

Segment 3: New Ulm to Mankato

This segment continues from the City of New Ulm and extends to the City of Mankato traversing through the City of Courtland. This segment is the longest segment of the plan at approximately 30 miles in length. Connections to the Blue Earth County trail system will be a featured part of this segment. This segment is bookended with Flandrau and Minneopa state parks in New Ulm and Mankato, respectively. In addition to providing areas of interest to trail users, the Mankato-North Mankato Metropolitan Statistical Area has significant population that will drive local trail use.

Criteria specific to this segment are:

- Provide connections to Blue Earth County trail system and Mankato area parks.
- Connect Flandrau State Park to Minneopa State Park.
- Take advantage of the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway alignment as an identified scenic route with unique design standards, and to attract new visitors to the byway.

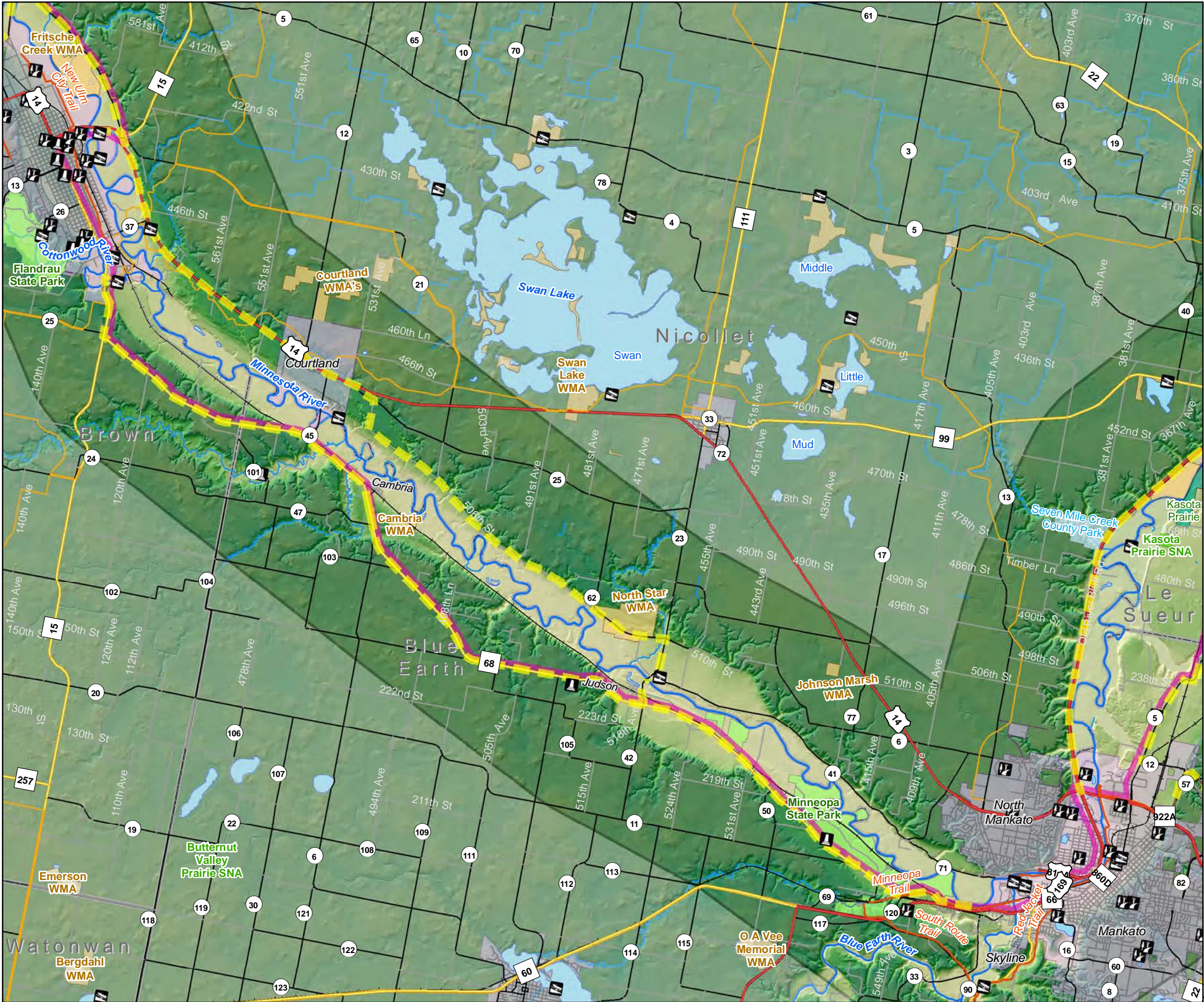
State Highway 14 is currently undergoing redesign from New Ulm to Courtland. The trail could be incorporated into this project. The potential trail route would follow Nicollet County Highway 62 from Courtland to Judson, where it would cross the Blue Earth County Highway 42 bridge. This bridge currently has a bike and walkway physically separated from vehicular traffic. This route would then follow Blue Earth County Highway 68, travel through Minneopa State Park and into Mankato on city and county trails.

Alternatively, the trail could exit New Ulm on the south side of the river and follow Highway 68 all the way to Mankato. This option would feature a closer connection to Flandrau State Park, and directly link it to Minneopa State Park and Mankato.

Cyclists can ride from Judson to North Mankato on the Judson Bottom Road, which has widened shoulders from Nicollet County Highway 23 to Highway 71.

Minnesota River State Trail

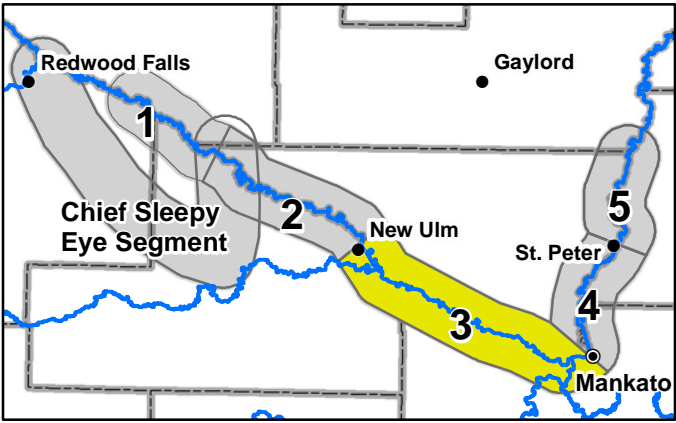
Figure 10: Segment 3 - New Ulm to Mankato



Legend

- Historical Site
- City Park
- Water Access Site
- Potential Trail Alignment
- Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail
- City and Regional Trails
- Minnesota Snowmobile Trail
- Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway
- U.S. Trunk Highway
- MN Trunk Highway
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- State Park
- Scientific and Natural Area
- Wildlife Management Area
- County Park
- Kasota Prairie
- City Boundaries

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Segment 3 Trail Communities and Connections

City of Courtland

The City of Courtland is located between the cities of New Ulm and Nicollet. Just about 20 miles from Mankato, Courtland is in Nicollet County and contains small city charm in the middle of bigger cities.

The City of Courtland was not incorporated until 1892. Before this time it was in control by the Township Board. The city was first called Hilo, but changed to Courtland after a town in New York, had the spelling of "Cortland".

The first building erected was a warehouse, in 1872. In 1873, C. Bobsin opened a general store. In 1882, there were 3 general stores, 2 blacksmith and wagon shops, a harness shop, a shoe shop, hotel and saloon, about 8 dwellings, a depot, and an elevator.

Courtland station was on the line of the Winona and Saint Peter railroad, on section 8. At one time there were 4 passenger trains that went through town and 4 freight trains. The train tracks were taken out in 1973.

The population of Courtland according to the 2010 census is 611 people. The city contains several businesses that provide many services to the surrounding people and communities. Courtland is home to a saw mill. Minnesota Valley Forest Products deals in hardwood lumber. Two major industries in the City of Courtland include: Hancock Concrete and G and S Manufacturing, which was formerly located in New Ulm.

The trail corridor to Courtland from the west will be located between US Highway 14 and the river. The city of Courtland has proposed the acquisition and development of a park system and trail corridor that will serve residents and trail users. The Minnesota River State Trail could follow this alignment through the City of Courtland. There is space along this route to develop a trail head that could serve city and state trail users.

