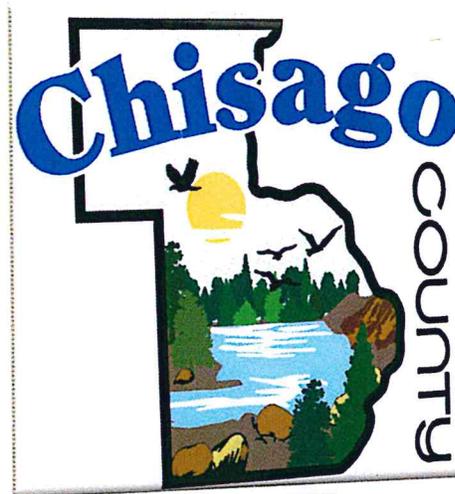


# SWEDISH IMMIGRANT REGIONAL TRAIL

## MASTER PLAN

### CHISAGO COUNTY, MINNESOTA

APPROVED BY THE CHISAGO COUNTY  
BOARD ON JUNE 17, 2015



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The preparation of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail Master Plan has been a team effort led by Chisago County Environmental Services staff and representatives from local and regional agencies. In acknowledgement of their knowledge, ideas, time and efforts, they are listed below.

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## 1. Introduction/overview

The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail corridor is 20 miles long and will, when complete, provide a paved trail connection running east/west across southern Chisago County. The trail will connect the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail on the west and Interstate State Park and Taylors Falls on the east. The trail will pass through the cities of Taylors Falls, Shafer, Center City, Lindstrom, Chisago City and Wyoming connecting several city parks, schools, libraries and pedestrian systems with the regional trail system and to one of the state's premier parks, Interstate State Park along the St. Croix River. Currently, residents and visitors to southern Chisago County have limited access to off-road, multi-use paved trails that support bicycle and pedestrian mobility and commuting. The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail (SIRT) will provide interconnection between several cities and parks and will allow for access to diverse natural and cultural communities while expanding multi-modal transportation and recreation access to vital recreation and employment sites in Chisago County thus providing economic development, safety, health and mobility benefits.

Chisago County has been planning and constructing (in segments) the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail since 1993. This trail will highlight the historical significance of the Swedish Immigration through Taylors Falls across southern Chisago County to Wyoming and the importance the railroad played in that history. The Taylors Falls and Lake Superior Railroad was completed in 1880 that connected the river town with the main line railroad that ran through Wyoming (which is now the location of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail). The railroad was abandoned in 1948 and the tracks were removed. Much of the existing and proposed trail will follow the former railroad right-of-way across southern Chisago County.

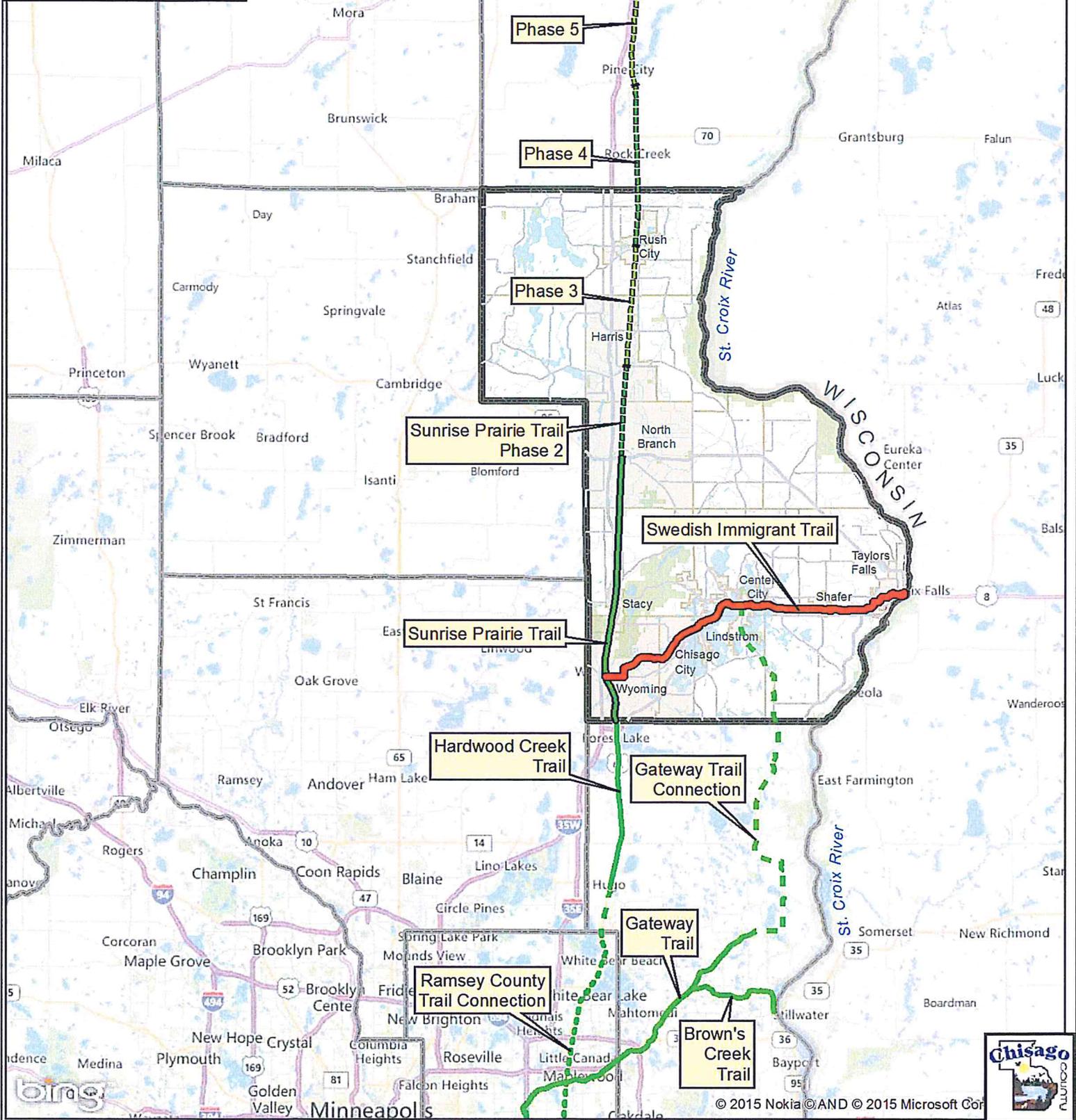
The Chisago County Parks and Trail Foundation was formally organized in 1993 to promote bicycle safety in Chisago County and to help with the public promotion and support of Chisago County Parks and Trails. This group was instrumental in the initial planning and promotion of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail and has been working with Chisago County staff and the Chisago County Board to plan and construct the trail as land and money have become available. In addition, Chisago County identified the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail as an element of the County Comprehensive Parks and Trail Plan in 2002 and has reaffirmed its importance as a regional trail as part of the 2014-2015 update to the Comprehensive Parks and Trails Plan.

**Figure One** illustrates the regional location and the general route of the trail and the other existing and future trails (Sunrise Prairie, Hardwood Creek, and Gateway) in the area. **Figure Two** illustrates how the trail will connect the cities, trails and parks in southern Chisago County. The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail Master Plan is a document that Chisago County will use to guide the future development of the trail. This Master Plan will provide the public a better understanding of why Chisago County selected the primary trail route, the primary opportunities and the potential challenges the County will face when developing the remaining parts of the trail. The County analyzed several alternate trail routes before selecting the recommended trail route. The primary routes are described in detail and the alternate trail routes are briefly described in each segment element (in Section VI – Development Master Plan) of this Master Plan.

# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail Plan



Chisago County



Willard Munger State Trail

Phase 5

Phase 4

Phase 3

Sunrise Prairie Trail Phase 2

Swedish Immigrant Trail

Sunrise Prairie Trail

Hardwood Creek Trail

Gateway Trail Connection

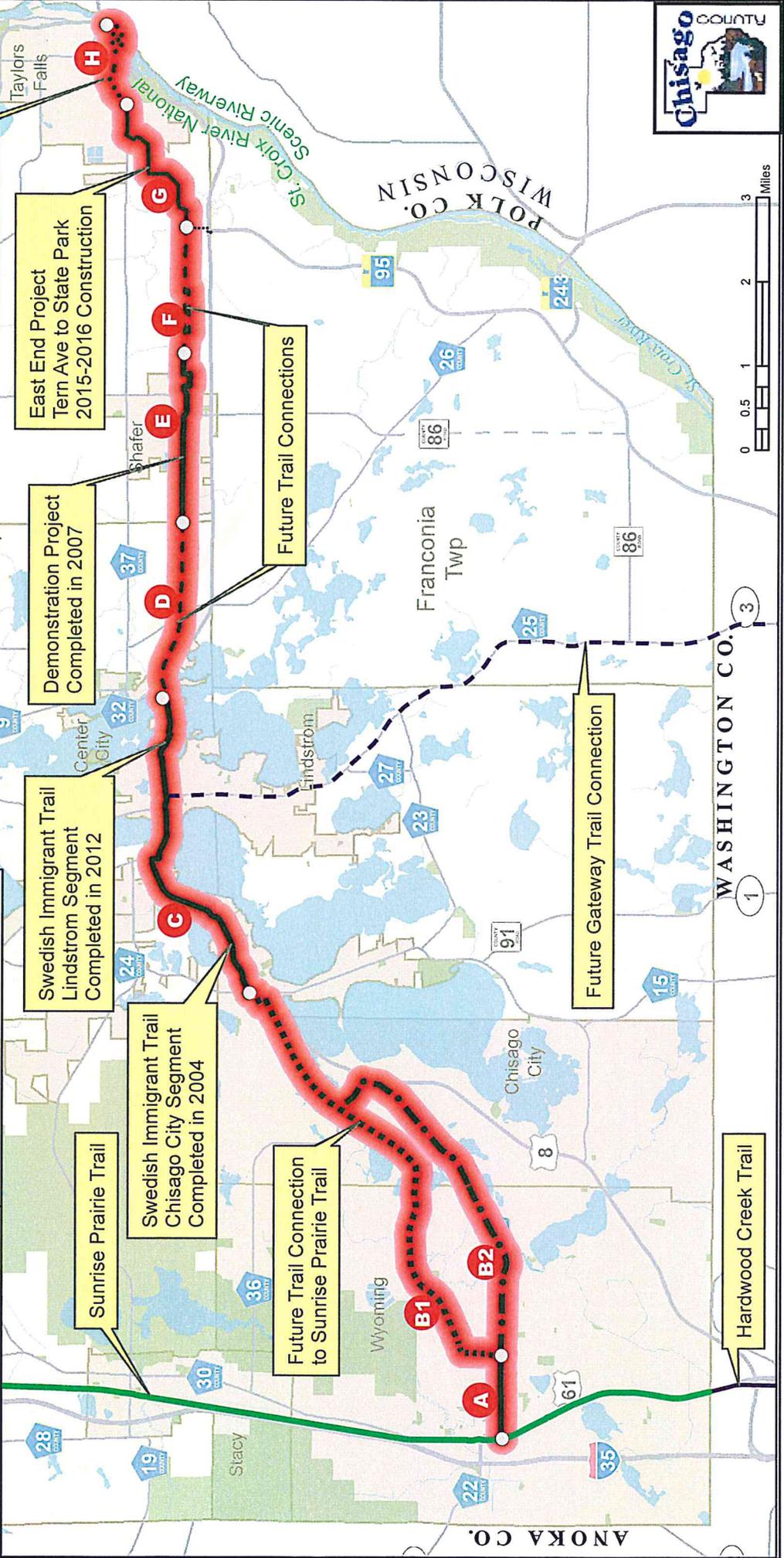
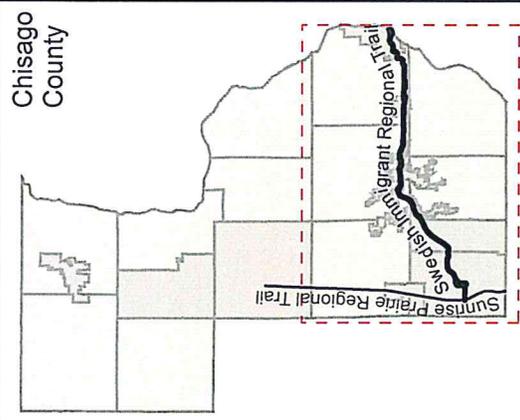
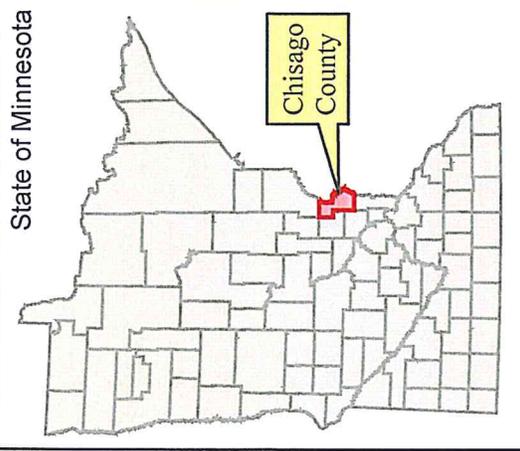
Gateway Trail

Ramsey County Trail Connection

Brown's Creek Trail



# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail Connections



Chisago County may seek funding from a variety of sources to develop the unfinished segments of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail. The length of the trail will likely require the construction of the remaining segments in several phases that may coincide with other projects, such as roadway redevelopment or widening of state or county roads. The trail development process will include additional opportunities for public input to allow residents to share ideas and concerns about proposed segment alignments and construction.

## **2. Proposer/implementing agency**

Chisago County is the lead and implementing agency for the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail (SIRT). Chisago County is located in east central Minnesota along the St. Croix River and just north of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. In 2013, Chisago County had an estimated population of 53,743 in 19,570 households and a population density of 121 people per square mile. The State Demographer's Office has estimated that the County population will grow to 63,671 in 2020 and to 68,071 by the year 2030. Chisago County has more than 30 lakes and is home to Interstate State Park, Wild River State Park and a large portion of the 255-mile long St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. The National Park Service (NPS) 2014 annual report showed that 671,582 people visited the national park in 2014. The County now operates the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail and the existing segments of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail. The Chisago County Parks department is responsible for construction, operation and management of the trail with input and guidance from the County Park Board.

Other agencies involved with the planning of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail include the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Chisago County Parks and Trails Foundation and the cities of Taylors Falls, Shafer, Center City, Lindstrom, Chisago City and Wyoming.

## **3. Setting/regional context**

The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail corridor generally follows a former railroad right-of-way from Taylors Falls to Wyoming across southern Chisago County and is part of the Chisago County Trail System. In this part of Minnesota, Chisago County is a regional trail provider. Because Chisago County has several cities within it and because it directly adjoins four other Minnesota counties, the County has a special role in providing trails and trail connections. These trails are immensely popular and provide alternative transportation options to residents and visitors.

Once finished, the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will complete missing links in the County's trail system and will fill a gap in the state and regional trail system in east central Minnesota. There are currently no scenic, hard-surfaced trails in proximity to this part of Chisago County and there are no Minnesota DNR State trails in Chisago County. The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will connect Taylors Falls and Interstate State Park (and the park trails) on the east to several cities and local trails to the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail on the west. Both of these County regional trails are critical backbones to local trail connectivity and they both offer regional trail opportunities. In addition, two state trails are located adjacent to Chisago County. As shown in Figure One, in Pine County to the north, the Willard Munger State Trail runs north/south between Hinckley and Duluth on a former railroad right-of-way in alignment with the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail. To the south in Washington County, the Hardwood Creek Trail runs north/south providing a trail connection to the Twin Cities

metro area as it connects to the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail in Chisago County (which will connect to the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail). In addition, the Gateway Trail extends from St. Paul to Stillwater with a planned extension from Stillwater to Taylors Falls or Lindstrom in Chisago County. Of the 20.5 mile length, Chisago County and local government units have completed or designated 7.4 miles of the trail to date. The County will be constructing another 2.2 miles of the eastern end of the trail (from Tern Avenue to Interstate State Park – known as Segment G in this plan) in 2015-2016.

