to County Road J has approximately 6 miles of undeveloped trail north of Buerkle Road. This undeveloped section is a critical trail gap for the northern communities of Ramsey County.

This project is the first of two steps to eliminate half of the six-mile trail gap in the regional and national trail system. This project will set the stage for future connections north of Highway 96 to County Road J, provide connections to the Highway 96 Regional Trail, Lakes Line Regional Trail, South Shore Trail, and will provide a future connection to the Hardwood Creek Trail at County Road J. This project will also complete a major gap in the National US Bike Route 41 (USBR 41) for connections north of Ramsey County to the Canadian border, since the Bruce Vento Regional Trail is the designated USBR 41 route through Ramsey County. Another important aspect for this project is providing critical pedestrian connections and removing significant barriers to the proposed Rush Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) between Buerkle Road and Highway 96. The Bruce Vento Trail will provide pedestrian access to these station stops

The trail improvement project is extremely important to the County and Regional system and helps create a connected bicycle and pedestrian transportation system throughout Ramsey County.

Sincerely,

Jo Emerson
Mayor



**WHITE BEAR
TOWNSHIP**

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RAMSEY COUNTY
MINNESOTA

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Board of Supervisors
ED M. PRUDHON, Chair
STEVEN A. RUZEK
SCOTT E. MCCUNE

STATEMENT CONFIRMING SUPPORT OF THE MASTER PLANNING OF THE BRUCE VENTO REGIONAL TRAIL

WHEREAS, Ramsey County and the City of Saint Paul established a joint master plan for the Bruce Vento Regional Trail in 1989,

AND WHEREAS, Ramsey County has submitted a master plan update, attached as Exhibit A, to update the Bruce Vento Regional Trail master plan section between Larpenteur Avenue and County Road J,

AND WHEREAS, the 2020 master plan update incorporates several changes to the regional trail corridor between Larpenteur Avenue and County Road J to address boundary expansion and acquisition, trail alignment changes, long-term site and infrastructure improvements, recreation improvements, and additional recreational opportunities throughout the Ramsey County section of the Bruce Vento Regional Trail corridor,

AND WHEREAS, White Bear Township Board has reviewed the plan and supports master planning for the Bruce Vento Regional Trail corridor between Larpenteur Avenue and County Road J,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Board of the Town of White Bear, Minnesota that White Bear Township supports the Bruce Vento Regional Trail Master Planning.

Dated: April 1, 2021.

PATRICK CHRISTOPHERSON, Town Clerk-Treasurer



March 26, 2021

Office of Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04)
Congresswoman Betty McCollum
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 2051

RE: Bruce Vento Regional Trail extension

Dear Representative McCollum:

This letter is to share the City of Vadnais Heights' support Ramsey County Parks and Recreation's plan to extend the Bruce Vento Regional Trail along our border with White Bear Lake. We encourage strong consideration be made for this project for the Community Project request.

The Bruce Vento Regional Trail has been a highly popular multiuse trail corridor for Ramsey County residents for years since development of the Trail Master Plan in 1993. The trail corridor is 13 miles in length, and extends from the east side of downtown St. Paul to the north County line in White Bear Township. The final segment of the southern seven miles of regional trail was completed in 2005 on former Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railway ending at Buerkle Road at our border with White Bear Lake. The north six miles of trail has remained undeveloped for years, and is a critical trail gap for the northern communities of Ramsey County.

A major planning effort was initiated in 2014 to find an alternative trail alignment in hopes of finishing the six mile trail gap. As a result of this planning effort, a three-mile extension of the Bruce Vento Regional Trail has been planned from Buerkle Road to Highway 96. This is a major step to provide increased opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian travel within the communities of White Bear Lake, Maplewood, Vadnais Heights, Gem Lake and White Bear Township. In addition, this project will provide a connection to the Highway 96 Regional Trail, Lake Avenue Trail and South Shore Trail. This will allow our residents to more readily access other regional trails too, such as the Gateway Trail.

This trail will provide a critical segment in a complex regional trail system linking Vadnais Heights, Maplewood, White Bear Lake, Gem Lake and White Bear Township. This project is extremely vital to the regional system of bicycling and pedestrian opportunities. We are contacted weekly by pedestrians and bicyclists seeking more trails, so we hope this project moves forward. Please let me know if we may provide additional support for this project.

Cordially yours,

CITY OF VADNAIS HEIGHTS

Kevin Watson
City Administrator



26 March, 2021

Office of Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04)
Congresswoman Betty McCollum
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

RE: Letter of Support for Community Project Request, Bruce Vento Regional Trail

Congresswoman McCollum,

We are the co-chairs of the [Lake Links Association](#), a White Bear Lake area non-profit organized to drive completion of the regional vision outlined in the [2001 Lake Links Trail Network Master Plan](#). We're sure you recognize the document as you, along with Senator Chuck Wiger and fellow Representative Harry Mares, were the Legislative Sponsors to the project. Thank you for your work then, and your work now 21 years later, to help us complete the Bruce Vento Trail, as you will read, a vital part of this regional vision. We've included a copy of the 2001 overall system map at the end of this letter for your reference.