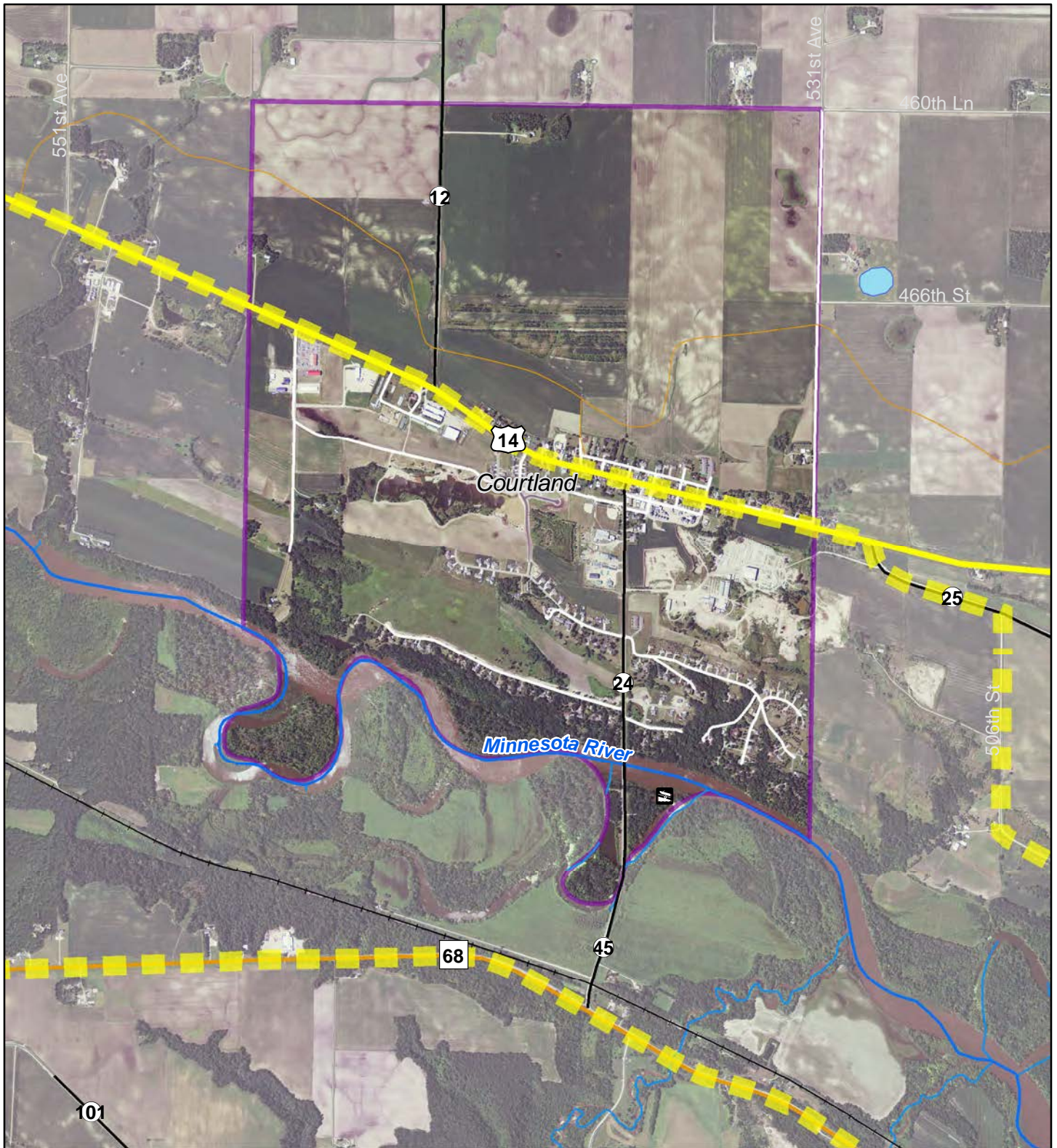


Figure 11: City of Courtland

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet



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Legend

- Railroads
- US Trunk Highway
- MN Trunk Highway
- County Highway
- Township Road
- Municipal Road
- City Boundaries
- Potential Trail Alignment
- Snowmobile Trail
- City Park
- Water Access Site
- School

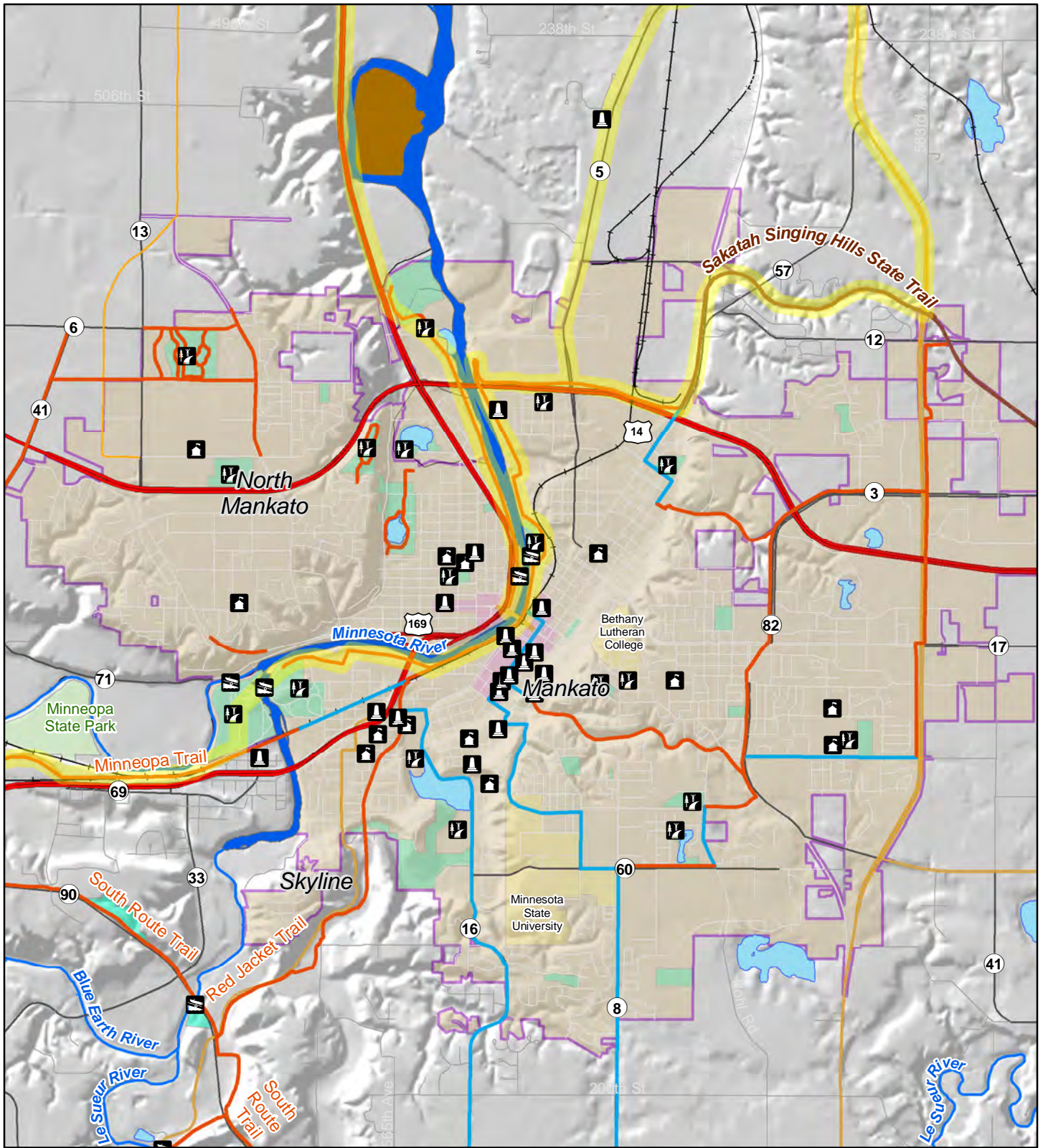





















Figure 12: City of Mankato




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Legend

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
|  Minneopa State Park |  Railroad |  City Boundaries |
|  Alternative Trail Alignments |  U.S. Trunk Highway |  Central Business District |
|  Minnesota State Trail |  MN Trunk Highway |  City & County Park |
|  Regional or City Trail |  Township Road |  Water Access Site |
|  On Street Bike Route |  County Highway |  Historic Site |
|  Snowmobile Trail |  Municipal Road |  School |

City of Mankato

Mankato is located at the confluence of the Blue Earth and Minnesota Rivers 75 miles southwest of the Twin Cities. The city is the county seat of Blue Earth County. US Highways 14 and 169 and State Highways 22 and 60 are major routes in the city.

The area was first inhabited by the Dakota who called it Mahkato, meaning greenish blue earth. What is now Sibley Park was an important area for powwows and major tribal gatherings.

The first Europeans came to the area in the 1700s. The area was settled in 1852 by Parsons K. Johnson and Henry Jackson and received its charter in 1868. New settlers arrived by steamboat on the Minnesota River, but this was an unreliable mode of transportation in low-water years. A crude military road was built from Saint Peter to Mankato in 1852 allowing for stagecoach travel. In 1868, a railroad was built in Mankato, making it a railroad hub for southern Minnesota. The railroads allowed the agriculture industry to thrive and many mills were built. Quarries for “Mankato stone” were also prevalent.

According to the 2010 Census, Mankato’s population is 39,305, up from 32,427 at the 2000 Census. The population has been rising steadily since the 1980s.

Mankato is the primary retail center for the south-central Minnesota region. Most of the commercial development has been along the major road corridors in the city. Manufacturing in Mankato has focused on agriculture and mining, but telecommunications, mechanical, and distribution are also important industries. Major employers in Mankato include health care, education, government, and manufacturing.

The city offers many opportunities for fine arts including community theaters, symphonies and the Mankato Ballet among others. Minnesota State University and Bethany Lutheran College offer additional opportunities for fine arts, sports and other events.

Mankato is home to 45 park areas and numerous miles of trails. The park facilities range from neighborhood mini-parks to community sports complexes and also include trail corridors and undeveloped natural areas. The park facilities include picnic areas, playgrounds, ball fields, fishing areas, swimming areas and historic sites. Riverfront, Sibley, and Land of Memories parks could be trail heads and each offers a variety of services to trail users.

The City of Mankato maintains many miles of trails, both off-road and on-road. These trails provide connections between developed and natural areas of the city and the region. Some of the city’s trails include the Minnesota River Trail, the Red Jacket Trail, and the South Route Trail. The Minnesota DNR maintains

the Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail, which enters Mankato on the northeast end of town and connects to the city's trail system.