The Minnesota DNR Parks and Trails Unit is responsible for trail planning and development within state parks and will be working to create the eastern end of the trail through Interstate State Park that will end in Taylors Falls. The DNR will conduct a more in-depth planning and analysis within Interstate State Park to identify the best trail route within the park that will take into consideration elements such as heritage sites, slopes, ecology and land cover.

#### **4. Site Information**

A primary objective of the master plan process is to locate as much of the remaining parts of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail in or along the former railroad corridor. This corridor was 100 feet wide and has gradual grades, making it ideal for the installation of a regional trail for bicycling and walking. Much of the former railroad bed is still intact but some of the right-of-way is now owned by the adjacent property owners. Chisago County has acquired some, but not all, of the necessary right-of-way for the uncompleted parts of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail. Once this Master Plan is approved, the County will work closely with the cities and the area property owners to ensure the trail right-of-way is protected from future development.

As part of the development and preparation of the project plans for the remaining parts of the trail, the County will be analyzing design solutions that minimize the impacts to adjacent property owners and to natural resources such as wetlands, lakes and steep slopes. Chisago County will be proceeding with property and right-of-way acquisition for the unfinished segments of the trail as part of the development and construction of the respective trail segments. The County still needs to acquire about 9 miles of the trail corridor and is anticipating acquiring the necessary land through a willing seller/willing buyer process. While the County does not anticipate that right-of-way or easement acquisition will be an issue, if there are small segments of right-of-way that Chisago County cannot acquire through the negotiation process, the County will consider using eminent domain or other processes to complete the land purchases for the trail. Chisago County has not yet conducted market rate appraisals of the affected properties, but the County expects to use recent property sales data to help determine future purchase prices before making any funding requests or acquisitions.

The land uses and areas surrounding the trail corridor are a mix of suburban, agricultural and rural residential uses with intermittent wetlands, forest areas and several lakes. Some of the terrain in the trail corridor, especially on the eastern end in and near Interstate State Park, is undulating and has slopes that will make it an appealing destination but challenging to build all of the trail in this segment to ADA standards. On the western end of the trail corridor, (Segment B in Chisago City and in Wyoming, as shown on Figure Two), the County has not yet completed a detailed alignment survey or analysis of the two possible trail corridors. The County will need to gather more complete information about

adjacent land uses, property ownership, wetlands and the terrain for this part of the trail corridor to determine the best route and the exact location of the trail in this area.

For Segments D and F of the trail, Chisago County expects to build the trail primarily on the remaining railroad bed that is still in place in the former railroad right-of-way. These two segments of the trail will connect to existing trail segments on either end of the future parts of the trail. The County has identified a limited number of separate properties in both Segments D and F that will require a negotiated land purchase with the land owners for the necessary right-of-way for these segments of the trail. The County is expecting to purchase a 50-100-foot-wide strip of land from each of the properties to complete these two parts of the trail. These segments of the trail are shown in more detail in Section 6 of this plan.

### **Natural Resource Description**

As identified in the Chisago County Comprehensive Parks and Trail Plan, the topography of Chisago County consists of three major landforms. The following 3 maps show the general topography of the County and the location of the trail. The northwestern and southeastern regions of the county are located in the Grantsburg Sublobe Till Plain (GSTP). This landform is characterized by nearly level to gently rolling plains. It was formed by material carried into the area by the Grantsburg glacial ice sublobe. When the glacier melted, it left behind a vast plain of finely ground deposits. The soils that developed from these deposits are loamy and poorly drained. As a result, wetlands and lakes are prevalent in this landform. Most of the lakes in this area are relatively shallow with a maximum depth of 20 to 40 feet. Elevations in these regions range between 920 and 980 feet above sea level.

The central part of the county is located in the Anoka Sandplain (AS). This area formed when the Grantsburg sublobe melted and broad, widely shifting streams spread sand across the land. Some of these streams became plugged and formed large shallow lakes and wetlands. Other lakes and wetlands in the area formed from depressions that were created when chunks of buried glacier ice settled and slowly melted. This region is virtually level with elevations between 840 to 900 feet above sea level.

The eastern part of the county is located in the Saint Croix River Terraces (SCRT). The runoff from the melting Grantsburg sublobe formed large glacial lakes that were drained by rivers that flowed through the Saint Croix Valley. The first of these rivers cut wide terraces into the sand and gravel deposits of the valley. Later, the Saint Croix River cut deep into the underlying bedrock and created additional terraces and bedrock bluffs. This region has a variety of landforms including floodplains, steep rock outcroppings and bogs. Elevations in this area range from 700 to 850 feet above sea level. The southeastern part of this region has the steepest slopes with bedrock outcroppings averaging 40 to 50 feet in height. The photograph at the end of this section provides a glimpse of these features and includes a river boat on the St. Croix River near Taylors Falls.

The glacial actions left Chisago County with rolling hills, many lakes and wetlands, a mix of hardwood and deciduous trees and gorgeous vistas throughout much of the County. The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will provide a connection between the rolling topography and views of the Saint Croix

River, the cities and lakes in the center of the County and the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail in the western part of the County.

The Minnesota Land Cover and Classification System (MLCCS) identifies a large part of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail route as agricultural land. On the west end of the trail corridor (Segment B in Chisago City and Wyoming), the trail route extends through a mix of agricultural land cover, wetlands and forest. For the parts of the trail that will be east of Center City (Segments D-G), the trail corridor passes through land cover that is a mix of agricultural with a few wetlands and pockets of forest. East of Shafer, the MLCCS identifies the land cover in the corridor as primarily cropland and pasture with intermittent wetlands and forest areas. The area east of Herberg Road (in Segments G and H) has areas of old growth forest – including parts of Interstate State Park.

Section 7 of the Plan (starting on page 31) has more detailed information about the natural and other ecological resources in the trail corridor.

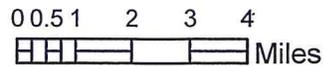
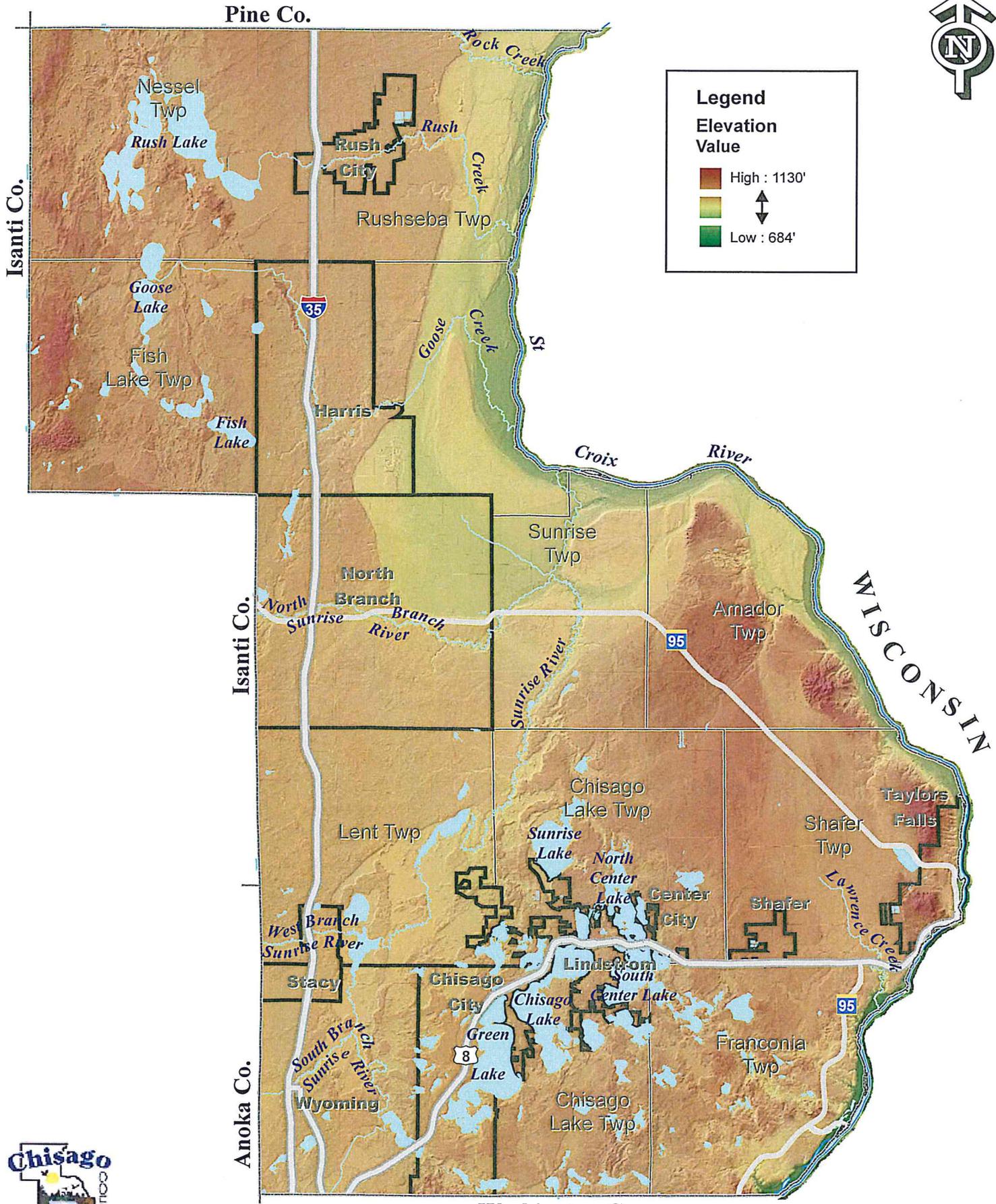
# General Topography



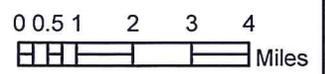
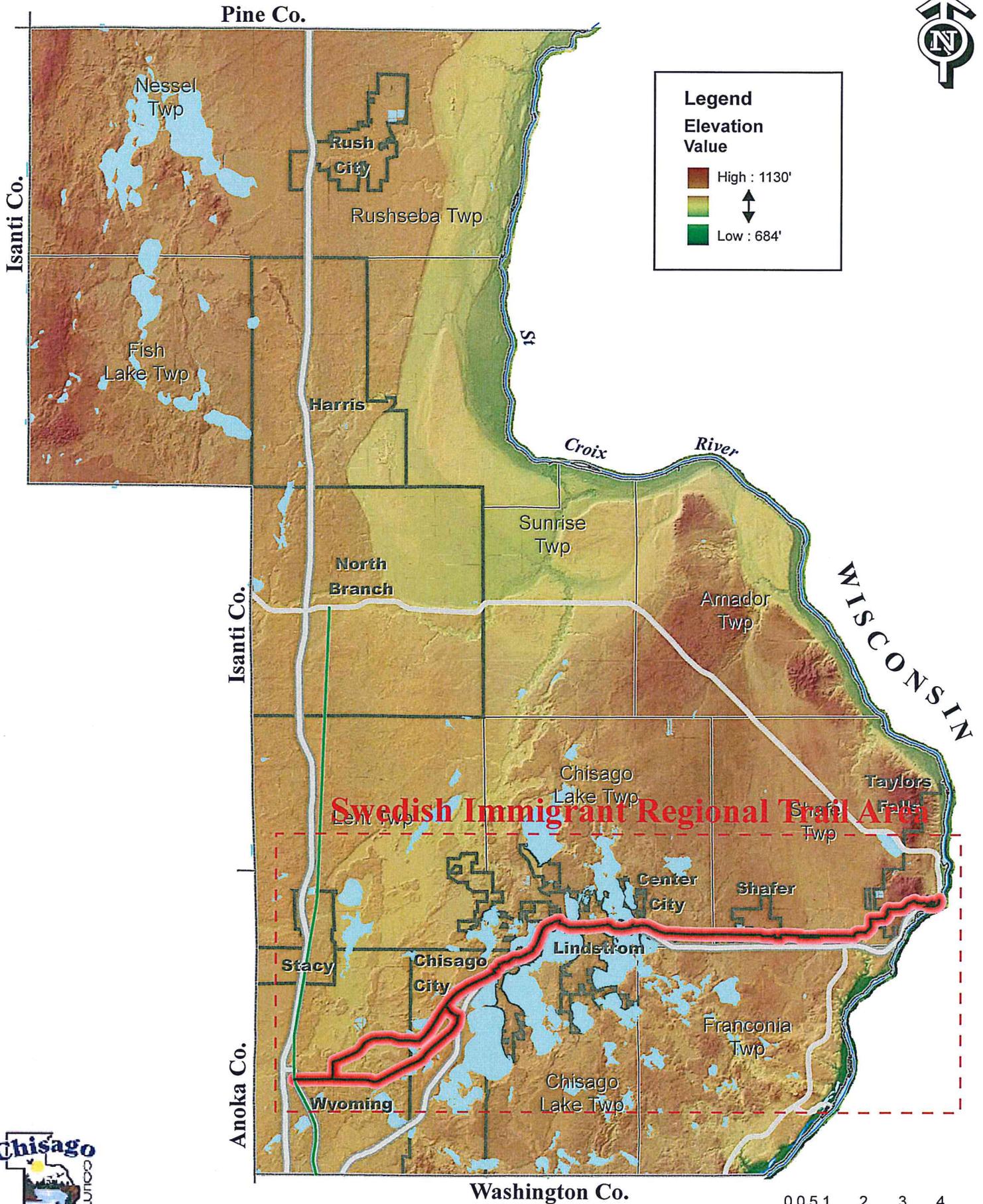
**Legend**

**Elevation Value**

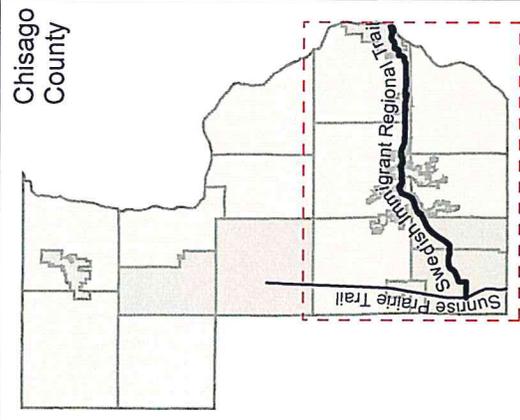
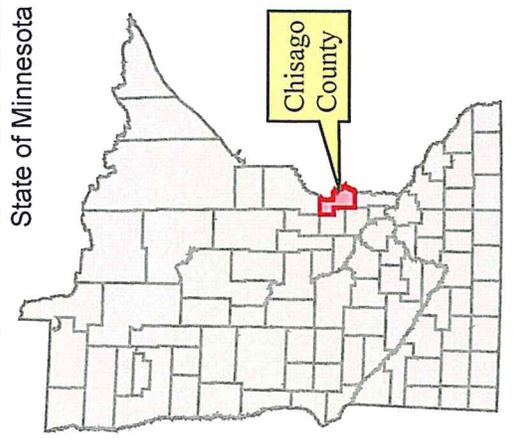
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# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail



# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail Connections

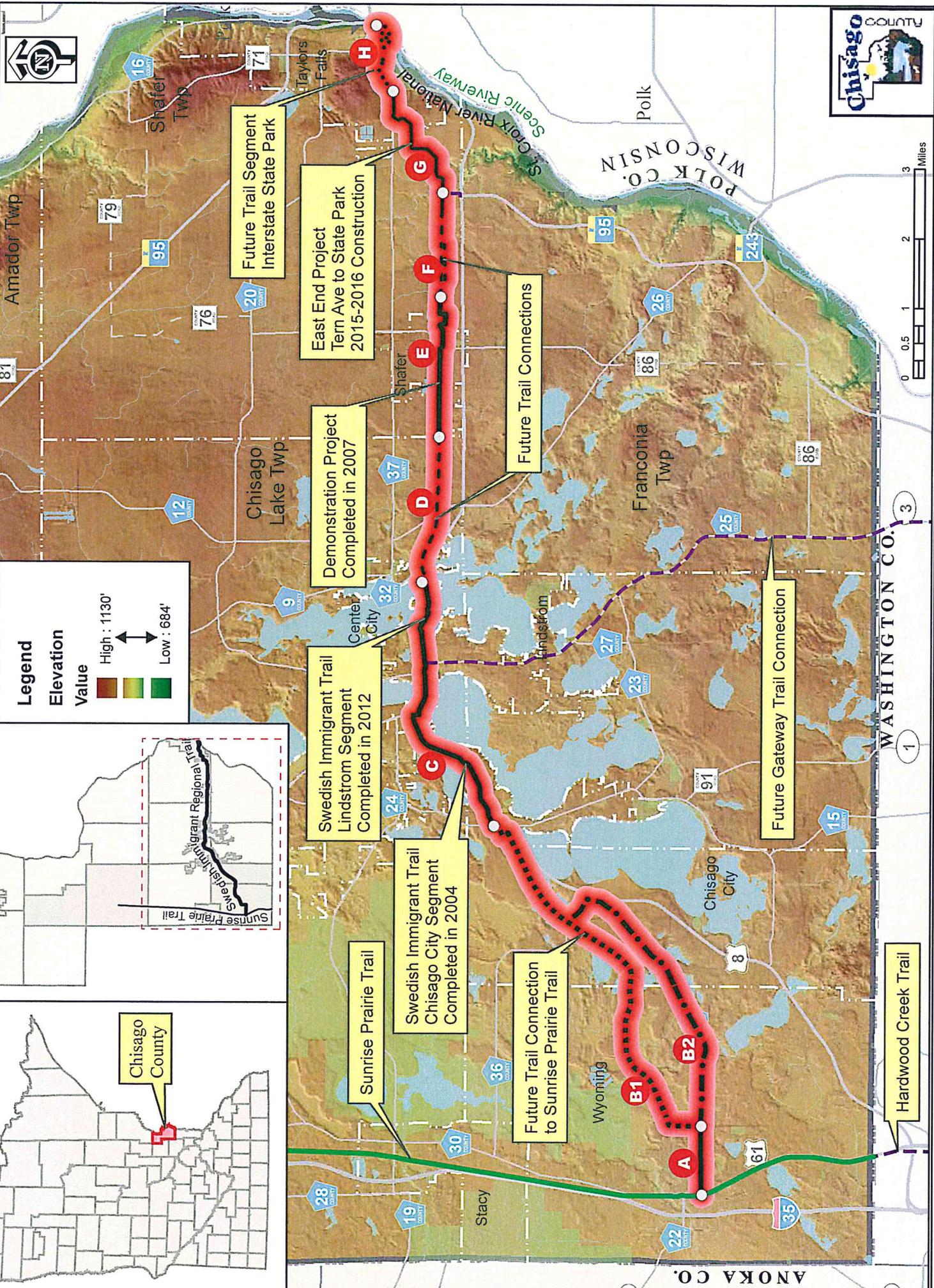


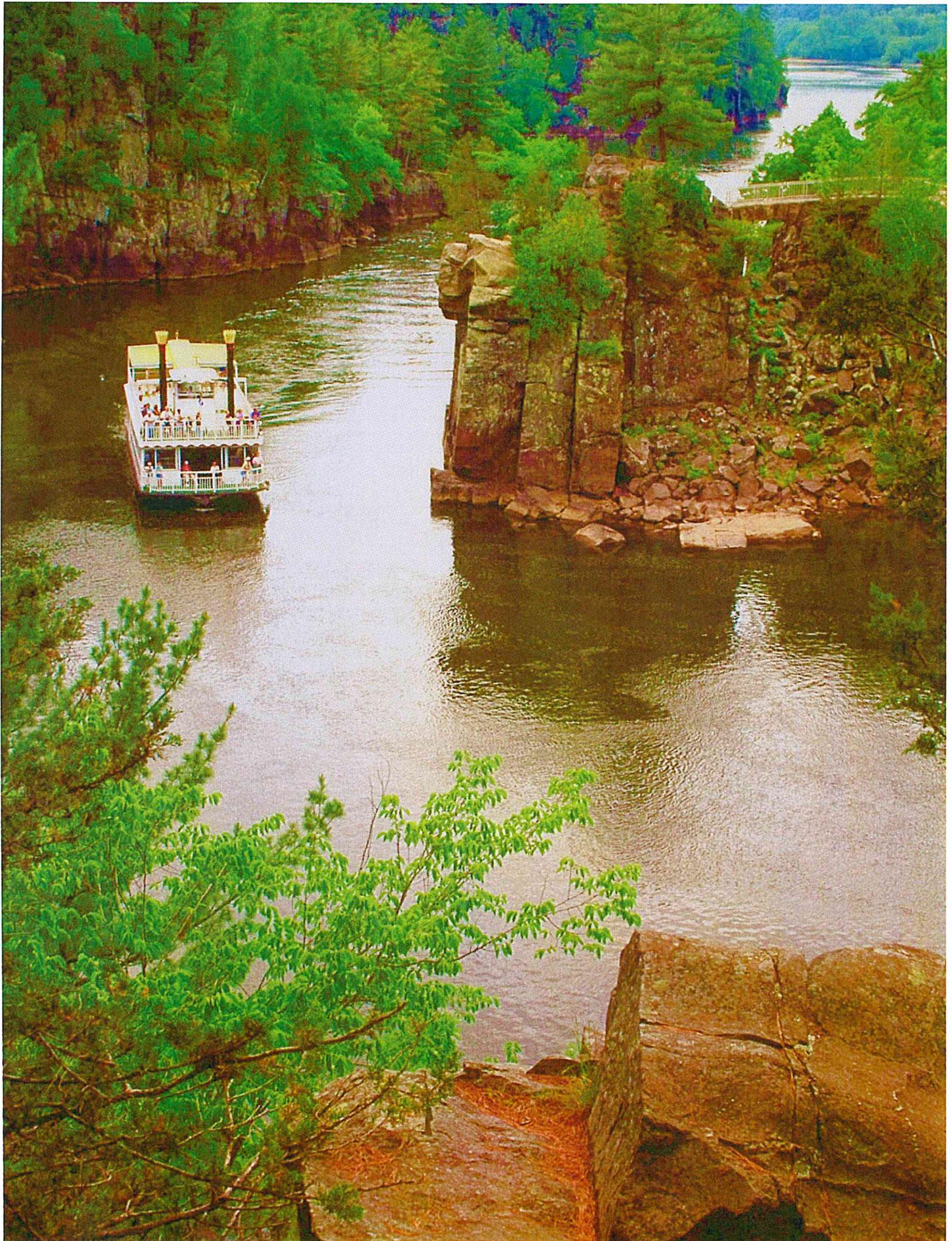
**Legend**

**Elevation Value**

High : 1130'

Low : 684'





## 5. Vision, trends and public values

### Vision and Mission Statements

As part of the 2013-2014 Comprehensive Parks and Trail Plan update, the County adopted newly refined vision and mission statements for the parks, trails and open space system. The County based these new statements on the current needs and goals for the parks and trails and from the original statements the County adopted in the 2002 Comprehensive Plan. Chisago County has adopted the following vision statement to guide future County park and trail acquisition, development and programming priorities:

#### VISION STATEMENT

***“A park and trail system focusing on diverse natural resources and the recreational needs of Chisago County residents and visitors.”***

The Chisago County Parks and Trails System adds value to all peoples' lives. The System contributes to the well-being of local and regional communities by providing public enjoyment and education, while maintaining and restoring high quality natural areas. By virtue of its size, quality facilities, and dispersed locations, the County Parks, Trails and Open Space System provides a place for users to find solitude, green space, access to natural resources, clean water and a place to recreate.

The County also adopted the following mission statement for its parks, trails and open space system:

#### MISSION STATEMENT

***“Protect the natural resources, balance the demand for recreation with the need for conservation, offer recreation opportunities that encourage healthy lifestyles and provide clean, safe and accessible places for leisure time activities.”***

### Demographic Trends

From 1960 to 1990, the population of Chisago County increased by 43%. Several factors contributed to this growth. Improvements in the transportation system allowed cities along Interstate Highway 35 and U.S. Highway 8 to have easy access to a greater area. By 2010, the Census showed 53,887 residents in Chisago County – a 79 percent increase over the 1990 population of 30,151. Consequently, businesses and industries prospered in these areas. In addition, people seeking a rural lifestyle moved to the County from the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Many of these people were attracted to the natural and rural amenities of the County. And, because of the relatively easy commute to the Twin Cities area, many of these people were able to live in the county, but work in the metropolitan area. In essence, the natural resources that attracted European-American settlers to the county in the 1800s has continued to attract residents from the 1960s to the present.

The U.S. Census shows that in the year 2000, Chisago County had a population of 41,101. This is an increase of 35% from the 1990 population of 30,521 and an increase of 60% from the 1980 population of 25,717. The 2010 Census count of 53,887 residents in Chisago County was an increase of 12,786 persons from 2000. In recent years, Chisago County has been one of the fastest growing counties in the state.

The State Demographers Office is projecting that in the year 2020, the population of Chisago County will be 63,671 (a 52% increase from the 2000 population of 41,101 and an increase of 14 % from the 2010 population). However, if we assume that the population growth rate will be the same between the years 2000 and 2020 as it was between the years 1980 and 2000, then we might estimate the population of Chisago County will be roughly 65,500 in the year 2020. The State also is estimating that the County's population will be 68,071 in 2030. Regardless of what the actual population will be in future years, it is clear that the population will continue to grow. This growth may affect the County Park and Trail system in several ways: 1) the need for additional recreation opportunities will likely increase, 2) pressure to develop in the rural and natural areas will likely increase, 3) revenues from future development may help fund future park development and 4) increased park and trail use will require consistent investment by the County in the park and trail infrastructure and maintenance.

## **POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS**

Not only is it important to know how many people live in Chisago County, but it also is important to know key characteristics of the population – for example, their age, household status, employment status and where they live in the county. Knowing about these characteristics can help the County plan for facilities and uses that respond to the recreation needs of the population. This section briefly describes population characteristics of the county as they relate to parks, recreation and trails.

**Age.** Although people of all ages participate in a full range of recreation activities, in general, younger people favor more active recreation activities (like soccer, skiing, and swimming) and older people favor more passive recreation activities (like nature walks and picnics). The State Demographic Office is projecting that the 65 and older population in Chisago County will significantly increase from the year 2010 to 2040 (from 6,247 to 31,274 persons). In contrast, the State is not projecting as significant of an increase in the younger population in Chisago County.

**Employment and Population Centers.** The employment and growth centers in the County are primarily along the Interstate Highway 35 and U.S. Highway 8 corridors. Because most of the existing and future development is and will be along these corridors, it provides residents with the option of living in the county, but working in the Twin Cities or somewhere else. The location of existing and future development will not only affect the need for additional park, trail and recreation opportunities in these areas, but it also could affect the preservation and/or enhancement of the existing open space in these areas. The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail parallels the U.S. Highway 8 corridor for about 15 miles across Chisago County thus providing another recreation, commuting and transportation alternative to a large percentage of the Chisago County population.

## **Demand Forecasts and Information**

### **Overview**

The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will become an exciting recreation opportunity for both visitors to the area and for the residents of Chisago County. The trail will serve two primary roles. First, it will serve as a destination trail that will draw visitors for the specific purpose of recreation. Secondly, the trail will link several communities, area lakes and Interstate State Park, while providing a safe, multi-modal transportation option for underserved communities. In its role as a linking regional trail, users will be able to access several popular area lakes directly from the trail corridor.

Chisago County is popular destination that attracts visitors (many from the Twin Cities Metro area and from Wisconsin) and seasonal residents drawn to the County's lakes and natural resources. Interstate State Park, which averages more than 300,000 visitors a year, will anchor the east end of the trail. Several local communities in southern Chisago County (Chisago City, Lindstrom, Center City and Taylors Falls) see a significant increase in traffic during the summer and fall months, largely due to tourism.

### **Demographics**

Regional parks and trails have been increasing in popularity and as the population in an area grows, the need for additional recreation resources and amenities grows as well. The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail is located in southern Chisago County. In 2000, Chisago County had a population of 41,101. The 2010 Census showed an increase in the County's population to a total of 53,887. According the Minnesota State Demographer's Office, the population in Chisago County will grow 63,671 by the year 2020 and to 68,071 in 2030.

As the population increases, diversifies and ages, the demand for easily accessible outdoor recreation opportunities and open spaces increases. According to the Outdoor Foundation's Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2012, "Outdoor recreation reached the highest participation level in five years. Outdoor recreation added three million participants (nationally) in 2011- a significant improvement over the past few years when participation either dropped or remained stagnant."

Chisago County experiences an influx of additional residents during the warmer weather months. The County Assessor's Office lists 1027 parcels as seasonal properties – many of which feature owners residing recreational vehicles and travel trailers, rather than in permanent structures.

### **Projected Trail Use**

Chisago County is expecting heavy use of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail. The trail's east end will draw visitors from Interstate State Park and Wildwood Campground while local users traveling short distances and other visitors traveling up to 50 miles will use the trail to experience the landscape and scenic beauty of southern Chisago County. During the non-winter months, the County is anticipating a variety of non-motorized uses and activities on the trail including bicycling, running/jogging, hiking, in-line skating and dog walking. During winter months, the County will allow snowmobiles on certain segments of the trail. The policy for using snowmobiles on specific segments of the trail will need to be approved by Chisago County.

When fully constructed, Chisago County is projecting that the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will generate between 30,000 and 50,000 annual visits. The County used the visitor numbers from Interstate State Park, Wildwood Campground, the Hardwood Creek Trail and the Sunrise Prairie Trail to estimate the annual use of the trail. Active use by Interstate State Park visitors will likely increase the use of the east end of the trail near the Park boundaries. Similarly, Chisago County is anticipating heavier local use of the regional trail in and near Wyoming, Chisago City and Lindstrom where the trail will connect to existing local trail networks, local amenities and to Metro-area trails.

### **Chisago County Public Health Values**

The Chisago County Public Health Department recently prepared a mission statement, a vision statement and a list of its values. They are:

#### **Mission Statement**

“Promotes a safe environment, prevents disease, protects and enhances the health of our community.”

#### **Vision Statement**

“We work in partnership to make a difference for the people in Chisago County with a commitment to excellence.”

#### **Values**

“Team work, trust, honesty, respect, integrity and stewardship.”

They also note their values for working together. They are:

1. Deliver on our commitments.
2. Ask for what we need.
3. Take responsibility for our own feelings and behaviors.
4. Make our expectations clear.
5. Deal with conflict directly.
6. Talk to each other, not about each other.
7. Hold each other accountable.
8. Have fun!

As part of its mission, vision and values, the Chisago County Public Health Department has been working on several initiatives to support physical activity in the County. The Department is participating in the State wide Health Improvement Program (SHIP). This program involves preparing a community health improvement plan for Chisago County (that will be complete by the end of 2015).

For SHIP planning, the Minnesota Department of Health has identified several science-based strategies that are effective for improving the health and living conditions of residents in a city or county. One community-based strategy that the state identified was to increase non-motorized transportation options for residents. This could include the preparation of master walking and bicycling plans,

increasing access to connected walking and bicycling networks and connecting and promoting trail systems. The draft of the County SHIP plan has identified good nutrition and healthy weight status (of which physical activity is a foundation) as a community health priority in Chisago County for the years 2015-2020. The County Public Health Department also identified recreation, parks and trails in the 2014 asset mapping as part of the community health assessment.

The completion of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will be consistent with the values and goals of the Chisago County Public Health Department and will be consistent with the strategies identified by the Minnesota Department of Health for improving the health and living conditions of the residents of, and the visitors to, Chisago County.

