



REQUEST FOR ACTION

Willow Creek Regional Trail Feasibility Study and Professional Services Agreement for Final Design

MEETING DATE:

August 17, 2026

ORIGINATING DEPT:

Public Works

AGENDA SECTION:

Reports and Recommendations

PRESENTER:

Dillon Dombrovski

Action Requested:

1. Accepting the Feasibility Study with recommendation on the preferred trail route to advance to final design and;
2. Authorizing a supplemental agreement in the amount of \$418,170 with Alliant Engineering, Inc. for a Final Design of the proposed trail.

Clerk's Note: This item was vetoed by Mayor Norton. The veto automatically places the item back on the next agenda for reconsideration. To override a veto, the item must pass with a supermajority of the body voting Aye (5 regardless of quorum). The item may only be considered as it was passed. No amendments may be made.

Report Narrative:

This project extends the City's trail network from approximately 28th St SE, proceeding under Highway 52, and to County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 47 to Gamehaven Regional Park. The extension of the Willow Creek Regional Trail meets key priorities outlined in the Rochester Park System-Wide Master Plan and connectivity goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan and Active Transportation Plan. This project has been anticipated and had various planning options since the late 1990's. The trail would help provide access to jobs, food, and recreation for at least 1,041 households within half a mile and 2,716 households within a mile of the project. US Highway 52 effectively isolates neighborhoods to the south from anything other than vehicular transportation, which includes many recent multi-family residential properties.

Design for the project is underway. This presentation will include the results of the feasibility study completed by Alliant Engineering, Inc. and other project updates.

Alliant Engineering, Inc., provided a supplemental agreement outlining the next phase of the project, including final design, continued project management, utility coordination, and related services. The intent of authorizing these professional services will be to prepare the project for bidding this winter. Construction is anticipated to be complete in June 2028.

Priorities & Foundational Principles:

Fiscal Responsibility & Sustainability
Social Equity

Policy Considerations & DEI Impact:

This project has been identified on the long-range transportation plans that are completed every five years by the Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments (ROCOG). This project is also aligned with and identified in the City's Active Transportation Plan. Active Transportation includes walking, rolling, and biking. U.S. Highway 52 acts as a barrier to people looking to access jobs, retail, and the larger network of recreational trails. This project will create a safe pedestrian and bicycle passage between the isolated area to the south and the rest of the community.

Prior Legislative Actions & Community Engagement:

November 4, 2024: Council approved Item ID 4168, authorizing two grant agreements with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for the bond funds received for the Project and; authorizing a contract in the amount of \$165,230 with Alliant Engineering, Inc. for a Feasibility Analysis to identify the preferred trail alignment.

September 8, 2025: Council adopted a resolution authorizing the right-of-entry on a property to continue surveys for the Willow Creek Regional Trail Project.

Fiscal & Resource Impact:

The current base project cost, including engineering, property acquisition, interest, and construction contingencies, is estimated to be \$2,563,370. The recommended pedestrian bridge option is estimated at \$3,400,000 (including engineering and contingencies). The project with the addition of the bridge is estimated to be \$5,963,370.

The 2026-2031 Capital Improvement Plan identifies \$1,875,000 in tax levy funds and two State grants totaling \$3,625,000 for total funding availability of \$5,500,000. This leaves a gap of \$463,370 to achieve the estimated total cost of including the bridge in the project.

Authorization to proceed with final design of the bridge will help the project team refine estimated costs, assess the funding shortfall, and explore options to fund the bridge in the project.

Alternative Action(s):

No alternative actions suggested at this time.

Prepared By:

Sam Budzyna

Attachments:

[Presentation - Willow Creek Regional Trail Feasibility Study \(ADA\)](#)

[Willow Creek Regional Trail Feasibility Report \(ADA\)](#)

[Supplemental Agreement - Willow Creek Trail Final Design \(ADA\)](#)

[Appendix A - Open House Meeting Summary Document \(ADA\)](#)

[Appendix B - Trail Alignment Map](#)

[Appendix C - Trail Segment Layouts](#)

[Appendix D - CSAH 47 Grade Separation Alternatives](#)

[Appendix E - Cost Estimates for Trail Segments \(ADA\)](#)