The trail alignment will follow existing county and city trails through Mankato. From Minneopa State Park, the trail will follow the path of the Minneopa Trail to Land of Memories Park and Sibley Park. Construction of a bridge over the Blue Earth River will be necessary to connect these two parks. From Sibley Park, the trail will follow the path of the Sibley Parkway Trail and Minnesota River Trail. The Minnesota River Trail is located between the river and river wall, as it passes by downtown Mankato. This trail passes through Riverfront Park, goes underneath the US Highway 14 Bridge, turns east and connects to the Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail.

City of North Mankato

The City of North Mankato is located across the Minnesota River from Mankato in Nicollet County. US Highway 169 travels through the city along the Minnesota River and US Highway 14 crosses east to west.

Even though the city was platted in 1857 by Issac Marks, Asa White, and Joseph Guenther, North Mankato was not incorporated until 1897. Originally, North Mankato was little more than two ferry boat landings connected by a river road. The city has experienced steady population growth since it was incorporated. As of the 2010 census, North Mankato has a population of 13,394.

The city is part of the Mankato-North Mankato Metropolitan Statistical Area which is a regional center of health care, shopping, education, sports, and recreation. The city's central business district is located on Belgrade Avenue across Veterans Memorial Bridge from downtown Mankato. North Mankato has seen an increase in its residential, commercial, and industrial sectors as a result of being awarded its own Port Authority in 1985.

Sixteen parks are located in North Mankato ranging from neighborhood parks to natural areas to large athletic complexes. Caswell Park is one of the premiere softball complexes in the nation and has hosted numerous state, regional, and national tournaments since opening in 1987. Spring Lake Park, at 52 acres, features a unique sand bottom swimming facility among other recreational activities. Riverview Park, between US Highway 169 and the Minnesota River, provides access to the river and could be a potential trail head. The Rex MacBeth River Trail also travels through Riverview Park from the Veterans Memorial Bridge to Kiwanis Recreation Area.

A possible trail corridor could be developed through North Mankato along the Rex MacBeth River Trail. This option would be most feasible if an alignment is developed along Highway 169 from Mankato to Saint Peter. The trail, or a connection to the trail, could be made across Veterans Memorial Bridge.

Connections to other parks and trails in the city could be made through local trails or on-road routes.

Minneopa State Park

In 1905 the State of Minnesota passed legislation establishing Minneopa State Park setting aside land around Minneopa Creek and the falls for public use. This made Minneopa the third state park in Minnesota. The park became a popular destination due to the scenic value of the Minneopa Falls. Thousands of visitors arrived by rail to the depot in the townsite of Minneopa while others made their way by steamboat.

The Seppmann windmill, in the northwest corner of the park, was donated by Albert Seppmann, son of its builder. It was designed by Louis Seppmann after windmills in his native Germany. One of the only wind-powered mills in Minnesota, it served the area until 1880 when two of the arms were broken by high winds. The main structure, made of stone, is still intact today.

The park holds two outstanding geologic features – the double waterfalls and the giant boulders on the park’s grassland. The word Minneopa means “water falling twice” in the Dakota language. In all, the water drops 45 feet making it the largest waterfall in southern Minnesota. Large boulders in the park’s prairie are referred to as glacial erratics. These erratics were transported over a hundred miles from their bedrock source and deposited here by glaciers over 15,000 years ago.



The remaining structure of the Seppmann windmill stands in the southwestern portion of Minneopa State Park. ©MN DNR



Minneopa Falls was a primary tourist attraction in the early 1900's. ©MN DNR

Minneopa’s diverse habitats support a myriad of wildlife that can be observed throughout the year. The southern portion of the park, around Minneopa Creek

and the falls, is hilly and wooded. Northern sections of the park feature the Minnesota River floodplain and restored prairies on the uplands. Turtles, beaver, and waterfowl are found near the floodplain while the southern portion is home to woodland animals including pileated woodpeckers.

The trail should parallel State Highway 68 along the length of the park. The trail will cross Minneopa Creek and join the Blue Earth County Minneopa Trail, where it terminates near the falls.

A connection across Highway 68 should be explored to link the main body of the park to the falls area. This connection could also serve to link the Minnesota River State Trail and Minneopa Trail to other Blue Earth County trails, including the South Route Trail and Red Jacket Trail.

Wildlife Management Areas

Trail users interested in wildlife viewing could find opportunities at one of several Wildlife Management Areas in this segment. Cambria WMA, located on the bluff south of the Minnesota River, provides both prairie and hardwood forest habitats. Wildlife viewing options include wetland, prairie, and forest wildlife. North of the river, Courtland, North Star, and Johnson Marsh WMA's could serve as stopping points for trail users. Snakes, butterflies, and bluebirds are abundant at North Star, which is located along Nicollet County 41 on river bluffs.

MINNEOPA STATE PARK

FACILITIES AND FEATURES:

- Two picnic areas
- Picnic shelter w/ electricity
- Semi-modern campground
- Heated camper cabin with electricity
- Hiking/Ski trails
- Primitive group camp
- Historic site
- Native prairie
- Visitor center
- Geologic formations
- Cross-country ski trails
- Volleyball court
- Horseshoe pit
- RV dump station

VISITOR FAVORITES:

- Twin waterfall
- Seppmann Windmill
- River fishing
- Wildlife viewing
- Hiking
- Photography

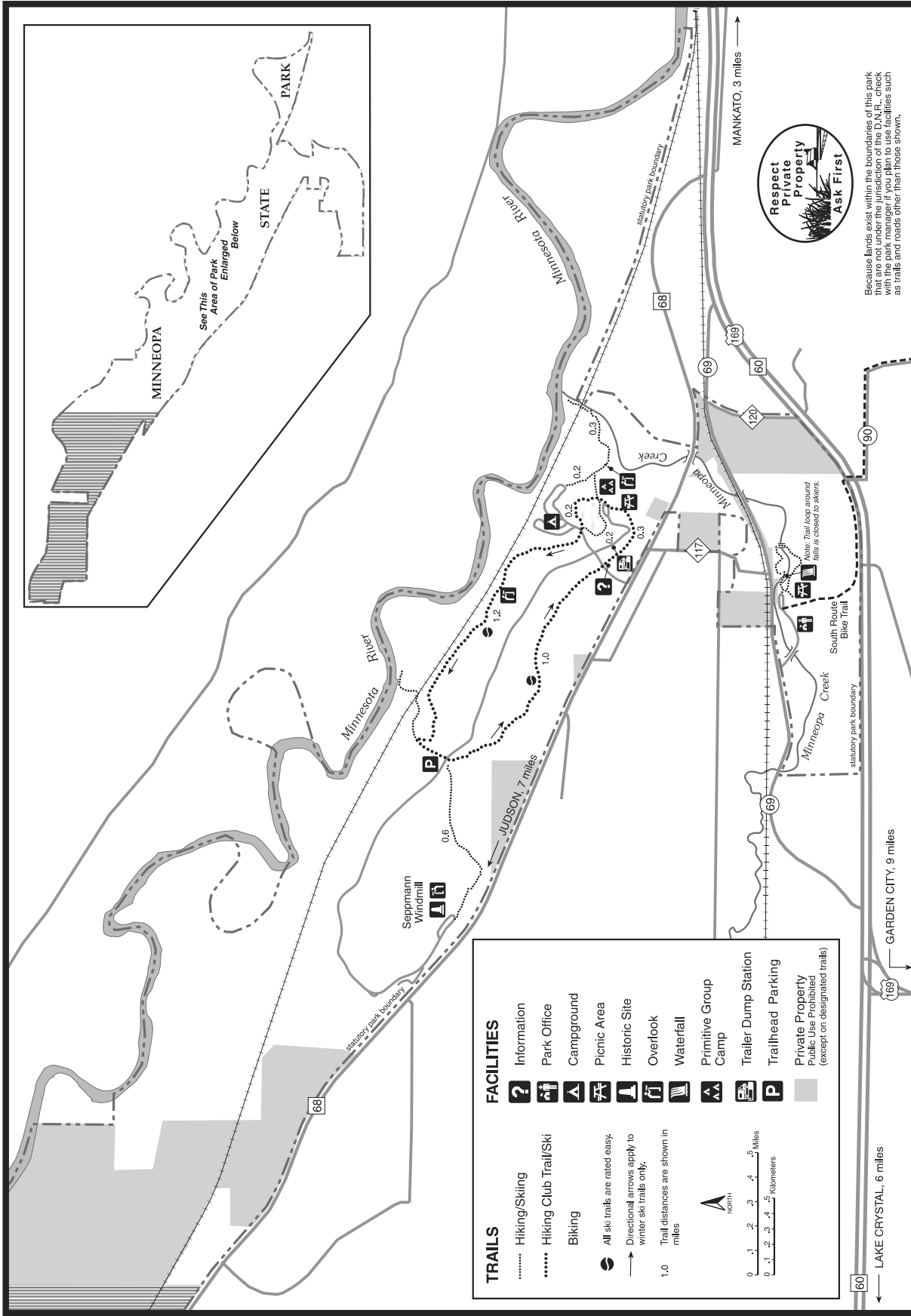
LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION ?

The DNR has mapped the state showing federal, state, county, and township recreational facilities. Public Recreation Information Maps (PRIM) are available for purchase from the DNR gift shop. DNR regional staff, Minnesota state parks and interpretive centers, and map stores.

