

# Hear Every Voice

Case Study: Dakota County Greenway Collaborative/North Creek Greenway Master Plan & Visualization



Visualization

Ongoing collaborative stakeholder process focused on planning, design, and implementation of greenway system

Dakota County, Minnesota

Dakota County, Active Living Dakota County, Friends of the Mississippi River, HKGi (consultant), URS Creative Solutions (consultant), Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (funder)

Project Budget: Unknown

Public Participation Budget: \$26,000 for North Creek Greenway Visualization video (Patterson 2011)

## Project Details

### Location

### Organizations

### Budget

## Case Summary

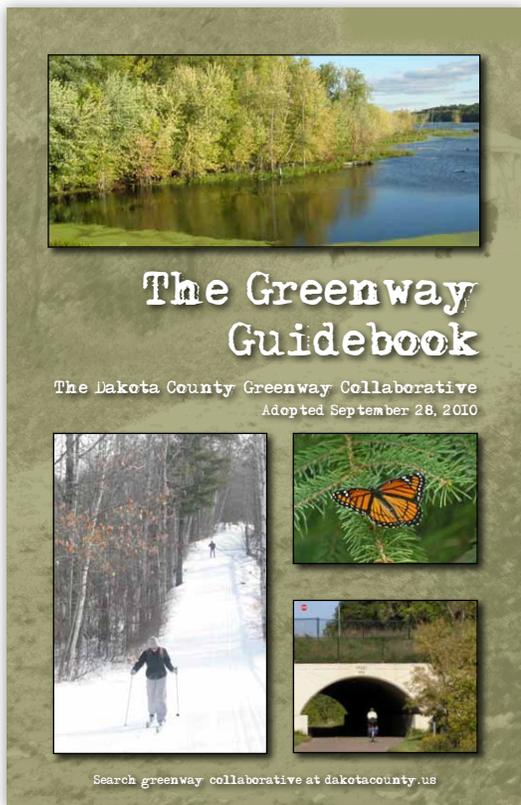
**Context:** Dakota County is situated in the southeastern portion of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. It includes the highly urbanized areas of West St. Paul, suburban communities such as Apple Valley and Inver Grove Heights, exurban areas such as the city of Farmington, and rural townships. Following the completion of the Dakota County Park System Plan in 2008, participants were aware of the many high-quality parks in the county but raised concerns about the lack of connections among them. The Dakota County Greenway Collaborative grew out of this concern, bringing together various county departments, cities, school districts, landowners, and other stakeholders in an effort to pursue a greenway vision. Greenways would be identified and planned to “connect city parks, regional parks, rivers, wetlands, open space, existing trails and community centers in a web of interconnected loops” (Dakota County 2011a). The greenway system is intended to provide recreational opportunities and also “protect, restore and connect natural areas and open space” (Dakota County 2011a). One outcome of the effort to plan and design future greenways is the North Creek Greenway Visualization, which will receive particular attention in this case study.

*Participants in the public process noted that the county and cities within it have great parks, but they aren't connected or coordinated to maximize benefits to the community (Dakota County 2011a).*

**Public Involvement:** The Dakota County Greenway Collaborative represents an explicit effort to engage the range of stakeholders, expertise, and resources necessary to plan and design a cross-jurisdictional greenway system. The Collaborative created the Greenway Guidebook in September 2010, following an extensive series of meetings focused on sharing information and building consensus around key corridors and impacts. The Collaborative will continue to meet approximately once per year, with smaller greenway-specific collaboratives meeting to address master planning, location, natural resource protection, implementation, and greenway operation issues (Dakota County Greenway Collaborative 2010). As of summer 2011, two greenway-specific groups, including representatives from several local governments, are meeting to develop master plans (Patterson 2011).