### **Economic Development/Tourism Opportunities**

National studies have documented that bicycle trails longer than 10 miles promote economic development and healthy lifestyles, inexpensive transportation and pollution-free recreation. The longer the trail, the further people will travel to use it, the longer they will visit the area and the more money they will spend. For example, studies have shown a visitor who travels to a trail for a day's ride will spend four times as much money as a local user and trail users who stay overnight will spend twice as much money as one-day visitors. A report by the University of Minnesota Tourism Center found that between 1996 and 2008, the average spending rates for trail users who traveled at least 30 miles from home to use a trail in Minnesota was between \$27 and \$39 per day (E. Venegas, November 2009). The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail could potentially generate between \$1,000,000 and \$2,000,000 annually in spending in the County, based on the anticipated number of trail users and the average statewide spending of \$33 per day.

Regional trails serve pedestrians, inline skaters and casual bicyclists who prefer comfortable access to the trail. The casual bicyclists are most comfortable on designated bikeways, off-road facilities and independent trails or on streets with low vehicle speeds and volumes. Currently, residents and visitors to southern Chisago County have limited access to off-road, paved trails that support bicycle and pedestrian mobility. The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will provide interconnection between several cities, schools, parks and attractions. In addition, the trail will provide access to diverse natural and cultural communities while expanding multi-modal transportation access to vital recreation and employment sites in Chisago County thus providing economic development, safety and mobility benefits to residents and visitors.

The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail is within a 30-minute drive of much of the Twin Cities Metropolitan area and will serve many functions in Chisago County. When completed, it will provide a 20-mile long link across southern Chisago County. It will extend from Wyoming and the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail on the west, to the lakes and cities in the south-central part of the County to Interstate State Park, Taylors Falls and the scenic St. Croix River valley on the eastern end, making it a regional tourist destination. Because of its location and features, the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will provide a high-quality recreation opportunity, making the trail a destination itself. The County will be developing and maintaining the trail to include easy access, secure parking, access to drinking water and other necessary amenities and services for its users.

**In summary, having a continuous regional trail connection across Chisago County that links several cities, schools, parks and attractions will provide a safe and comfortable user experience for a variety of trail users which in turn creates economic and tourism opportunities for residents, business owners and visitors to Chisago County.**

## **Citizen Participation and Public Outreach**

### **Public Involvement Process – Planning History**

The development of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail is the outgrowth of local and County-wide interest in increasing recreation opportunities for residents and tourists. In response to demands for non-motorized outdoor recreation opportunities in Chisago County, the Chisago County Park Board and the Chisago County Parks and Trail Foundation started the planning of a trail corridor across southern Chisago County in 1993-1994. These groups gained the support and approval of the Chisago County Board to develop the plans for Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail. The County Board recognized the need and the opportunity to create additional recreation amenities between Interstate State Park and the cities of Taylors Falls, Shafer, Center City, Lindstrom, Chisago City and Wyoming. This part of Chisago County receives a significant increase in daily and seasonal tourism visits by people drawn to the area lakes and to Interstate State Park. The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will provide another opportunity for residents and visitors to experience the beautiful landscapes and lakes of Chisago County.

### **Public Involvement - Input Process**

There is strong community commitment to finish the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail. The Chisago County Parks and Trails Foundation has been working toward the completion of this trail for many years and has documented support for the trail via a petition that they submitted to the County with over 400 signatures supporting the concept.

### **2013-2014 Comprehensive Parks and Trails Plan Update Process**

In 2013, the Chisago County Park Board identified the need to update the County's Comprehensive Parks and Trails Plan, including creating action-oriented goals, updating vision and mission statements for the system and updating the master plan for each County park and trail. On September 18, 2013, the Chisago County Board authorized the County Park Board and County staff to work together to update the County's Comprehensive Parks and Trail Plan. The update process included several meetings with the County Park Board, input from the County's Environmental Services staff, the use of social media and a survey of park and trail users to get updated information about trends in park and trail use.

The County created an on-line questionnaire to gauge the concerns and thoughts of County parks users. The survey was initially available to participants from September 2013 to December 2013. The County promoted the survey on the County website, with signage in the County Courthouse, in the County parks and at trail heads and with a direct mailing to all City Administrators and Township Clerks in the County. Staff also included information about the survey in the fall 2013 issue of the "Environmental Connections" newsletter that the County mails to all property owners. Those that responded to the survey answered 20 questions related to the parks and trails in the County and provided the County with comments.

The County found that public is generally supportive of the County parks and trails, appreciates access to park facilities and the benefits parks the trails provide to users (including open space preservation and habitat values). The Chisago County residents that participated in the survey for the Comprehensive Plan update reflected the regional and state trends of favoring trails and

walking/hiking opportunities as their top priority for facilities, followed by leisure activities and water access as their next highest priorities.

The County Park Board also held two public open houses (one in July 2014 and one in August 2014) to take comments about the County parks and trails. The persons attending these meetings provided the County with helpful comments and insights about the County parks and trails.

**The following is a summary of some of the key points that staff and the County Park Board learned from the public involvement process as part of the update for the Comprehensive Parks and Trails Plan:**

1. There are a wide variety of recreational interests represented in the County.
2. **Trails are extremely popular and continuing to provide and expand trail opportunities is a priority. This could include paving trails in parks or between parks and points of interest and adding more primitive or basic-types of trails in parks.**
3. **There is public interest in the County for completing the Swedish Immigrant Trail.**
4. The Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail in particular is extremely popular and the County should carefully review suggestions for trail improvements and maintenance.

### **Master Plan Review and Formal Approval Process**

Chisago County prepared the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail Master Plan in 2015 before finalizing the update to the County's Comprehensive Parks and Trails Plan. As noted earlier, the County conducted public outreach during the update to the Comprehensive Parks and Trail Plan in 2013-2014 and found that there was strong support for the maintenance and improvement of existing trails and for expanding the trail system in the Chisago County.

The County will conduct open houses and hold meetings with each of the cities and townships in which the Chisago County will construct the remaining segments of the trail. The County will publish notices in the local newspapers and post the meeting notices on the Chisago County website. In addition, the County will mail invitation post cards to adjacent property owners and local City and County officials about each of the meetings.

Chisago County will, where possible, incorporate the comments and suggestions received from the public and the local and regulatory agencies into the Master Plan and into the final design of each segment of the trail.

### **Local and City Comments**

Refer to Appendix A for a copy of a letter of support from the Chisago County HRA-EDA and a listing of the letters of support the County received about the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail.

### **County Park Board**

The County Park Board reviewed drafts of the trail Master Plan in March and April 2015 and recommended approval of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail Master Plan on May 21, 2015.

## **County Board Approval**

The Chisago County Board has the authority to approve the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail Master Plan. Further planning and design for the unfinished trail segments may identify changes to the Master Plan, such as revisions to the trail alignment or changes to proposed trail facilities. If the County or another agency determines that changes to the master plan are necessary, the County Board may request an amendment to the Master Plan. Such an amendment process will include a public hearing, a review and recommendation by the County Park Board and a formal approval of the proposed Plan amendment by the Chisago County Board.

County staff is expecting the Chisago County Board to approve the Master Plan on June 17, 2015.

## **Related Projects and Planning**

The Minnesota DNR set a goal of paving 1,300 miles of bicycle trails by 2035 in their Minnesota DNR Parks and Trails Legacy Plan (2011). The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail is well-qualified to count among 20 of those newly paved trail miles. The Parks and Trails Legacy Plan sets nine criteria for prioritizing State investment in trails. The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail meets these criteria as follows:

### **Connects to communities, schools, work opportunities and central business districts:**

The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will connect several communities (Taylors Falls, Shafer, Center City, Lindstrom, Chisago City and Wyoming) and their corresponding work opportunities and the major employers of Hazelden/Betty Ford, Chisago County and Polaris. The trail will connect schools (Chisago Lakes Middle School and Lakeside Elementary) and will be within blocks of Taylors Falls Elementary, Chisago Lakes Area High School, Chisago Lakes Primary School and Wyoming Elementary School). In addition, the trail will connect the central business districts of Taylors Falls, Shafer, Center City, Lindstrom, Chisago City and Wyoming.

### **Connects with existing state or regional trails:**

The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will connect to the trails in Interstate State Park and to the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail. Chisago County also is aware of plans by the DNR to extend the Gateway Trail north from Washington County into Chisago County to make another trail connection to the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail.

### **Connects with high-quality natural resources or recreation areas:**

The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will connect to and go through Interstate State Park (which receives more than 300,000 visitors a year) and will provide connections to the St. Croix River, the Sunrise River, Carlos Avery State Wildlife Management Area and several lakes including North Center, South Center, North Lindstrom, South Lindstrom, Wallmark Lake and Little Green Lake. The trail route will pass through rolling hills, abut lakes and wetlands and traverse a mix of prairie and forested landscapes.

**Connects to multiple destinations:**

As noted above, the proposed trail will connect six cities and several lakes, a state park and regional trail. In addition, the trail will connect to privately-owned campgrounds along its route.

**Fills a critical gap in an area with a recreation opportunity shortage:**

The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will fill a critical gap in recreation opportunity in Chisago County by providing a safe, continuous, paved trail across the southern part of the County (where no such trail or opportunity now exists). Access to most of the recreation facilities and cities in the area are now only available by motor vehicle. The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will allow for enjoyment of recreation areas and resources on foot, by bicycle or by other non-motorized modes of transportation.

**Secures a critical piece of a trail system:**

When finished, the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will secure a critical piece of the regional and state trail system by connecting the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail on the west with the local trails in the cities in which it will pass through with Interstate State Park on the east thus creating a more complete regional trail system for southern Chisago County.

**Secures a unique opportunity or experience:**

The users of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will enjoy small-town experiences, biking, walking, jogging or in-line skating among the diverse flora and fauna. Users may see bison on a farm in Shafer, cross deep ravines by bridge and see all the unique amenities and natural features of Interstate State Park and the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. In addition, Segment F of the trail will be only one-half mile north of the 43-acre Franconia Sculpture Park (located at the intersection of U.S. Highways 8 and 95). This outdoor sculpture garden, with an ever-changing collection of more than 100 contemporary sculptures, reflects the talents of local, national and international artists.

**Fills a critical gap for commuting:**

The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will serve several communities and will provide safe and direct connections to their central business districts. In addition, the trail fills a critical gap for bicycle commuters in Chisago County that work or live in the area and for those that want to ride to the Twin Cities Metro area via the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail and the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail in Washington County.

**Evaluation and Findings**

**In summary, and as is noted in the analysis of the evaluation criteria listed above, the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will meet or exceed all the evaluation criteria and standards for regional trails as outlined by the State of Minnesota.**

## **6. Development Master Plan**

### **Introduction**

The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will provide residents and visitors in southern Chisago County with access to a regional trail that connects them to the St. Croix River valley, Interstate State Park, area lakes and the cities of Taylors Falls, Shafer, Center City, Lindstrom, Chisago City and Wyoming. These cities are now deficient in regional trail access and have to travel to the western part of the county to use the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail, the nearest trail of regional significance.

### **Development Plan**

#### **Permitted Trail Uses**

This regional trail will be open to the general public. Chisago County intends the trail to be used by walkers, joggers, hikers, bicyclists, dog walkers, in-line skaters and other uses mandated by State law. During the spring, summer and fall seasons, motorized vehicles will be prohibited on the trail, except for use by maintenance personnel and law enforcement personnel for enforcement activities. During the winter months, the County will allow snowmobiling on certain segments of the trail corridor.

#### **Regional Trail Design Guidelines**

Chisago County is committed to designing and developing the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail using design standards that are consistent with quality outcomes and accepted standards and practices. The County expects that many of the remaining parts of the trail will have a 10-foot-wide bituminous paved surface that is separate from roadways. A bituminous trail surface is preferred because it is cost-effective, less prone to erosion than gravel surfaces, provides a more desirable user experience and allows for more types of uses. The County intends to keep the trail separate from the roadway by using grade and distance through-out the 20-mile corridor. This separation will be achieved by locating the trail behind the curb in the urban-type settings and by creating a buffer between the trail and the roadway in the more rural-type settings. The location of the trail and thus the width of the buffer will depend on the width and availability of public right-of-way, the location of the former rail corridor and the speed limit of the nearby roadway. Where possible and practical, Chisago County will use boardwalks and/or bridges where wetlands, ditches and ravines exist, to reduce the environmental impacts of the trail.

The County will design the trail with at least a 2-foot-wide “clear zone” on either side that will have cross slopes between 2 percent and 4 percent. The clear zone will be planted with grass that the County will maintain by mowing on a regular basis. The County also will be trimming and maintaining vegetation in the trail corridor so there is a minimum ten foot vertical clearance across the entire trail and clear zones. Alongside the trail, the County will be clearing and maintaining the vegetation a distance of at least seven feet on either side from the centerline of the trail.

Chisago County will be considering several elements that effect trail development during the final design of the unconstructed segments of the trail including:

- Right-of-way width
- Topography and drainage impacts
- Proximity to lakes or wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas
- Existing vegetation

- Driveway crossings
- Intersection crossings
- Overhead and underground utilities
- Proximity to residences, farm structures and other buildings

There are several locations where the trail will be near or will encroach upon wetlands or water bodies. The County will take special care when designing the trail in these locations. There may be a need for retaining walls and guardrails to lessen the impacts to adjacent wetlands. In certain circumstances, constructing a boardwalk across a water body or wetland may be the best solution to minimize impact in sensitive environmental areas.

Stormwater management for the proposed trail will meet the requirements of the Minnesota DNR, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, local watershed districts and organizations and all other permitting and regulatory agencies that have jurisdiction at the time of construction. For example, in certain jurisdictions, water quality treatment for a trail can be accomplished through a minimum of a five-foot-wide vegetated filter strip or vegetated open space located down-gradient of the trail. The ownership and maintenance of any such stormwater management facilities built with the trail will be the responsibility of Chisago County.

The County is proposing to use trailhead signs at major intersections and at designated parking areas along the trail. Detachable warnings, such as truncated domes, will be used at all roadway crossing and will extend the entire width of the trail. The maximum cross-slope of the trail is expected to be 2 percent on straight segments and not more than 3 percent on curves. The maximum grade of the trail will be 5 percent unless local conditions require steeper slopes for short segments. The topography in the eastern end of the trail, especially in Interstate State Park, is very undulating and there may be instances where the trail grade will exceed 5 percent for short distances. In these situations, special signage will be used to warn trail users of steep downgrade grades and hazards.

## **Trail Design Elements**

### **Trail Crossings**

Because much of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will be in rural settings, the trail will cross several roadways. The County will use the appropriate trail crossing treatments at each such intersection in accordance with industry best standards to minimize conflicts between trail users and roadway traffic.

In all cases, Chisago County will evaluate existing roadway configurations, infrastructure elements, vegetation and other potential visual obstructions so sight lines can be maximized and maintained. Specific design considerations and trail enhancements will be addressed during the trail design development. Trail wayfinding signage, traffic signage and devices, rest stops and drainage are important elements of regional trails. Their proper design and placement add both functional and aesthetic value to a trail. The following elements can be incorporated into the trail design:

**Rest Stops** – Located about every two miles along the trail, rest stops provide users with a mid-point destination or a place to sit down and take a break. Rest stops usually include a bench, bike rack and a waste receptacle placed on a concrete pad at the edge of the trail.

**Trail Signage** – Mile markers and roadway name signs are helpful tools that can aid trail users by indicating their location. These trail signs also are helpful in emergencies because they can help describe the location of the trail user to first responders.

**Trail Maps** – The County can place maps at trailheads or rest stops that provide users information about the trail, their location and what services and amenities are nearby.

**Traffic Signage and Devices** – Traffic control signs and devices, such as stop signs, will be used to help guide trail users. Special signage can be used in locations where agricultural equipment needs to cross the trail. Such signage will help alert trail users to the potential for heavy machinery crossing the trail.