Check it out - you'll be glad you did.



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Segment 4: Mankato to Saint Peter

This segment extends north from the City of Mankato 13 miles, to the cities of Kasota and Saint Peter. A significant portion of land in this segment is being utilized for mining. The Kasota stone found in this area is the same stone used to construct historic buildings in Ottawa Village and the Stone Arch Bridge in downtown Minneapolis. Several natural areas are present in this segment, including Seven Mile Creek County Park which has extensive trail infrastructure in place.

Criteria specific to this segment are:

- Connect the cities of Mankato, Saint Peter, and Kasota to Seven Mile County Park.
- Connect to Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail.
- Take advantage of the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway alignment as an identified scenic route with unique design standards, and to attract new visitors to the byway.

The preferred alternative for this segment will be on the east side of the river and west of State Highway 22. This segment could follow the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway, along Blue Earth County 5 and Le Sueur County 21 to Kasota. One of the principal property owners on the east side of the Minnesota River between Saint Peter and Mankato, Unimin Corporation, has stated its support for the trail proposal and has mentioned the potential for the company to permit a trail corridor on portions of its lands.

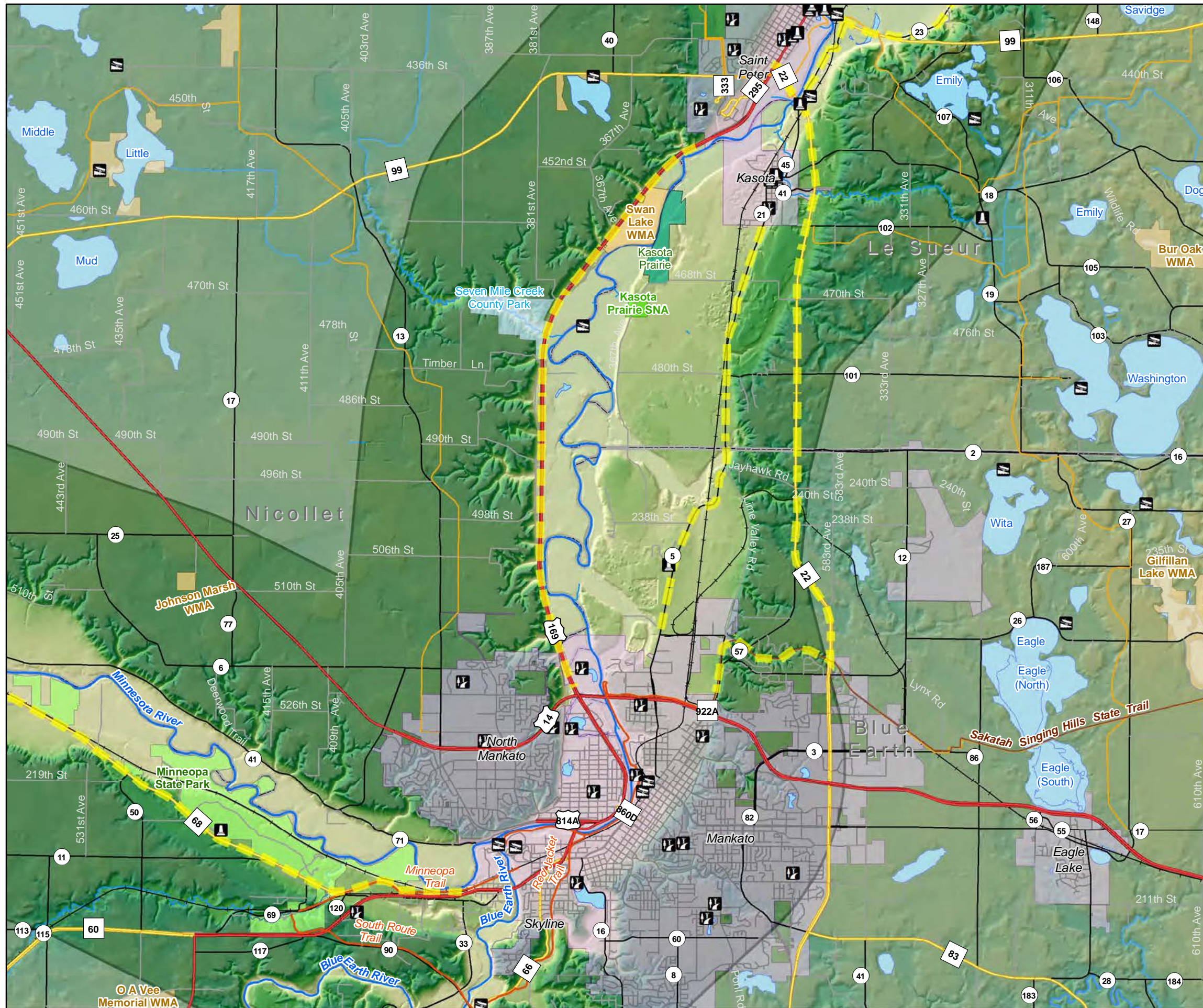
An alternative trail could be developed along the US Highway 169 corridor from the Kiwanis Recreation Area to Saint Peter. The trail could be routed across the Veterans Memorial Bridge in Mankato, then follow the Rex MacBeth River Trail through North Mankato to reach the Kiwanis Recreation Area. The benefit of this alternative is that the trail could link to the existing trail network, infrastructure, and the tunnel under Hwy 169 at Seven Mile Creek County Park.

Another alternative is to develop a bridge across the Minnesota River north of Mankato. This would allow trail users to connect to Seven Mile Creek County Park.

Ultimately, dual treadways or separate trail corridors may be developed to accommodate all uses in this segment.

Minnesota River State Trail

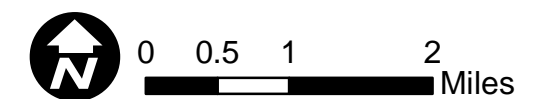
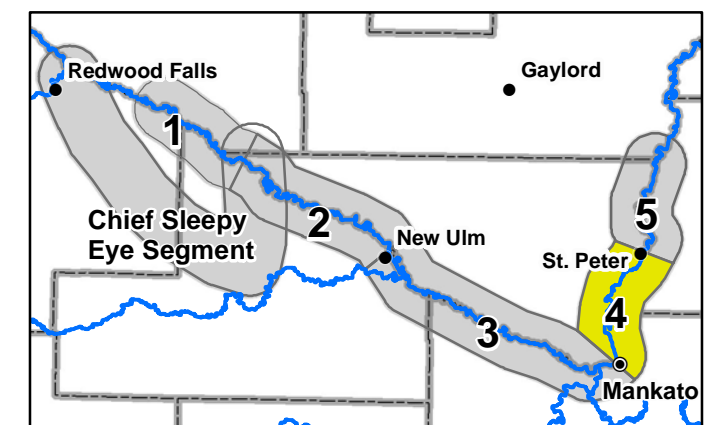
Figure 14: Segment 4 - Mankato to Saint Peter



Legend

- Historical Site
- City Park
- Water Access Site
- Potential Trail Alignment
- Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail
- City and Regional Trails
- Minnesota Snowmobile Trail
- Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway
- U.S. Trunk Highway
- MN Trunk Highway
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- State Park
- Scientific and Natural Area
- Wildlife Management Area
- County Park
- Kasota Prairie
- City Boundaries

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Segment 4 Trail Communities and Connections

City of Kasota

Reuben Buetters was the first settler in Kasota and all of Le Sueur County in 1851. J.W. Babcock founded the city and eventually established it as the Village of Kasota, the only establishment in the Kasota Township of any commercial or political importance.

The Kasota Village Hall is on the National Register of Historic Places. Babcock also was the first to begin quarrying Kasota limestone in and around the city of Kasota. The Babcock Company was the chief stone company throughout the early history of the city, and at one point, decided to blast within the city limits. This led to the creation of the park on County Road 21 in the town center, after the company was forced to fill in the quarry near the homes of city residents.

In the early 1980s, the Babcock Company went bankrupt. The Vetter Stone Company subsequently bought the Babcock quarries, further expanding the business, which currently operates just outside the Mankato city limits. The Vettters were former employees of the Babcock Company who left to start their own company in the 1950s. The former location of the Babcock Company in Kasota is now occupied by Door Engineering, a company manufacturing industrial doors.

The City of Kasota is a small community with a population of 675, according to the 2010 Census. The city covers one square mile in Le Sueur County.

Potential trail alignments through Kasota exist with a likely crossing into Saint Peter on State Highway 22. The trail could enter Kasota from the south on State Highway 22, County Highway 21, or on Mills Street. The trail would follow Hill Street and exit Kasota to the north on County Highway 102/45 or Highway 22 (See Figure 15).

City of Saint Peter

Saint Peter was founded in 1853 by Captain William Bigelow Dodd, who claimed 150 acres north of what is now Broadway Avenue. He named the new settlement Rock Bend because of the rock formation at the bend of the Minnesota River. The town site was platted and surveyed in 1854 by Daniel L. Turpin. In 1855, a group of Saint Paul businessmen interested in promoting the town formed the Saint Peter Company, and the town was renamed Saint Peter. The president of the Company was Willis A. Gorman, Territorial Governor of Minnesota. Many of the streets in Saint Peter were named after streets in New York City; Park Row, Chatham, Broadway, Nassau, and Union, for example. Captain Dodd was originally from Bloomfield, New Jersey. His second wife, Harriett Newell Jones, a native of Cabot, Vermont, was living in New York at the

time of their marriage at the Church of the Holy Communion in New York City, that church helped fund the church in Saint Peter which shares the same name.