Lake Links Association organized as a Minnesota Non-Profit in 2017. Since our inception, our focus has been to rally units of government and work through our area legislators to raise, as best we could, the outstanding funding needed to complete the 10-mile walking and biking trail around White Bear.

Since 2017 we have worked very closely with our area legislators, particularly Senator Wiger. Our bi-partisan partnership with legislators and area public agencies at all levels has resulted in close to \$8 million being assigned by the Legislature to Ramsey County and the Cities of Dellwood, White Bear Lake, Mahtomedi and White Bear Township. Because of this generous funding, we fully expect these units of government to have the entire trail-around-the-lake in place by the time the snow flies in 2023.

When viewing the system map, the trail-around-the-lake is the noticeably the focal point of the regional vision, but the Bruce Vento Trail is arguably more important. It begins in Lowertown off the downtown of St. Paul in the Bruce Vento Sanctuary and winds north along abandoned rail land through Swede Hollow, through the Phalen neighborhood and toward White Bear Lake. But the railroad only abandoned the tracks till just north of Highway 694 in Vadnais Heights. On the south side of #694, heading north, there is a pedestrian bridge allowing people on bikes and those walking to safely cross over #694. Once on the north side of the highway, a small spur of trail drifts down a few hundred yards and abruptly ends at Buerkle Road isolating users.

Though the Bruce Vento Trail is a such a critical part of the overall 2001 regional vision, it has not advanced from its dead-end at Buerkle Road since 2005. Almost perennially, regional grant initiatives choose projects in higher density, more urban locations over the aging Bruce Vento Trail.

Here is why The Bruce Vento Trail is so critical to the overall network success within Ramsey County, but also to the movement of bicyclists and pedestrians in local communities, across the area and into Greater Minnesota.

-It is the only north-south regional trail in the Ramsey County bike ped plan network. When the current phase from Buerkle to Hoffman/#61 is complete it will connect those living in and around the City of Saint Paul with the outer tier northern communities such as White Bear Lake. Once in White Bear Lake, Vento users could pick up the around-the-lake trail and ride to the east side of the lake to pick up Highway 12, the main street to Mahtomedi and Willernie's downtown. Washington County is transforming Highway 12 into a very safe section for bike and ped use. This highway's bike facilities will be the safest and most direct connection to the DNR's Gateway Trail. A quick ride to the north on the Gateway would bring Vento users to a scenic spur called the Brown's Creek Trail which heads straight east and down into Stillwater's downtown. Brown's Creek was also one of the critical trail connections identified in the 2001 plan. Riding into Stillwater, touring, transportation or recreation bicyclists can now connect to the Loop Trail by riding over the re-purposed Lift Bridge into Wisconsin. Without a completed Vento to Hoffman/#61 segment this extended string of connections, and a host of local destinations by bike, ceases to happen for most, particularly kids, families and riders lacking the confidence and skill-set to mingle with traffic on County and State highways, which is all we have at the moment.

-When completed, coming out of White Bear Lake, the Bruce Vento Trail will connect to the [Hardwood Creek Trail](#) just over the border in Washington County. From here it connects to the [Sunrise Prairie Trail](#) in Wyoming which continues to North Branch. These interconnections are what makes a network, a network. Dovetailing them achieves the ROI envisioned in the planning of the original regional vision.

-MnDOT's creation of [USBR 41](#), part of a 15,000+ mile national bicycle routing system, is a blending of separated trails, quiet streets and highway shoulders connecting St. Paul with Grand Portage on the Canadian Border. The Bruce Vento trail is an integral segment in that overall routing within and leaving the metro. Without it today, touring bicyclists on USBR 41 are being directed on-line by MnDOT to take a circuitous re-route through multiple communities without the assistance of route signage along the way. Riders are being directed to cross multiple county and state highways, many without proper crossing facilities. A completed Vento would simplify the route and make it considerably safer.

-The economic impact of the Bruce Vento Trail for the Greater White Bear Area can be significant. The sale of traditional bicycles coupled with the massive double-digit increase in the sale of e-bikes, bicycles with a small, efficient electric motor, [continues to exceed available supplies](#) as the use of bicycles for transportation is at record highs in the United States. The Bruce Vento Trail provides connectivity within and between the local communities and beyond. The around-the-lake trail has a similar effect, though in a much more condensed area than the Bruce Vento Trail.

-Met Council has put in place the [RBTN \(Regional Bicycle Transportation Network\)](#). It is essentially a guideline for cities when writing their Comprehensive Plans. It suggests road corridors where cities should consider establishing facilities for the safe use of a bicycle for transportation. The Bruce Vento Trail segment seeking funding runs parallel to U.S. Highway 61. Since the 1970's the highway has systematically been transitioned from a bikeable route under Governor Wendell Anderson to an overloaded arterial seeing many tens of thousands of motorized vehicles per day. The Bruce Vento Trail, then, provides the only possible continuous safe RBTN route in the area that could be used for north-south non-motorized transportation or recreation.