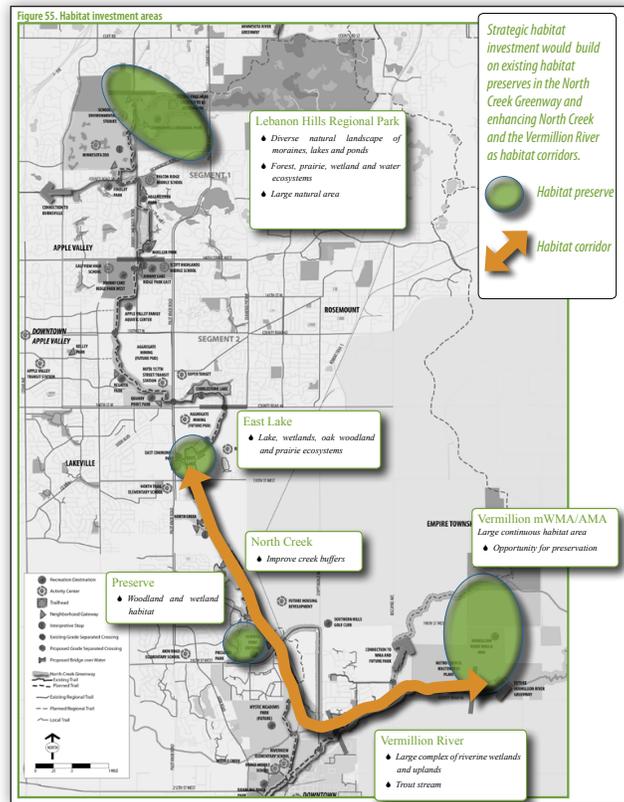
There was significant emphasis in the collaborative process on building an understanding of the wide range of functions that greenways provide, including habitat, recreation, water quality, and transportation. High-quality plan graphics were used to illustrate key concepts and depict greenway locations and connections, a necessary approach considering the wide range of perspectives brought to the table by collaborative members.

**Greenway Guidebook**



Source: Dakota County, 2011a.

**Example mp illustrating strategic investments**



Source: Dakota County, 2011b.

One key aspect of the Greenway Collaborative’s efforts was the development of a visualization video that provides background information on greenway planning and shows future greenway scenarios in the proposed North Creek Greenway in Dakota County. The video was developed with funding from a grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. The video highlights key locations along the greenway, project impacts, and design treatments. It shows before and after scenes and uses animation to show users actively moving through various greenway nodes. The video was posted on YouTube, with an additional link on the county’s website.

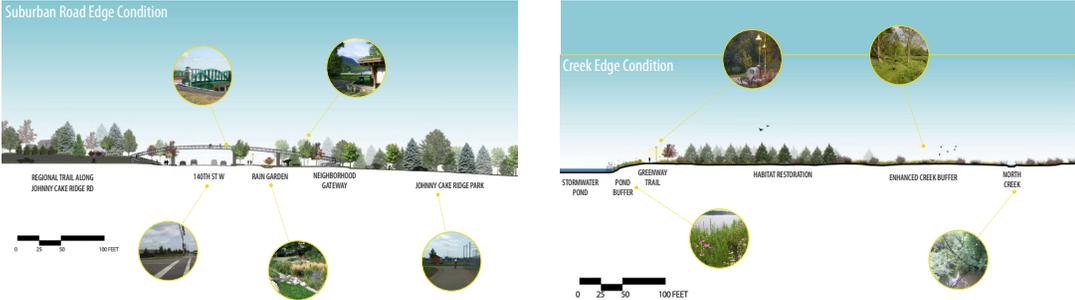
**Existing conditions and artistic rendering illustrating possible enhancements**



Source: Dakota County, 2011a.

In addition to the collaborative process used by the North Creek Greenway sub-group, additional participation efforts were conducted, as detailed in the North Creek Greenway Master Plan Public Review Draft (Dakota County 2011b). For example, a cultural resources and interpretation workshop was conducted to engage a range of stakeholders in identifying interpretive themes to be applied in the greenway corridor. Two public open houses were also conducted. A website was also established to communicate information to Collaborative members and the broader public. The website incorporated a virtual workshop component as well, allowing those unable to attend meetings to view meeting materials and provide comments.

**Typical sections illustrating different location conditions and highlighting design elements**



Source: <http://www.hkgi.com/projects/dakota/NorthCreekSections.pdf>

Dakota County. 2011a. Greenway Collaborative. Retrieved from: <http://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Departments/OPA/Reports/GreenwayCollaborative.htm> (accessed July 14, 2011).

Dakota County. 2011b. North Creek Greenway Master Plan Public Review Draft. Retrieved from: <http://www.co.dakota.mn.us/NR/rdonlyres/00004891/mobdimstbxagkoourbzcemotgtjikoju/NorthCreek.pdf> (accessed July 14, 2011).

Dakota County Greenway Collaborative. 2010. The Greenway Guidebook. Retrieved from: <http://www.co.dakota.mn.us/NR/rdonlyres/00003f41/xhzeuscedkqzlswhkslxbxayweuohrxt/GreenwayGuidelinesSummary.pdf> (accessed July 14, 2011).

Patterson, D. 13 June 2011. Personal communication.

**1. HKGi Dakota County Greenways website:** <http://www.hkgi.com/projects/dakota/index.php>

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**References**

**Resources**