In 1857, an attempt was made to move the Territory of Minnesota's capital from Saint Paul to Saint Peter. Governor Gorman owned the land on which the bill's sponsors wanted to build the new capitol building.

According to the 2010 Census, Saint Peter's population is 11,196, up from 9,747 in the 2000 Census. Some of the major industries in Saint Peter include educational services, health care, retail, and manufacturing. The downtown area is primarily retail and three blocks are designated as a historic district and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Saint Peter is home to Gustavus Adolphus College. Founded in 1862 by Swedish Americans, Gustavus Adolphus College is a private liberal arts college rooted in its Swedish and Lutheran heritage. Approximately 2,600 students attend the college. A Nobel Conference is held annually and features science-based presentations by and discussions with notable scientists and Nobel Laureates. The conference has been held since 1965.

Numerous parks and recreation opportunities can be found in Saint Peter. Sixteen parks offer a variety of opportunities, including picnicking, ball fields, playgrounds, swimming, camping, trails, and fishing. The city's 2005 comprehensive plan lays out other priority areas for preservation, development, or expansion in the future.

A trail connection to Saint Peter will be made across the Highway 22 bridge. This bridge has a walk and bikeway separated from vehicular traffic with a barrier. Existing infrastructure could be utilized to connect trail users to downtown Saint Peter and the Traverse des Sioux Treaty Site to the north.

Traverse des Sioux Treaty Site History Center

For centuries, Traverse des Sioux has been a crossroads and meeting place for many cultures. Native Americans gathered here to hunt and traverse the river using the shallow crossing, calling the site Oiyuwege, meaning "the place of crossing."

The home of the Nicollet County Historical Society, the History Center museum was built next to the site where the Treaty of 1851 between the Dakota people and the federal government was signed. The museum contains three exhibit halls, an audio-visual room, archives, and trails.

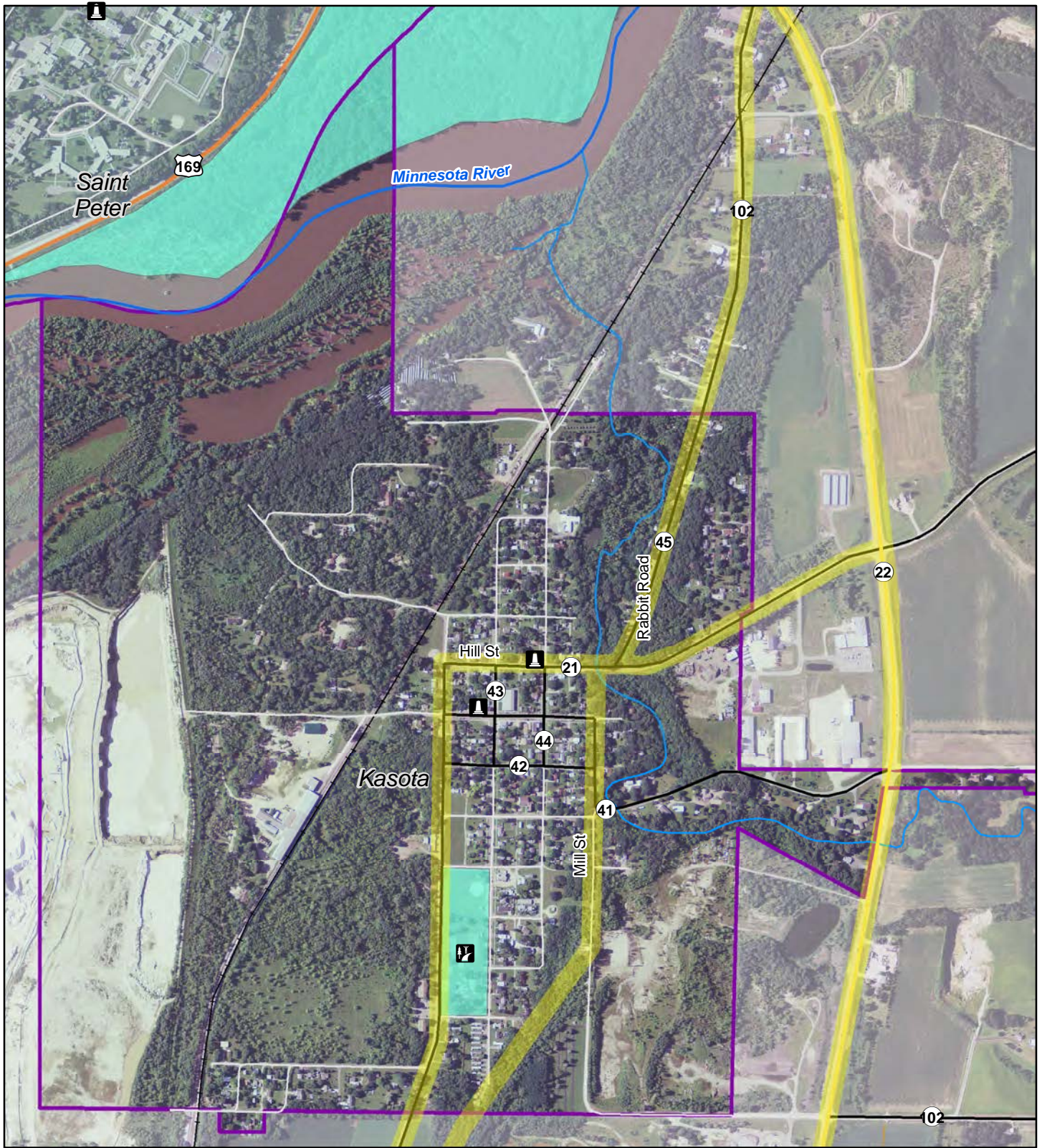


Figure 15: City of Kasota














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Legend

-  U.S. Trunk Highway
-  MN Trunk Highway
-  County Highway
-  Railroad
-  River
-  City Boundaries
-  City Park Boundaries
-  City Park
-  Water Access Site
-  Historic Site
-  Alternative Trail Alignments
-  Snowmobile Trail

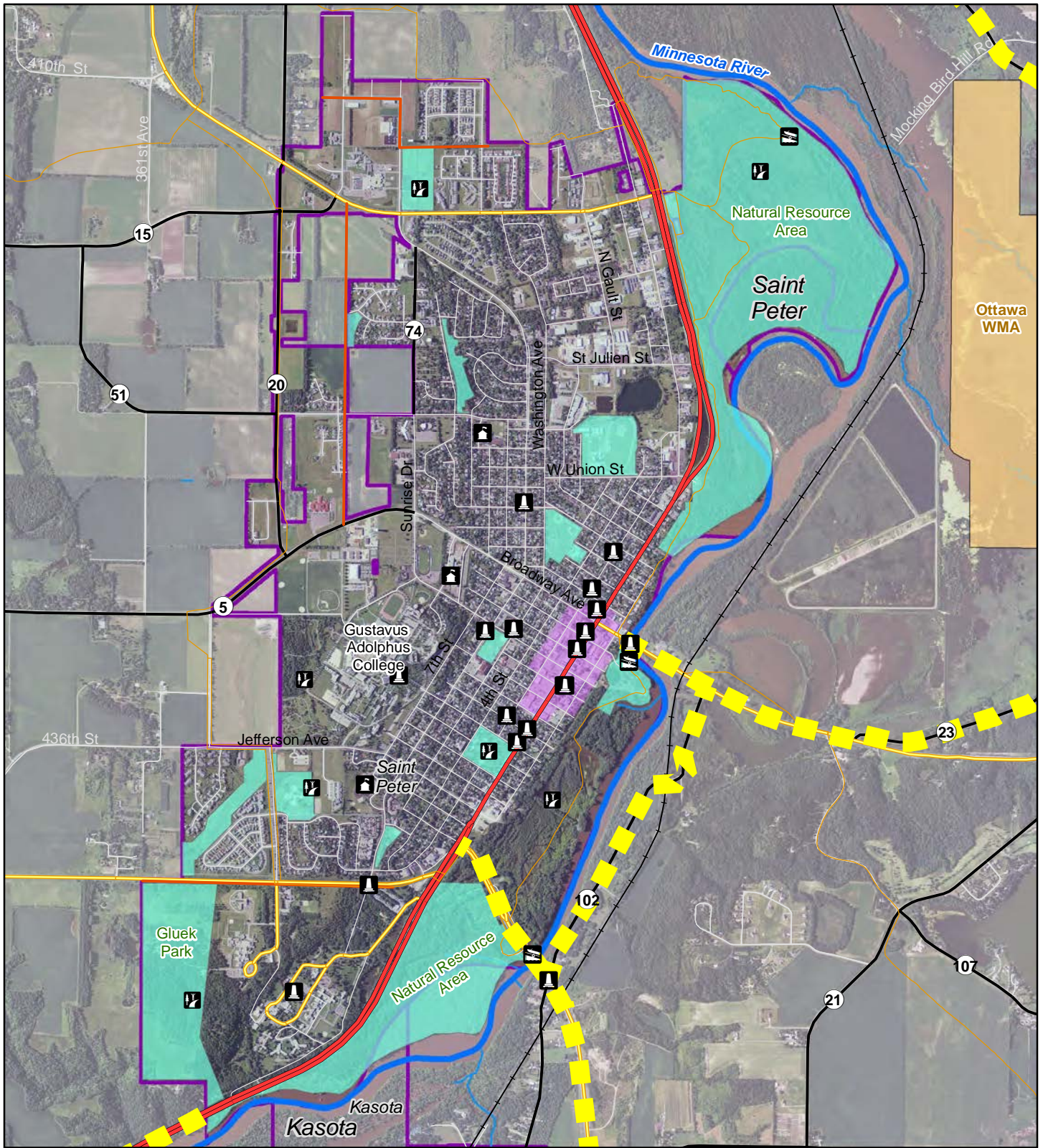
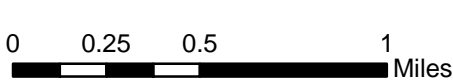