## **Route Assessment**

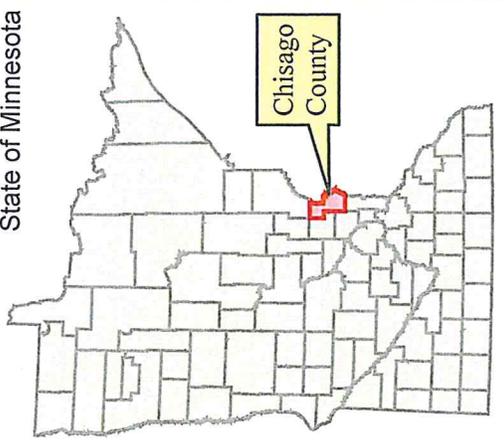
For the purposes of this Master Plan, the County has divided the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail (SIRT) into eight planning segments – progressing from west to east across southern Chisago County. This Plan describes each segment of the trail in more detail as follows:

### **Segment A**

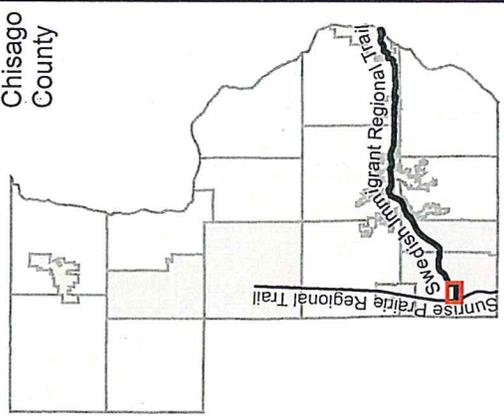
This segment of the trail is an existing eight-foot-wide, off-road bituminous bike path that is within the road right-of-way of County Road 22, and is parallel to the south side of the road. It is the west end of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail proceeding east from the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail for about one mile through the City of Wyoming.

This segment of the trail is shown on the map on the following page.

State of Minnesota



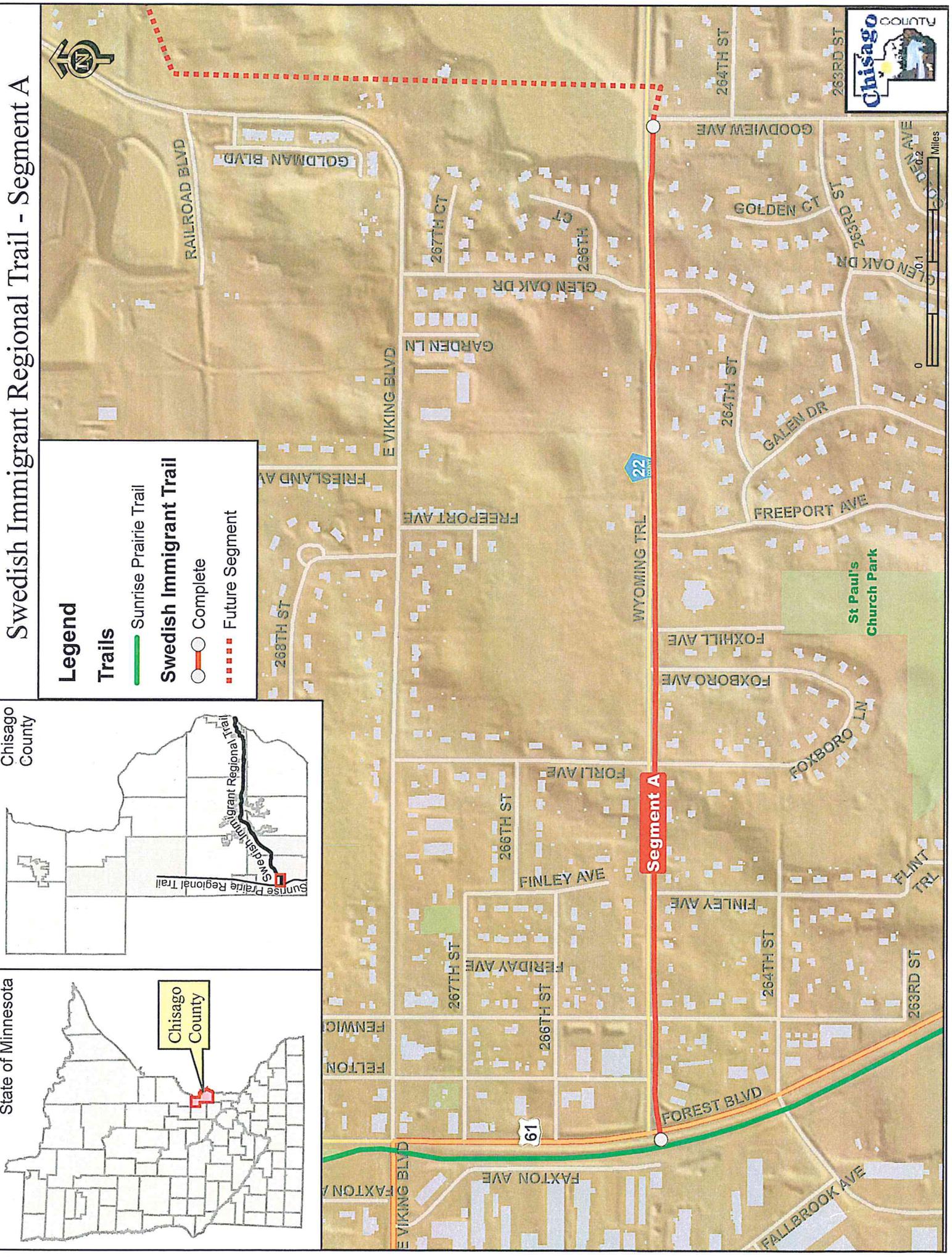
Chisago County



Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment A

Legend

- Trails**
- Sunrise Prairie Trail
  - Swedish Immigrant Trail**
- Complete**
- Future Segment**



## **Segment B**

For Segment B of the trail, the Chisago County has identified two potential corridors that the County could use for the trail. The first corridor would primarily be off-road and would be in-part on the remnants of the former railroad bed. It would include a connection to the east end of the existing trail segment along County Road 22 in Wyoming and would proceed north and east to Chisago City. This potential trail corridor would be in the general area east of the residential properties on Grand Avenue and then would proceed east south of E. Viking Boulevard to County Road 36. This part of the trail would provide scenic views as it passes through Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area and near wetlands and lakes. Chisago County has not yet determined the final alignment for this possible route of Segment B. The County is expecting the trail in this segment to be a 10-foot-wide bituminous off-road path.

The second possible corridor for Segment B would also use the County Road 22 right-of-way for the trail by proceeding east from the east end of Segment A in Wyoming to County Road 36 in Chisago City. The County has not yet determined if widening the shoulder of the road or if constructing a 10-foot-wide off-road trail (or a combination of the two) would work best for this possible section of the trail.

Both of these two possible trail corridors need more evaluation – including a review of possible environmental effects, property ownership, acquisition constraints and design considerations. The County will need to take special care in the design of these trail segments to ensure adequate protection for existing water bodies, wetlands and trail users. This part of the trail will be about six miles long – depending on the final design and route.

The following are a series of maps showing general route, topography and land uses along the two parts of Segment B of the trail. They include:

### West End – City of Wyoming

Location Map, Location Map with Parcel Data (Property Lines and Owners), Contour Map, Wetland Inventory Map, Wetlands and Hydric Soils Map, Generalized Lidar Map, Aerial Photo and 2011 Land Cover Map

### East End – Chisago City

Location Map, Location Map with Parcel Data (Property Lines and Owners), Contour Map, Wetland Inventory Map, Wetlands and Hydric Soils Map, Generalized Lidar Map, Aerial Photo and 2011 Land Cover Map

# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segments B1 & B2 - Wyoming

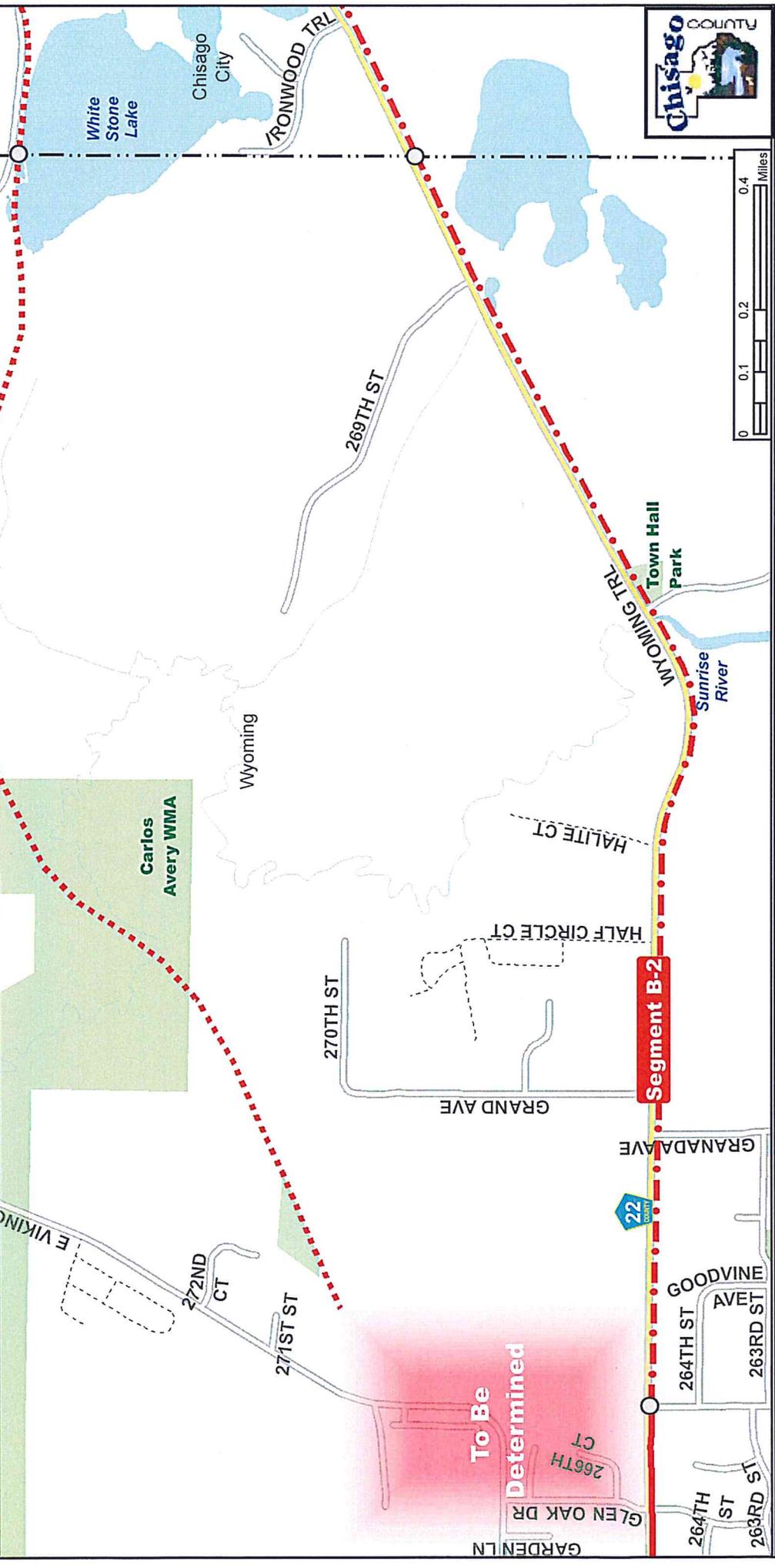
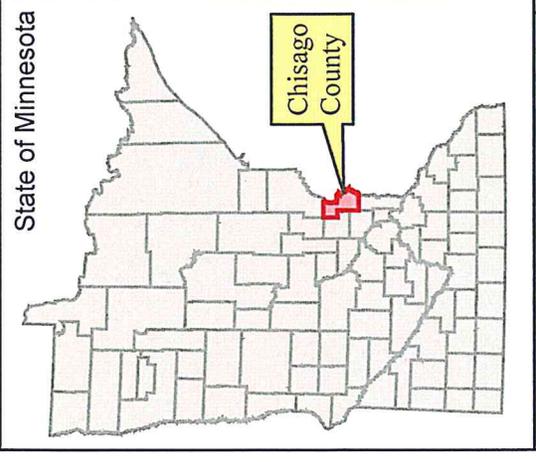
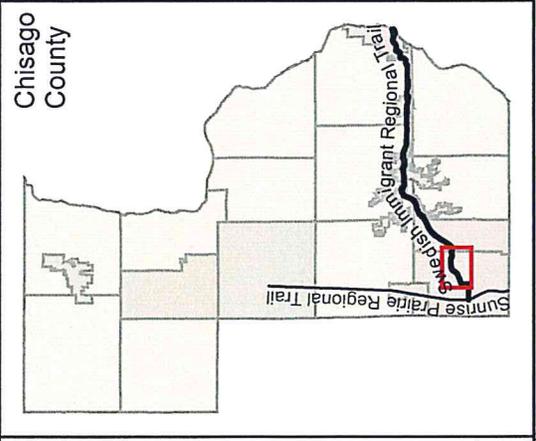


**Legend**

North

**Swedish Immigrant Trail**

- Complete
- Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)
- Segment B-1
- Segment B-2



Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segments B1 & B2 - Wyoming

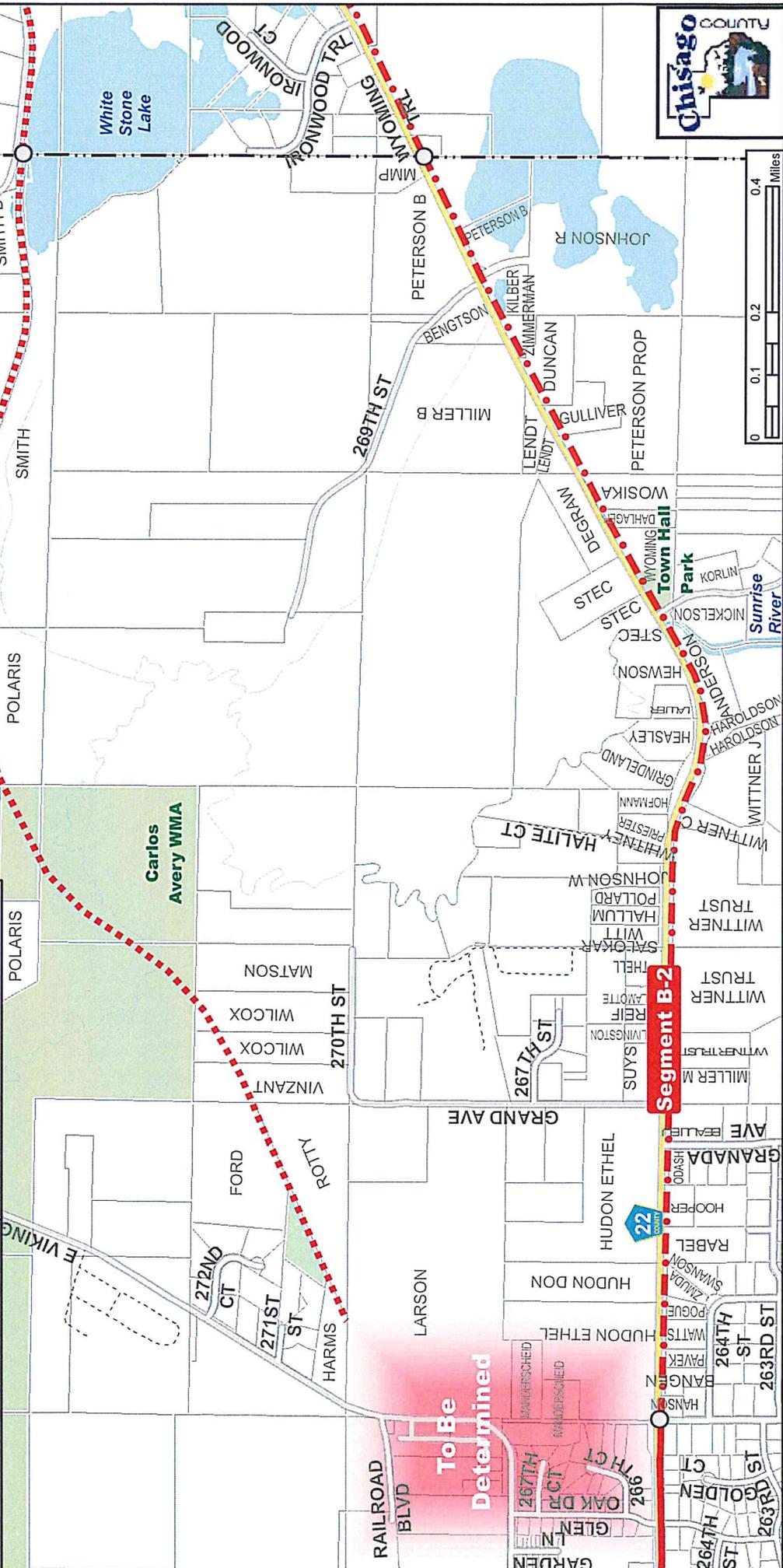
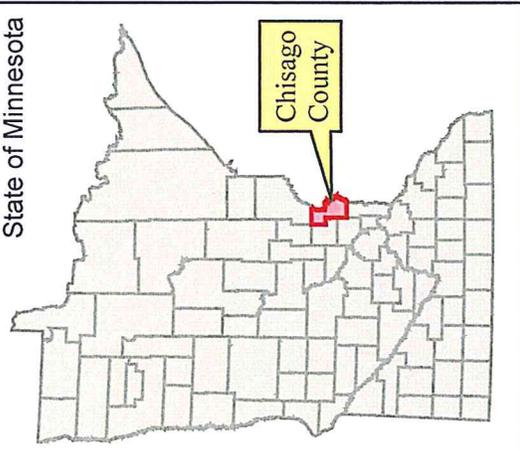
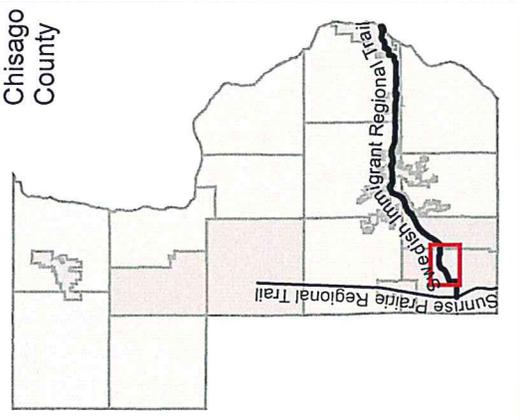