-In White Bear Lake, most of the elementary, middle and high school locations are within a few thousand yards of the increasingly busy Highway 61 corridor. Many wishing to ride a bicycle between their home and school or the downtown or visit friends would have to cross that corridor. The Bruce Vento Trail segment we are supporting for funding would create a primary safe route that would minimize the number of times many of these students cross the highway. Its funding would be a big step toward the creation of select, ultra-safe crossings over a dangerous highway.

As you can see, the Bruce Vento segment from Buerkle Road to Hoffman Road / Highway 61 is much more than a regional trail for weekend riders. In Ramsey County and across local and State trail networks it serves as a “spine”. The advancement of this long-stalled trail brings with it the economic benefits of bicycle tourism, greater health and livability for people of all ages through local recreational and safe passage to and between schools, neighborhood, parks and shopping destinations. If Greater White Bear Area residents wish to ride their bike to work to St. Paul and points west toward Minneapolis, which more and more are doing, it will make the journey less stressful for some, and for others, it will make using that mode of transportation possible.

Advancing the Bruce Vento Trail is a meaningful step to completing the regional vision you helped to sponsor 21 years ago.

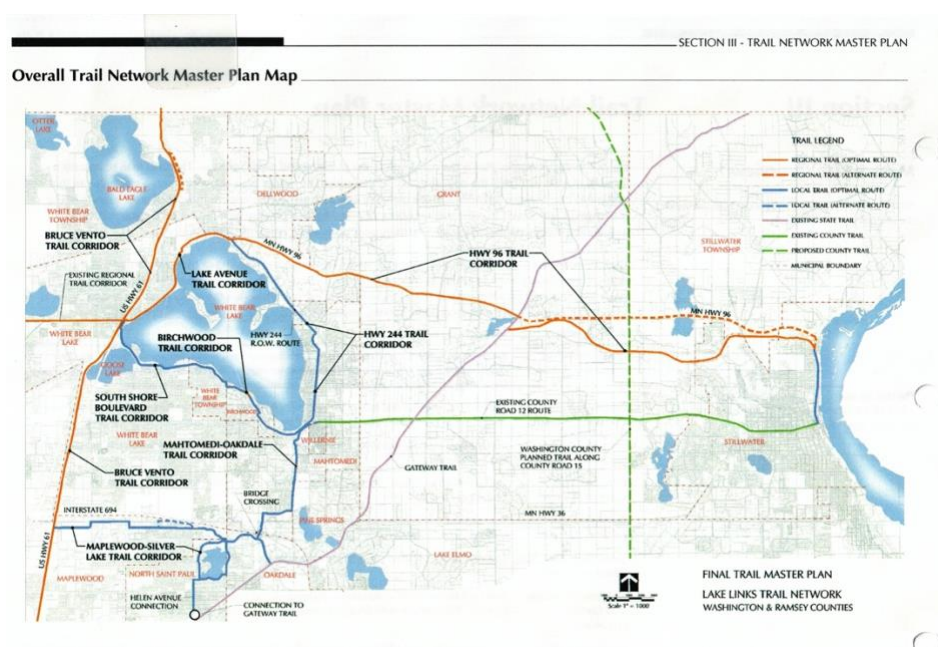
Thank you for your continued representation of Minnesota and your assistance in funding this project through Ramsey County for the benefit of the region.

Respectfully,

Michael Brooks,
Ramsey County Chair
Lake Links Association

Steve Wolgamot,
Washington County Chair
Lake Links Association

Overall System Map of Critical Trails Identified in 2001 Lake Links Trail Network Master Plan





5/13/2020

Support for Bruce Vento Trail Extension Project

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to share our support for funding for Ramsey County Parks and Recreation's plan to extend the Bruce Vento Regional Trail from Buerkle Road to the intersection of Hoffmann Road/ US Highway 61 in the City of White Bear Lake.

The Task Force is a joint powers board of city, county and township elected officials, which is planning transportation improvements to enhance mobility, promote economic development and preserve community assets within the 80-mile transportation corridor between Saint Paul and Hinckley. The Task Force provides technical and policy guidance to transportation agencies, raises public awareness, builds support and advocates for improved transportation service in the corridor

The current Bruce Vento Trail and the extension will complement the planned 14 mile Rush Line BRT transit route by adding additional multi-modal transportation options to the Rush Line Corridor. In addition, the proposed extension project will not impact the ability of Minnesota Commercial Railway to continue to provide service in the corridor and bring economic benefits to the communities it serves.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Victoria A. Reinhardt".

Victoria Reinhardt
Chair, Rush Line Corridor Task Force

Centerville
Chisago County
Forest Lake
Harris
Hinckley
Hugo
Little Canada
Maplewood
North Branch
Pine City
Pine County
Ramsey County
Rock Creek
Rush City
Saint Paul
Sandstone
Stacy
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