Figure 16: City of Saint Peter











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Legend

-  Railroad
-  U.S. Trunk Highway
-  MN Trunk Highway
-  County Highway
-  Local Road
-  City & Regional Trail
-  Snowmobile Trail
-  Potential Trail Alignments
-  City Boundaries
-  Central Business District
-  City Park
-  Water Access Site
-  Historic Site
-  School

Kasota Prairie Scientific and Natural Area

The Kasota Prairie SNA consists of 45 acres located on an extensive rock terrace overlooking the Minnesota River Valley. When the valley was originally carved by Glacial River Warren the flooded river covered this terrace. Today, prairie, wet meadow, oak woodland, and lowland hardwood plant communities thrive in the thin soils on site. Shrubby patches of wild plum, wolfberry, and narrow-leaved meadowsweet provide nesting and perching sites for horned larks, loggerhead shrikes, and upland sandpipers. Recreational uses include hiking, photography, snowshoeing, and wildlife viewing.



The 90 acre Kasota Prairie, located about one mile north of Kasota Prairie SNA, could be an additional trail connection in this segment. It is preserved and managed by a non-profit, Save the Kasota Prairie.

Seven Mile Creek County Park

Seven Mile Creek County Park is located south of Saint Peter and is accessed by US Highway 169. The 628 acre Nicollet County Park is comprised of wooded bluffs along Seven Mile Creek and the floodplain where the creek enters the Minnesota River. The park features 10 miles of multi-use trails, equestrian parking, and an underpass of Highway 169. Other facilities include shelters and picnic areas, a playground, sports fields, and a boat landing to the Minnesota River. Seven Mile Creek is one of few designated trout streams in south-central Minnesota.

Segment 5: Saint Peter to Le Sueur

This segment extends north approximately 12 miles from the City of Saint Peter to the City of Le Sueur. Highlights of this segment are Ottawa Village State Historic District, Traverse des Sioux Treaty Site, and the communities of Saint Peter and Le Sueur. Several natural areas on the east side of the river offer scenic vistas overlooking the river valley and could be rest areas for trail users. The Minnesota River State Trail will also connect to the Minnesota Valley State Trail in Le Sueur.

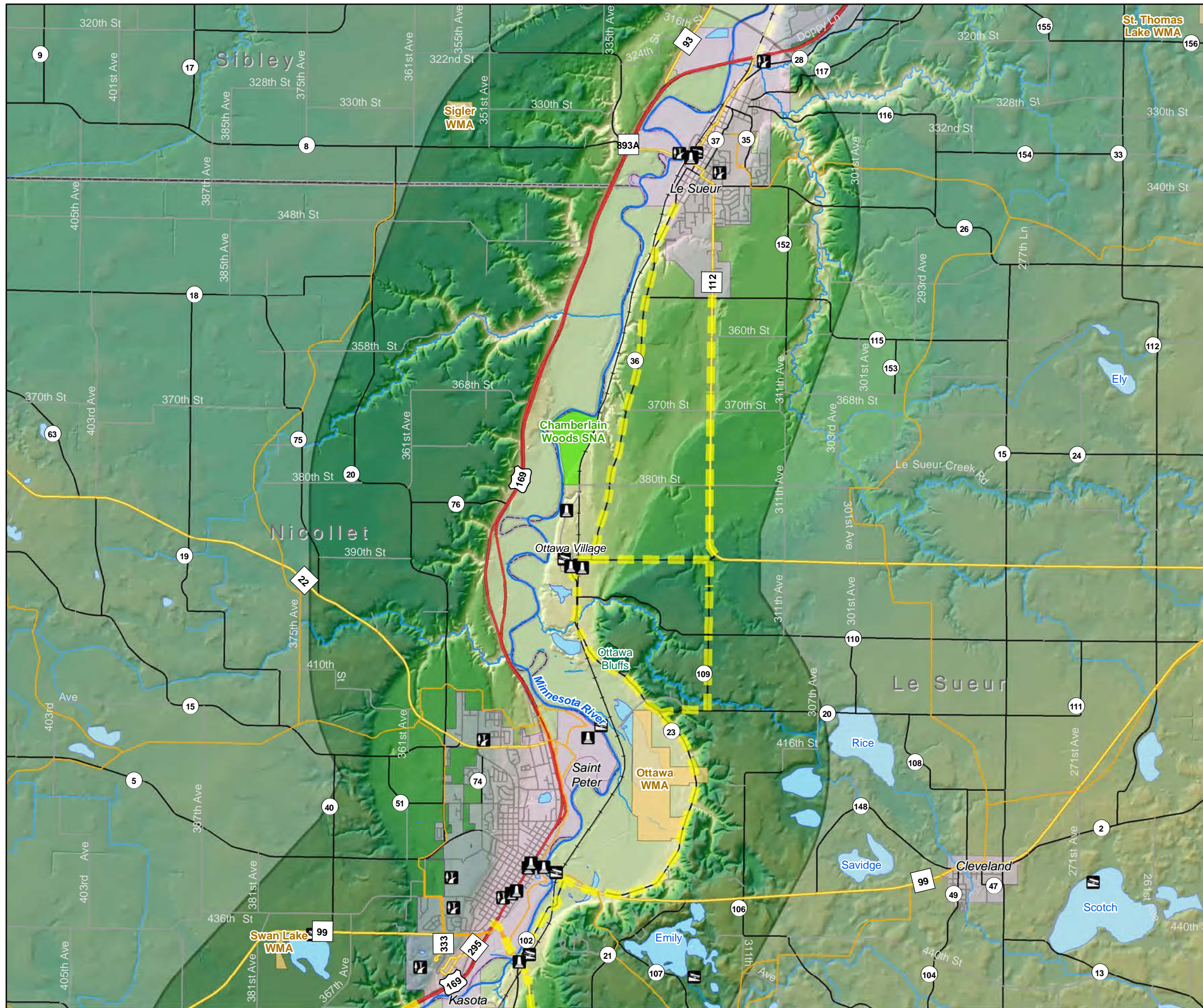
Criteria specific to this segment are:

- Provide connections to historic features in Ottawa Village and several natural features located in this corridor.
- Connect to Minnesota Valley State Trail at trail head in Le Sueur.
- Take advantage of the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway alignment as an identified scenic route with unique design standards, and to attract new visitors to the byway.

The most desirable alignment for this corridor would generally follow the scenic byway corridor on County Highways 23 and 36. These roads run along the edge of the floodplain and bluffs, and offer great views of the valley. Several natural areas in this corridor would provide excellent opportunities for users to get off the trail and see unique vegetation and wildlife. A benefit of this alignment is that it would take trail users near the Ottawa Village historic district.

An alternative alignment would be to follow State Highway 112 south from Le Sueur to where it connects with County Highway 109. This route could follow several county and local roads to provide connections back into the river valley from Highway 109. This alternative may have higher vehicular travel and would take trail users farther away from the river.

One of the principal property owners on the east side of the Minnesota River between Saint Peter and Le Sueur, Unimin Corporation, has stated its support for the trail proposal and has mentioned the potential for the company to permit a trail corridor on portions of its lands.



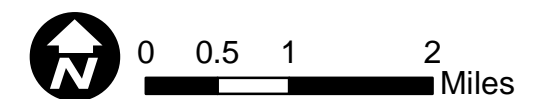
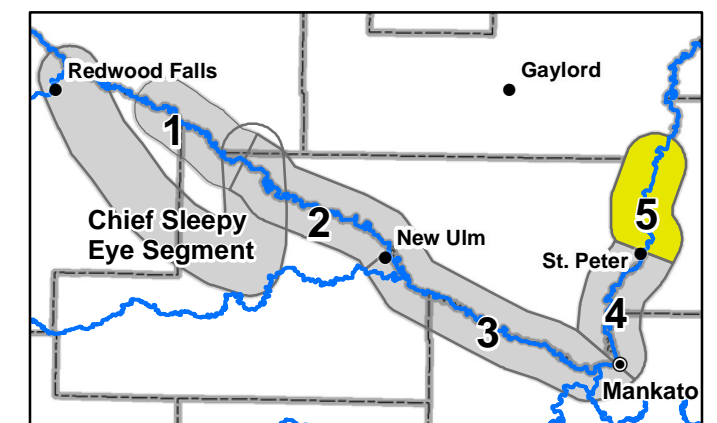
Minnesota River State Trail

Figure 17: Segment 5 - Saint Peter to Le Sueur

Legend

- Historical Site
- City Park
- Water Access Site
- Potential Trail Alignment
- Minnesota Valley State Trail
- Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail
- City and Regional Trails
- Minnesota Snowmobile Trail
- Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway
- U.S. Trunk Highway
- MN Trunk Highway
- Local Roads
- County Highway
- Railroad
- State Park
- Scientific and Natural Area
- Wildlife Management Area
- The Nature Conservancy Preserve
- City Boundaries

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Segment 5 Trail Communities and Connections

City of Le Sueur

The City of Le Sueur is located along the Minnesota River just off of Highway 169 in Le Sueur County. Le Sueur is known locally as the “Valley of the Jolly Green Giant” because of the Green Giant Company’s history in the town. The city is 4.7 square miles in area, with a population of just over 4,000. A small portion of the city extends across the Minnesota River into Sibley County.

The City of Le Sueur was named after the French explorer Pierre Charles Le Sueur. In 1700, Le Sueur traveled up the Saint Peter’s River, now known as the Minnesota River, looking for mineral deposits. He established a fort near the Blue Earth River and after experiencing some conflicts with Native Americans, he moved the establishment to the city’s present location. Le Sueur left the Minnesota Valley in 1702 and it wasn’t until the 1850s that settlers began to arrive in the area.

William W. Mayo began his medical practice in Le Sueur before moving to Rochester and starting the Mayo Clinic with his sons. His home has been restored to its mid-1800s appearance and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Minnesota Valley Canning Company was founded in Le Sueur in 1903. In the beginning, the cannery packed white cream style corn and peas. In 1925 the company began to market Green Giant Brand peas, and in 1950 the name was changed to Green Giant Company. Over the years, the company continued to expand and became a household name. The Green Giant label is now owned by General Mills. The canning processing plant in Le Sueur was used until 1995 and is still used for research on corn varieties.

The city’s population at the 2010 Census was 4,048 and has remained relatively steady (the population at the 2000 Census was 3,922). Manufacturing is the major employment sector in Le Sueur. Recent expansion by the Cambria Company, manufacturer of quartz countertops, is fueling an increase in employment.

There are two alternative routes through the city. One alternative is to follow the river corridor on the west side of town. The second is to use the city and county trails system. Both alternatives would connect to Mayo Park, where the Minnesota Valley State Trail is proposed to terminate. Mayo Park is identified as a potential trail head for both state trails.

Ottawa Village

This state historic district dates back to 1860. The platted town site occupies a long narrow tract of land on the bluffs along the Minnesota River, between Saint Peter and Le Sueur. Ottawa developed between the 1860s and 1890s, but by 1900 was falling into decline. Seven locally quarried stone buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. One of these sites, the Ottawa Methodist Church, was built in the 1860s of native limestone and is one of the oldest Methodist Church buildings in Minnesota.

Chamberlain Woods Scientific and Natural Area

This scientific and natural area protects a mosaic of vegetation types on 302 acres along the Minnesota River. The seasonally wet floodplain forest is dominated by cottonwood, basswood, and elm trees. A series of “point bars” mark the old banks of the river and capture a visual history of the changing river route. A variety of bird species including the Acadian flycatcher and bald eagle have been observed on the site. Recreational uses include hiking, photography, snowshoeing, and wildlife viewing.

Ottawa Wildlife Management Area

This WMA consists of 577 acres of marsh and shrubland in the Minnesota River floodplain. There are several areas of open water on site including three spring-fed ponds that are annually stocked with trout. Hunting options include: deer, small game, forest game birds, pheasant, waterfowl, and turkeys. Scenic views of the WMA would be an asset if an alignment along Le Sueur County Highway 23 was developed.

Ottawa Bluffs Preserve

The Nature Conservancy purchased this 62 acre property in 1975 to protect a remnant of the Minnesota River Bluffs. Since then, the Conservancy has been managing woody vegetation to restore prairie openings that were found on site in pre-settlement conditions. The preserve contains a Native American burial mound located at the top of the bluff (The Nature Conservancy 2013). This site offers visitors a great view of the Minnesota River Valley and a chance to observe prairie plants such as pasque flower, blazing star, and purple prairie clover.



This church, one of the oldest Methodist churches in Minnesota, is just one of seven historic limestone buildings in the village.

Segment 6: Chief Sleepy Eye Segment

The Sleepy Eye loop remains an interesting and viable option for trail development in the future. This segment is a 35 mile loop of the Minnesota River State Trail. It will connect Fort Ridgely State Park to the communities of Sleepy Eye, Morgan, and Redwood Falls. The Casey Jones State Trail is also planned to terminate in Redwood Falls.

A portion of this segment could follow an old railroad grade from Sleepy Eye to Redwood Falls. The rail line was constructed in 1878 and was crucial to the development of Evan, Morgan, and Redwood Falls. Passenger service was discontinued in the 1930s. Freight traffic continued to decline until the line was abandoned in 1977 (Schmidt 2007).

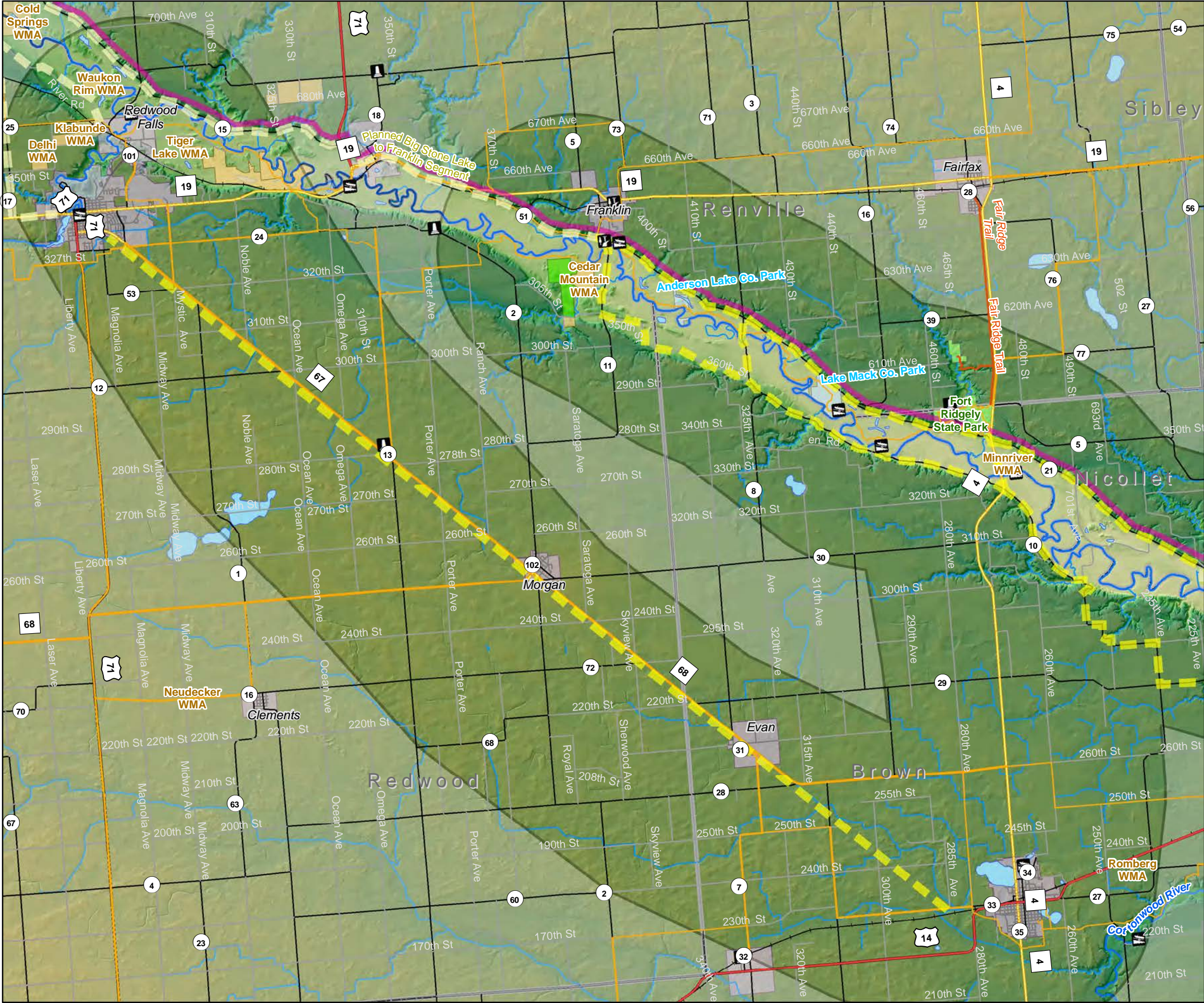
Criteria specific to this segment are:

- Former railroad right of way with flat topography and straight route.
- Facilitate connection to Casey Jones State Trail Extension that is authorized from Currie to Redwood Falls.

The trail would cross the Minnesota River on the State Highway 4 bridge and continue south towards Sleepy Eye. There are several local trails that could be used for a connection. The trail would travel west and likely utilize an old railroad grade that runs northwest to Redwood Falls. The trail would pass through the communities of Evan and Morgan. This segment would be an opportunity for trail users to experience a landscape dominated by agriculture. Prairie restoration along the trail corridor would create a unique state trail experience.

Minnesota River State Trail

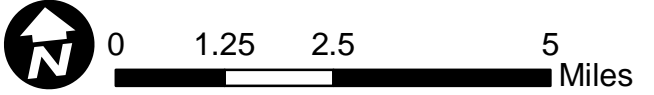
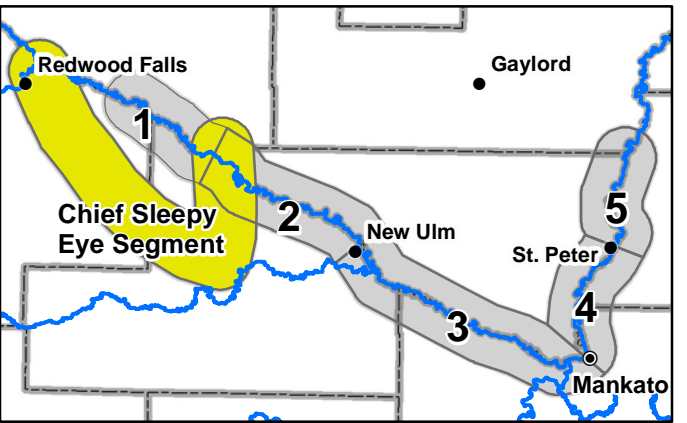
Figure 19: Segment 6 - Chief Sleepy Eye Segment



Legend

- Historical Site
- City Park
- Water Access Site
- Potential Trail Alignment
- Big Stone Lake to Franklin Segment
- City and Regional Trails
- Minnesota Snowmobile Trail
- Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway
- U.S. Trunk Highway
- MN Trunk Highway
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- State Park
- Scientific and Natural Area
- Wildlife Management Area
- County Park
- City Boundaries

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Segment 6 Trail Communities and Connections

City of Sleepy Eye

The City of Sleepy Eye is located at the junction of US Highway 14 and State Highway 4, to the southwest of Sleepy Eye Lake. The city limits cover just over 2 square miles in Brown County.

Sleepy Eye Lake is named after Dakota chief Ish Tak Ha Ba, which translates to Sleepy Eyes. Ish Tak Ha Ba's jurisdiction covered from Swan Lake and all of the Lower Sioux from Carver to Lac-Qui-Parle. He signed the Prairie du Chien, Mendota, and Traverse des Sioux treaties in his lifetime.

The city was platted in 1872 by Walter Brackenridge, a lawyer for the railroad, and Thomas Allison, a local settler. The Sleepy Eye Flour Milling Company began operations in 1883. At one time, the mill owned 27 grain elevators in Minnesota and South Dakota.

The population of Sleepy Eye is 3,599 according to the 2010 census. The community has three schools, a medical center, and a business district on Main Street, or US Highway 14, that serves the agricultural based area. The Sleepy Eye parks system includes an ice arena, water park, campground, and a three mile paved path around the lake.

City of Morgan

Morgan is a city in Redwood County with a population of 896 as of the 2010 census. The city covers over one section of land at the intersection of State Highways 67 and 68. The city was developed alongside the Chicago and North Western railroad that was constructed in 1878 and was used until 1977 when the line was abandoned.

City of Redwood Falls

Redwood Falls is located one mile south of the Minnesota River on the banks of the Redwood River. The city is sometimes referred to as the "Scenic City" and is known for its picturesque bluffs and gorges along the river.

Redwood Falls is named after the Redwood River, the banks on which the community is located. The Redwood River falls 140 feet here and descends in rapids the last three miles before it joins the Minnesota River. After the US Dakota War of 1862, the upper Minnesota River Valley ceased being part of the Dakota reservation and was opened up to European settlers. Redwood Falls was settled by Col. Samuel McPhail and J.S.G. Honner in 1864. It was platted in 1865, incorporated as a village in 1876, and as a city in 1891.

The city's natural and cultural assets make it an important destination for trail users. Many of the city's historic points of interest are located in the downtown

business district, just two blocks east of the falls. This area offers services to trail users including hotels, shopping, and restaurants. The population at the time of the 2010 census was 5,254.

Redwood Falls has nine parks that serve the community. Alexander Ramsey Park is located below the falls on the Redwood River. At 219 acres it is the flagship of the system and includes a campground, zoo, four miles of trails, and other day-use facilities. Redwood Falls also has a community center that includes a multi-purpose gymnasium, civic arena, conference center, and fitness center.

Downtown Redwood Falls has been identified as a trail head for the Casey Jones State Trail and the Minnesota River State Trail in the 2008 Master Plan for the Minnesota River State Trail – Big Stone Lake to Franklin. The Sleepy Eye loop would ideally connect to both of these trails at a trail head. Trail connections in the city may be difficult due to the constraints of three highways that intersect the city, topography, and the river. The Sleepy Eye loop trail would enter the city along State Highway 67, Broadway Street, on the southeast edge of the city.

Gilfillan Estate

Charles Duncan Gilfillan purchased 13,000 acres of land in Redwood County. On the site now known as Gilfillan, Charles built a beautiful home and offices, and later a grain elevator, stock yard, and tenant homes. He raised livestock for export to Great Britain. The farm site was left to Redwood County Historical Society to be kept in memory of C.O. Gilfillan. Its intended purpose is to preserve the history of the Gilfillan Estate and the surrounding area and to make this history available to the public.

The estate hosts many gatherings including fundraisers, festivals, and private events. The gardens of the estate are open for free viewing on a daily basis and guided tours can be accommodated by appointment. The Gilfillan Estate Fall Festival is held annually and it provides participants the opportunity to see things made the old fashioned way such as: apple cider, butter, rugs, and other goods. The estate offers refreshments and activities during FarmFest, which is held adjacent to the property.

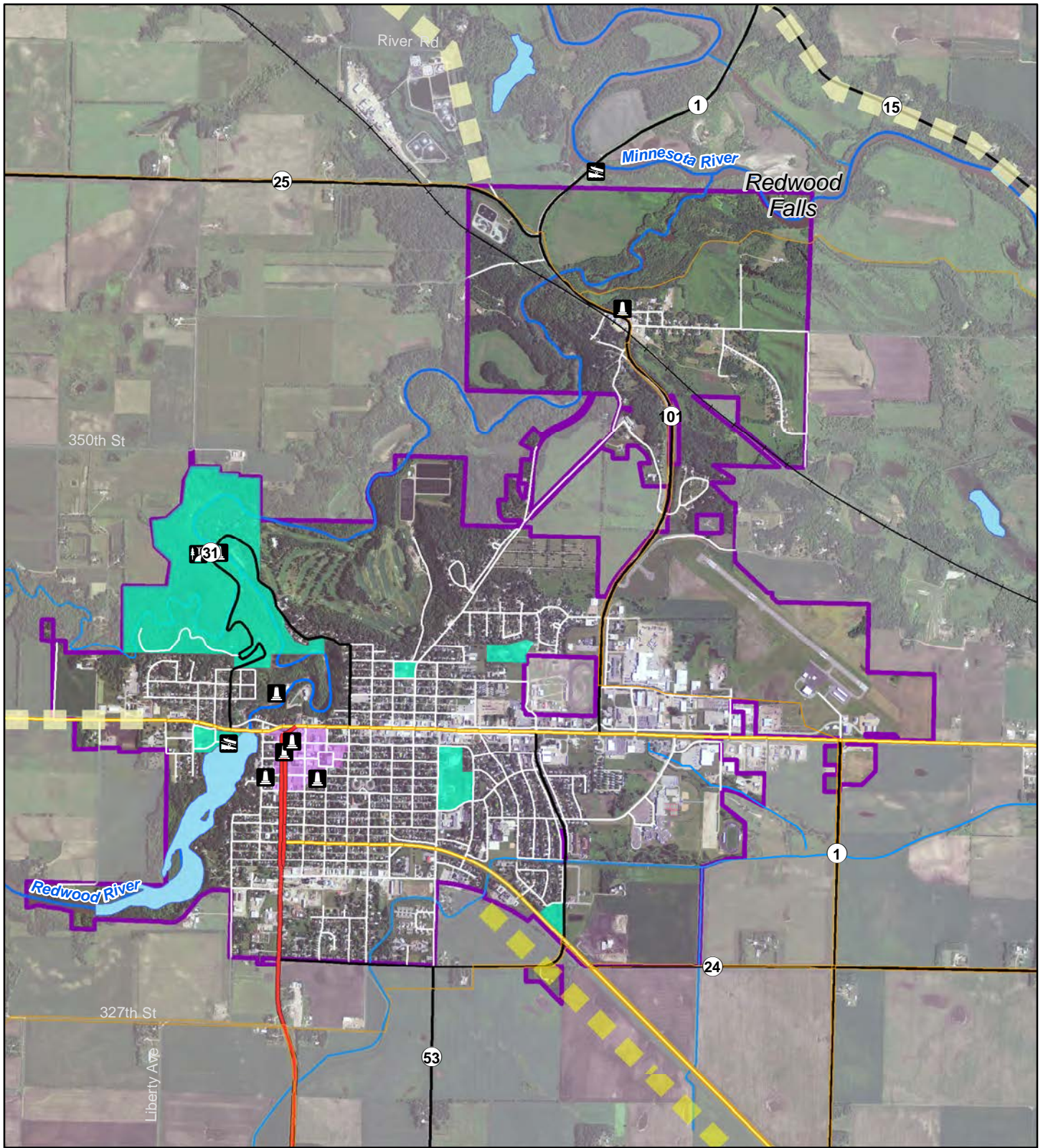


Figure 20: Redwood Falls

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


















MN Department of Natural Resources
Division of Parks and Trails

October 2013

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Legend

-  Railroad
-  U.S. Trunk Highway
-  MN Trunk Highway
-  County Highway
-  Township Road
-  Municipal Road
-  Big Stone to Franklin Segment
-  Preferred Trail Alignments
-  Regional Trail
-  Snowmobile Trail
-  City Park Boundaries
-  Central Business District
-  City Boundaries
-  City Park
-  Water Access Site
-  Historic Site
-  School