**Legend**

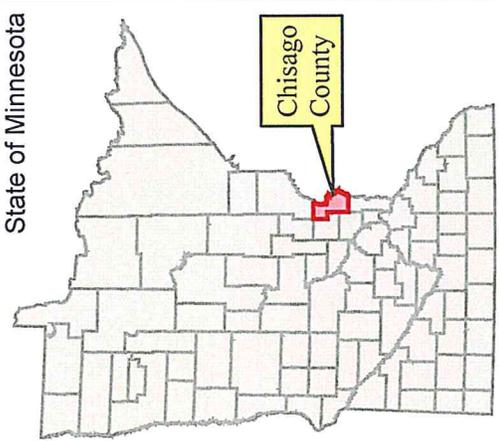
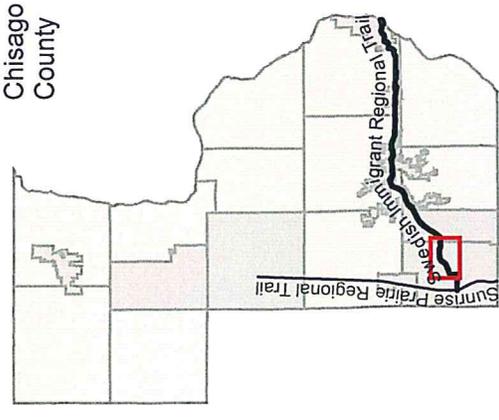
**Swedish Immigrant Trail**

- Complete
- - - Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)
- Segment B-1
- Segment B-2

with Parcel Data



# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segments B1 & B2 - Wyoming

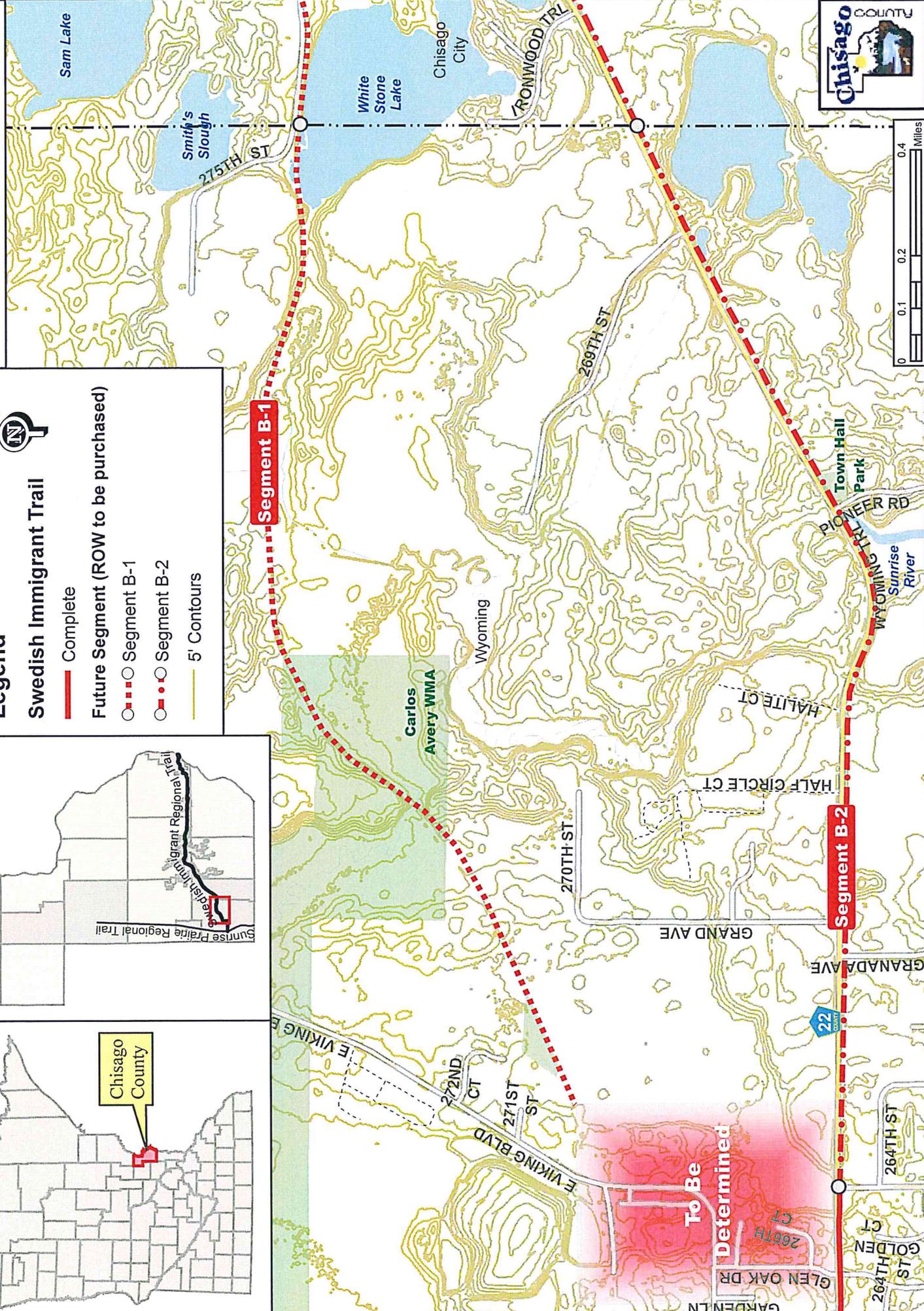


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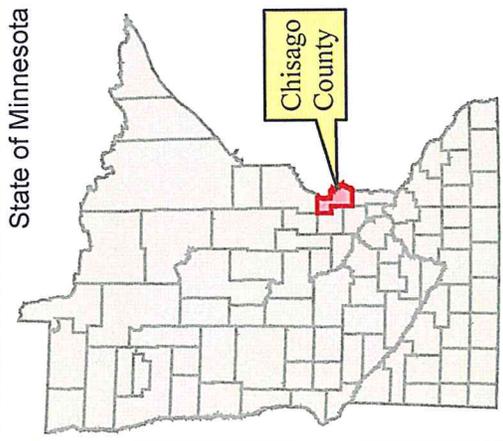
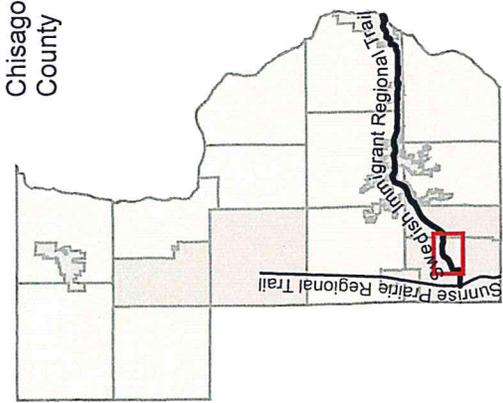
### Swedish Immigrant Trail

- Complete
- - - Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)
- Segment B-1
- Segment B-2
- 5' Contours

with 5' Contours



# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segments B1 & B2 - Wyoming

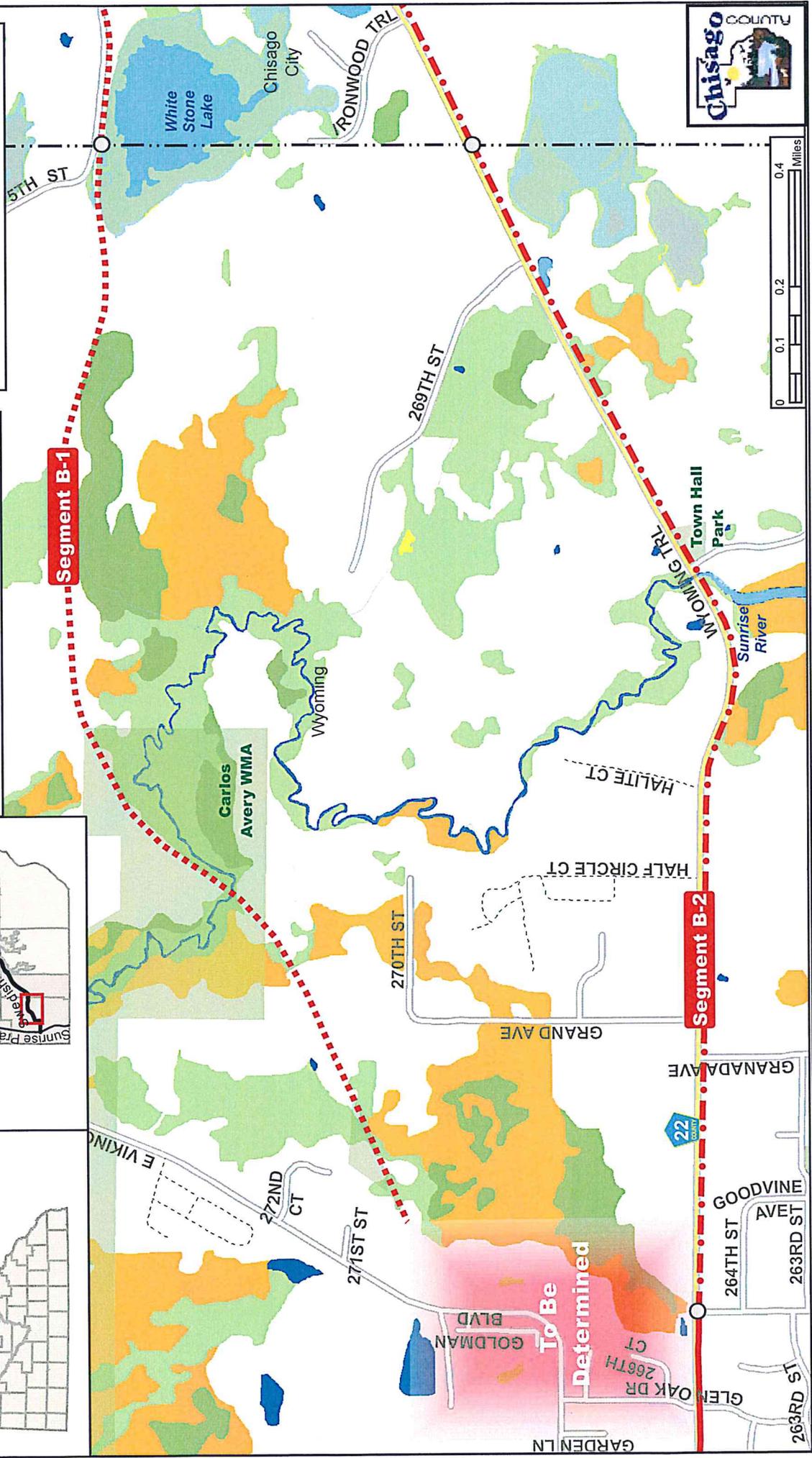


## Legend

- Swedish Immigrant Trail**
- Complete
- Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)
- Segment B-1
- Segment B-2

## with Wetlands Data

- National Wetland Inventory
- Aquatic Bed
  - Emergent Vegetation
  - Forested
  - Scrub-Scrub Forest
  - Unconsolidated Bottom (Basins & Channels)
  - Unconsolidated Shore (Banks & Sandbars)



# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segments B1 & B2 - Wyoming

with Wetlands Data with Hydric Soils

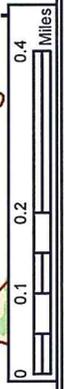
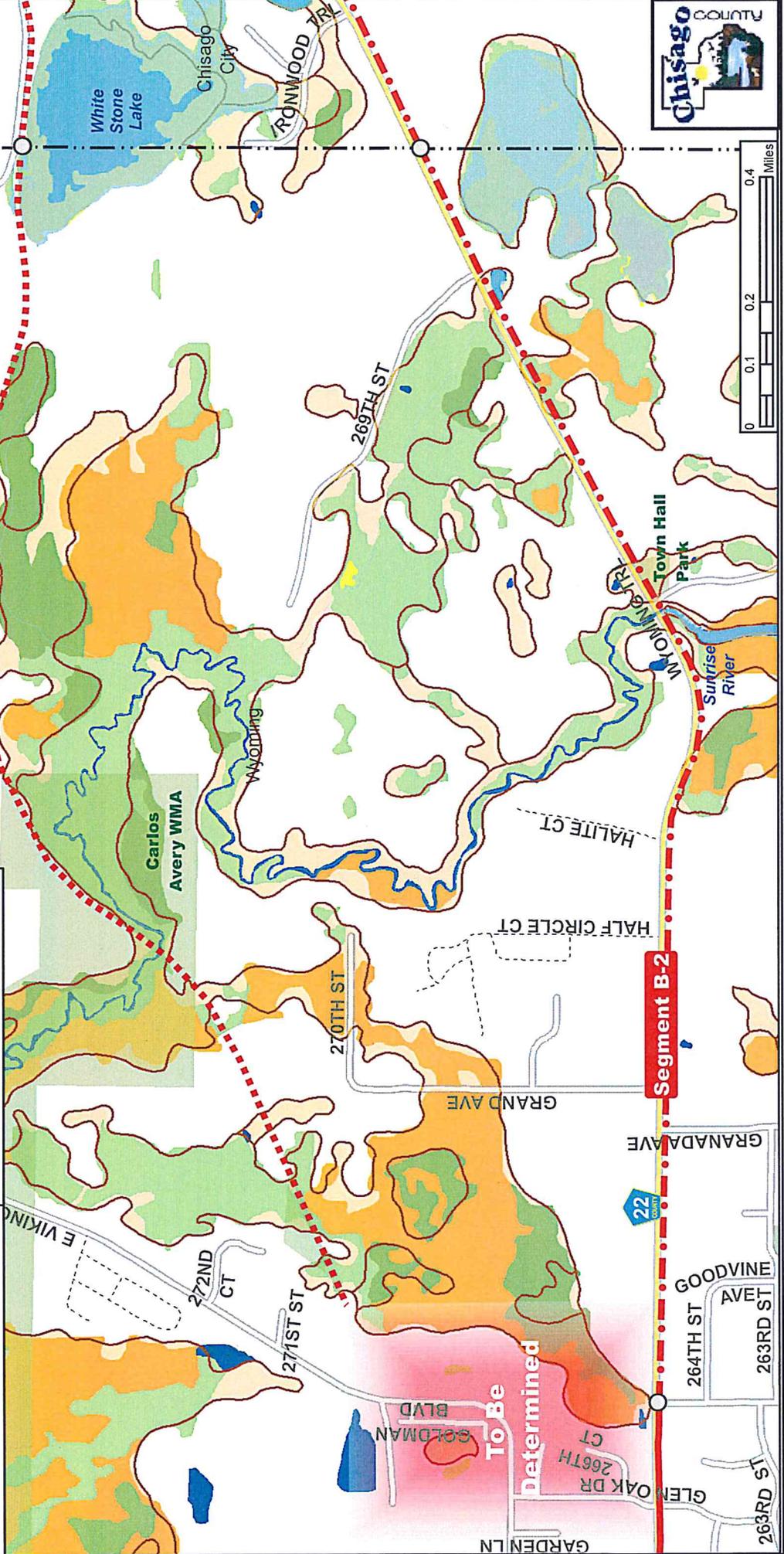
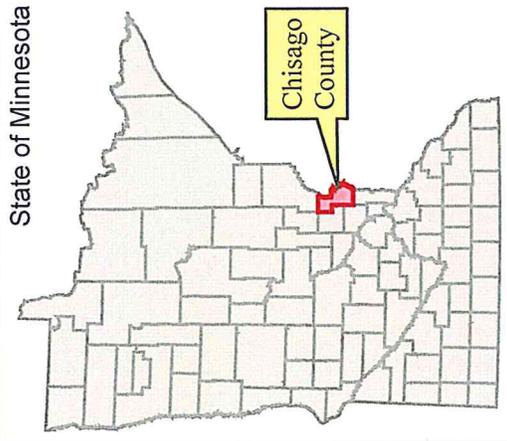
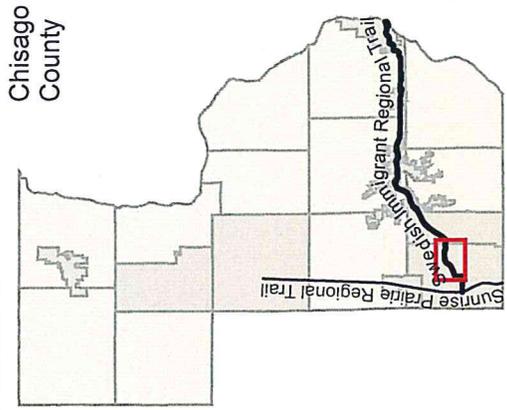


## Legend

### Swedish Immigrant Trail

- Complete
- - - Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)
- Segment B-1
- Segment B-2

- Hydric Soils
- National Wetland Inventory
- Aquatic Bed
- Emergent Vegetation
- Forested
- Scrub-Scrub Forest
- Unconsolidated Bottom (Basins & Channels)
- Unconsolidated Shore (Banks & Sandbars)



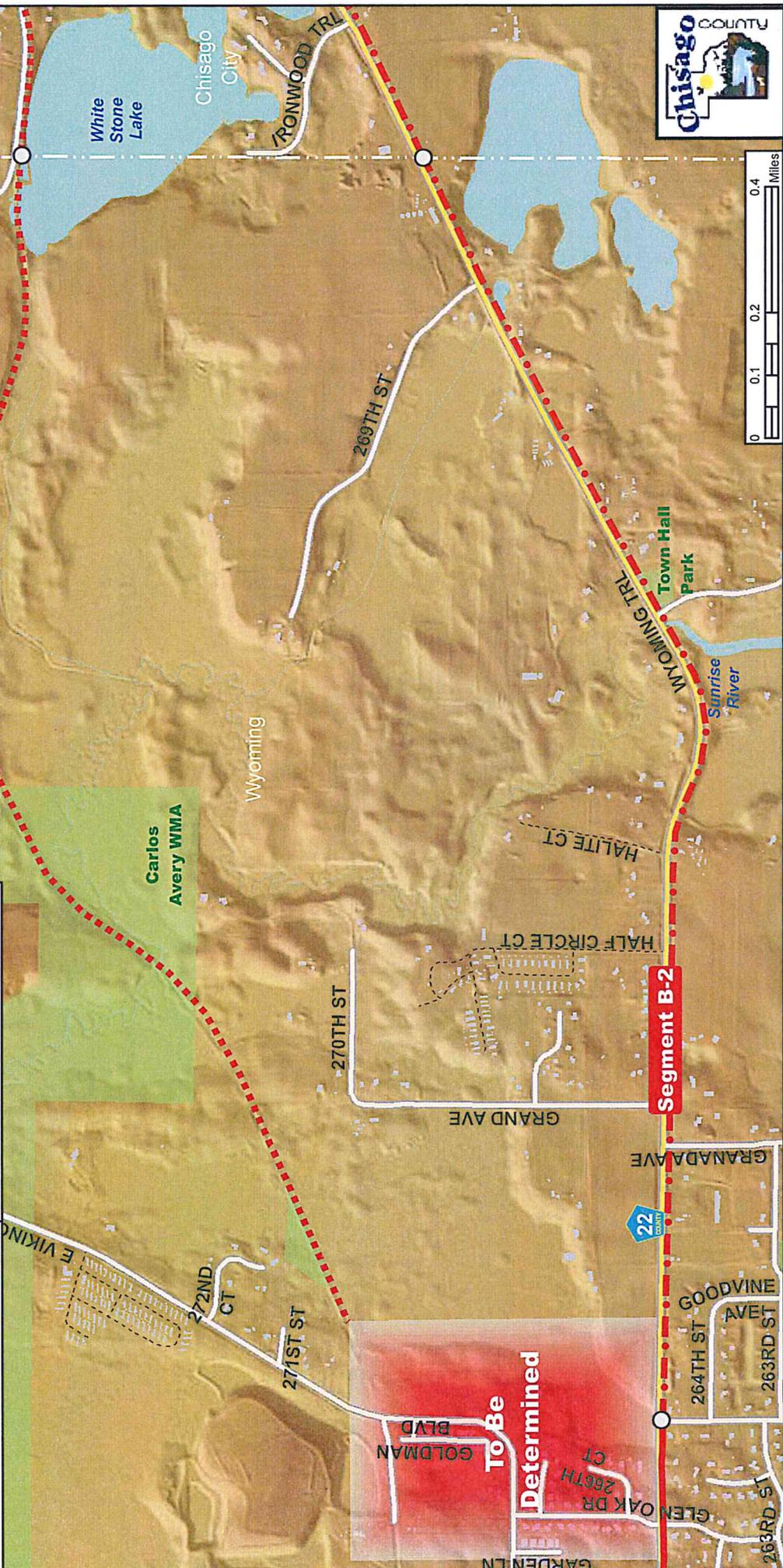
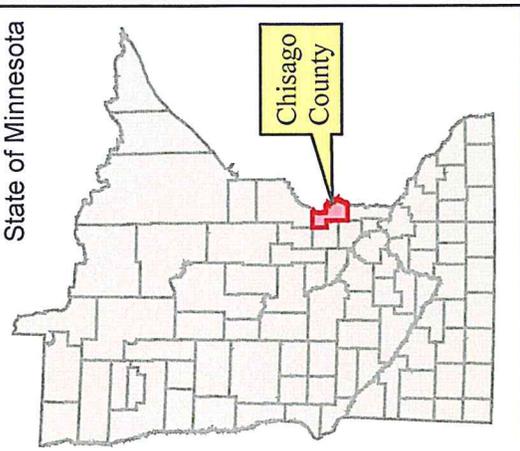
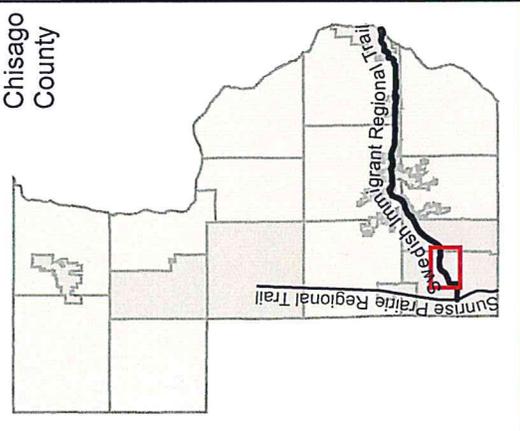
# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segments B1 & B2 - Wyoming



**Legend**

Swedish Immigrant Trail

- Complete
- Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)
- Segment B-1
- Segment B-2



Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segments B1 & B2 - Wyoming

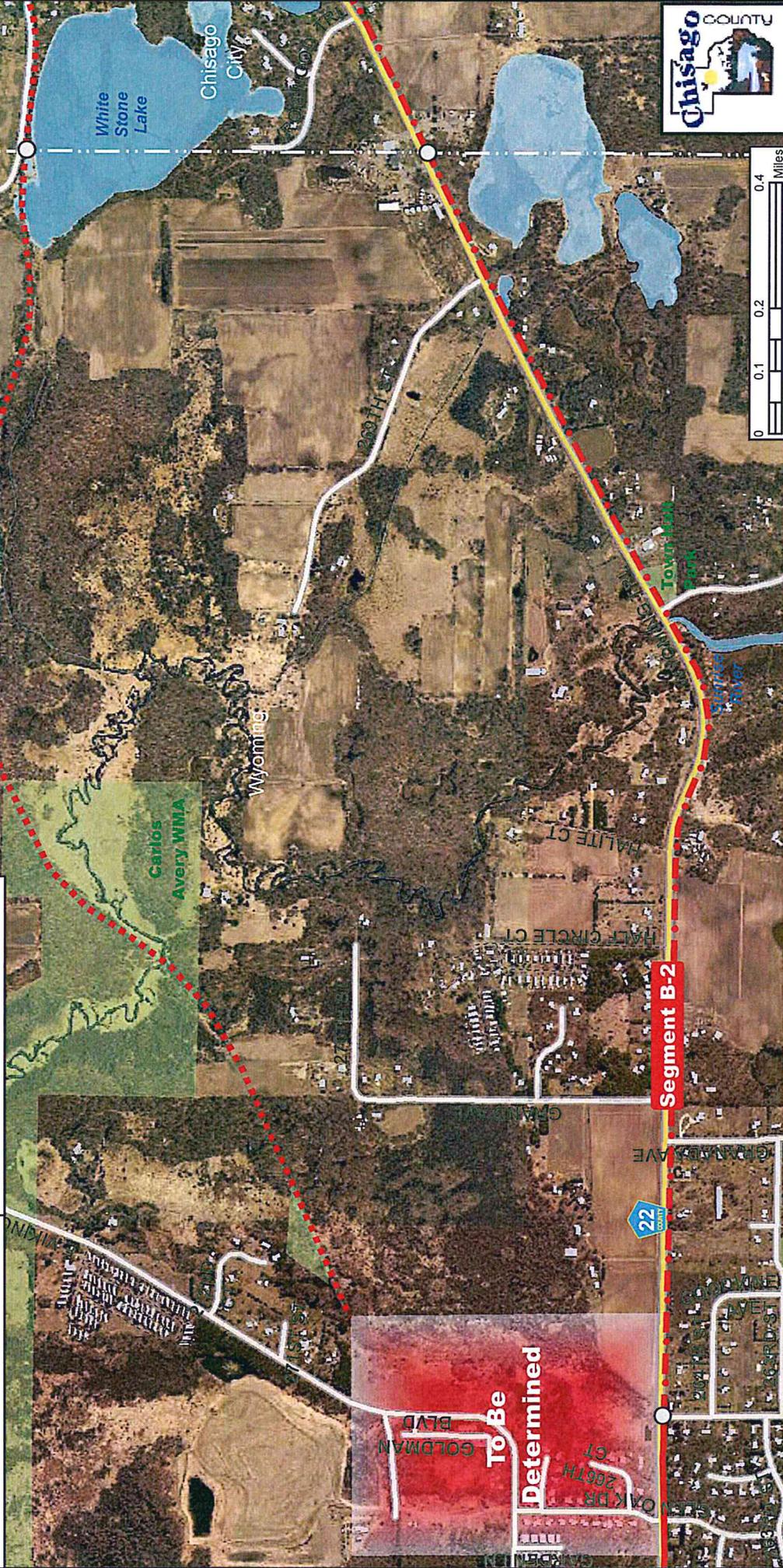
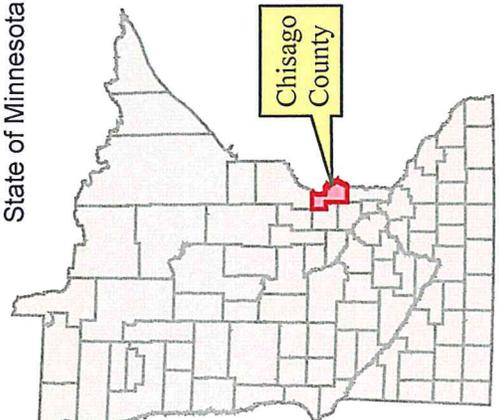
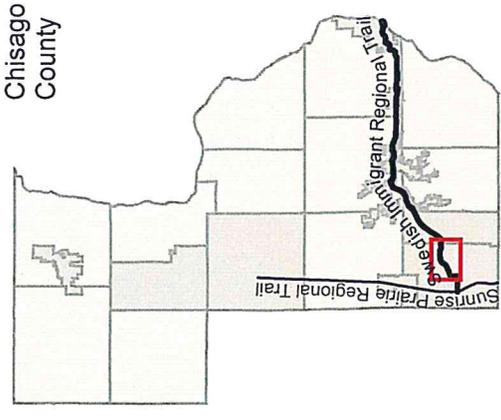
with 2013 Aerial



**Legend**

**Swedish Immigrant Trail**

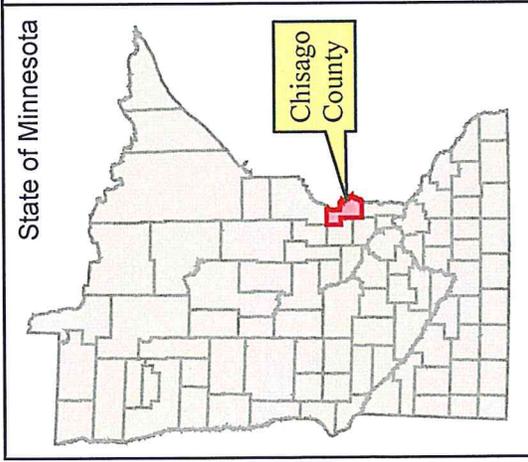
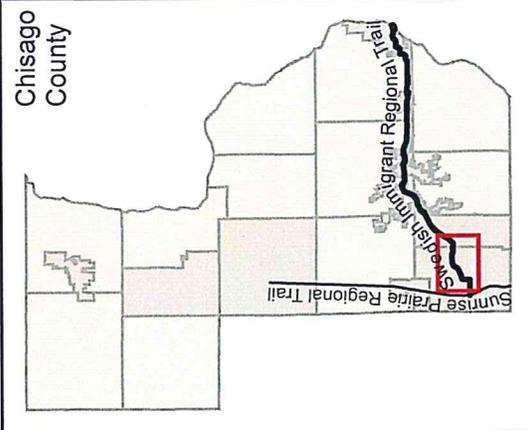
- Complete
- - - - Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)
- - - - ○ Segment B-1
- - - ○ Segment B-2



# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segments B1 & B2 - Wyoming

## with 2011 Land Cover

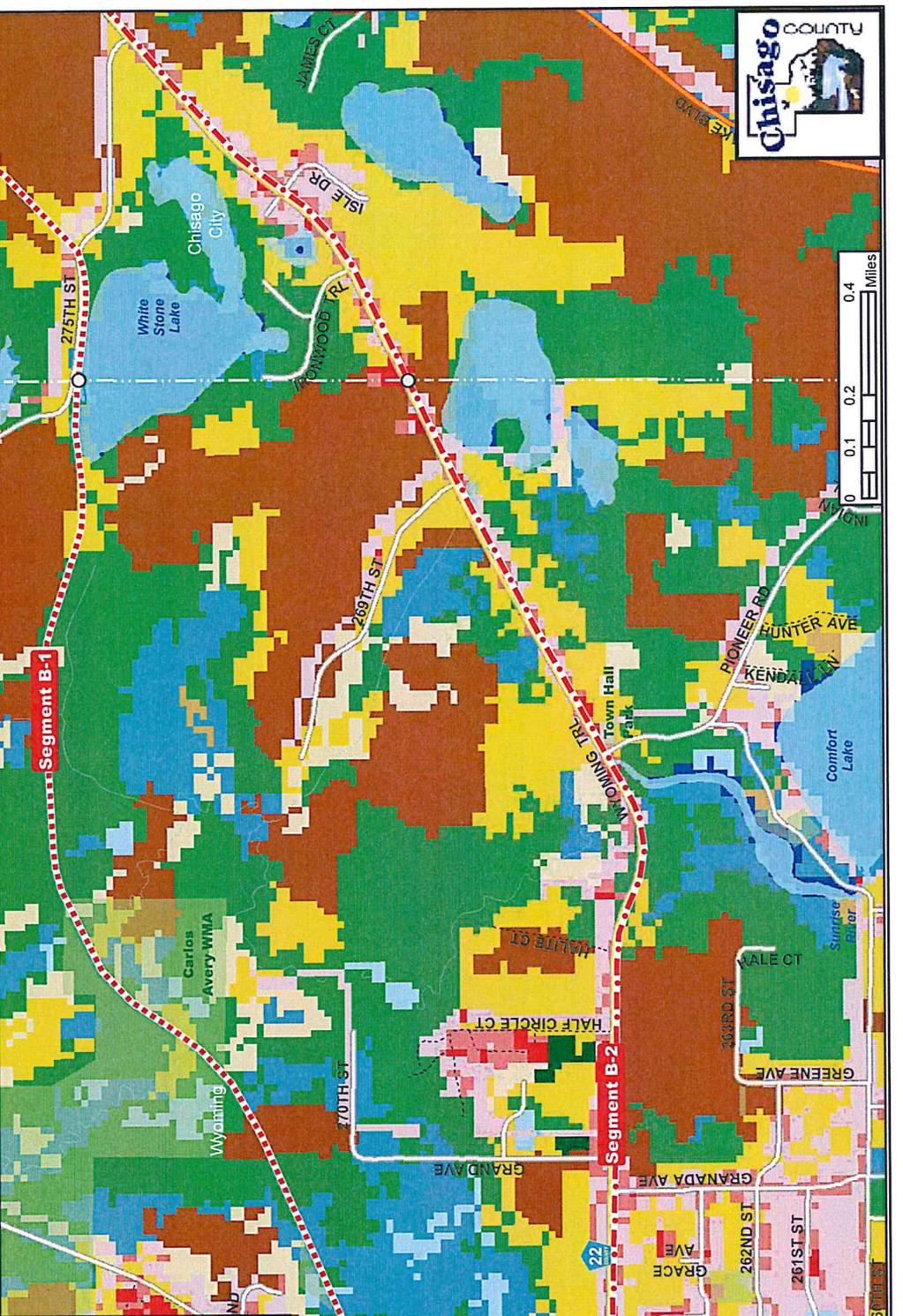
NLCD_2011	
	Woody Wetlands
	Shrub/Scrub
	Perennial Snow/ice
	Open Water
	Mixed Forest
	Hay/Pasture
	Grasslands/Herbaceous
	Evergreen Forest
	Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands
	Developed, Open Space
	Developed, Medium Intensity
	Developed, Low Intensity
	Developed, High Intensity
	Deciduous Forest
	Cultivated Crops
	Barren Land



**Legend**

Swedish Immigrant Trail

- Complete
- Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)
- Segment B-1
- Segment B-2





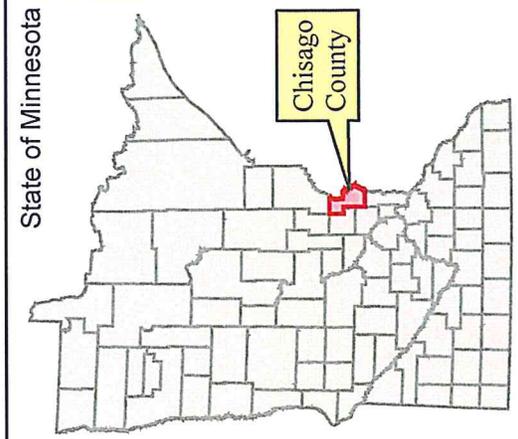
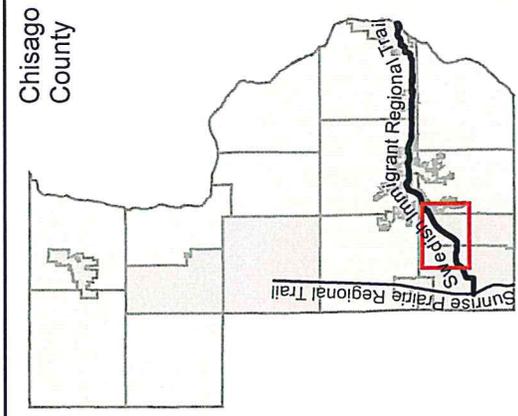
Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segments B1 & B2 -  
with Parcel Data

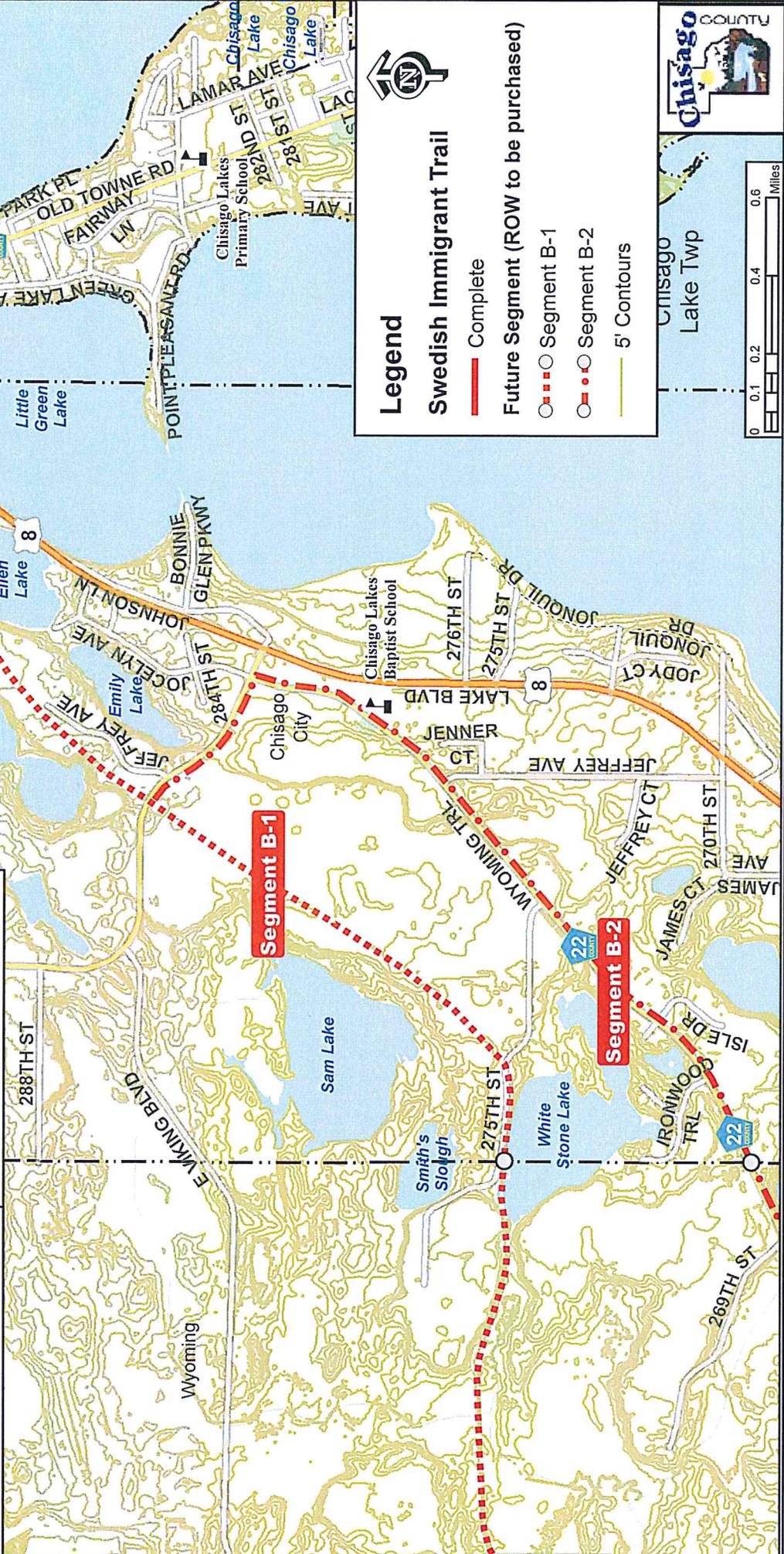
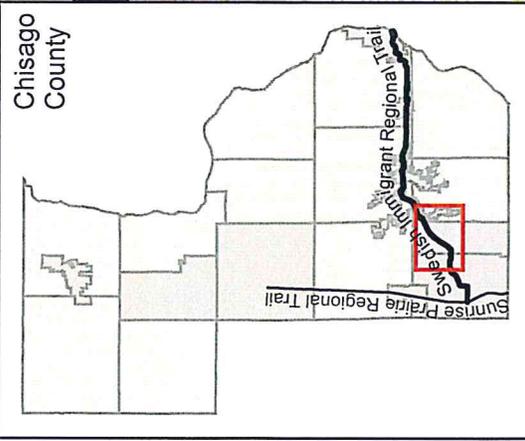
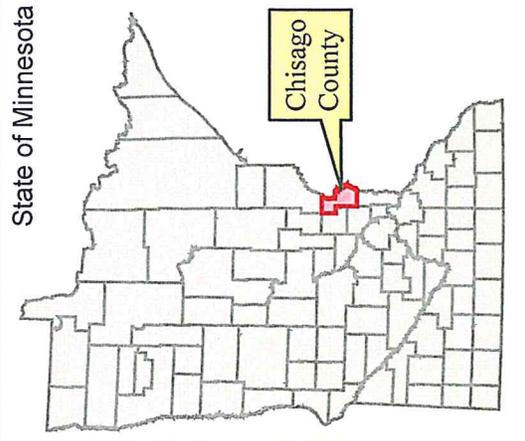


**Legend**

Swedish Immigrant Trail

- Complete
- - - Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)
- Segment B-1
- Segment B-2





**Legend**

- Swedish Immigrant Trail
  - Complete
- Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)
  - Segment B-1
  - Segment B-2
- 5' Contours

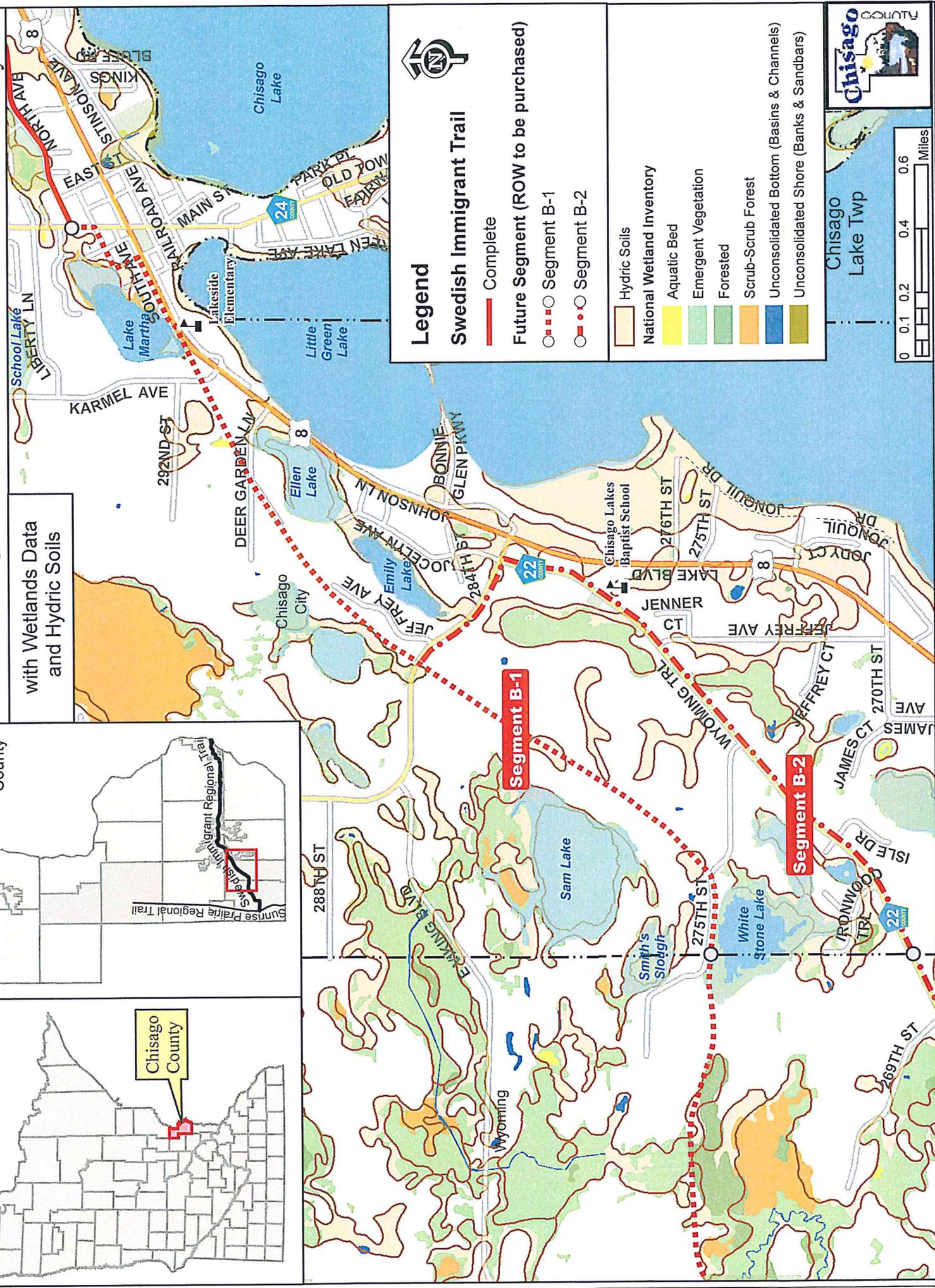
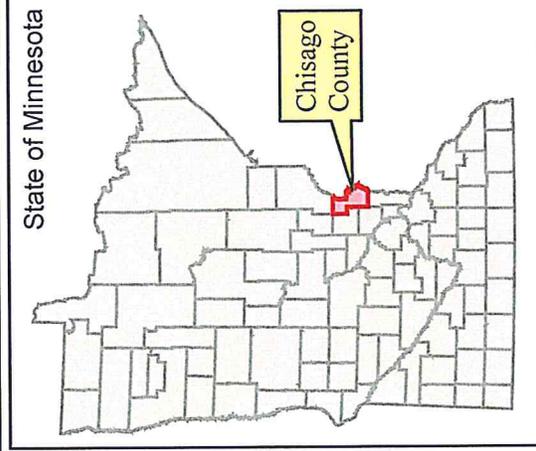
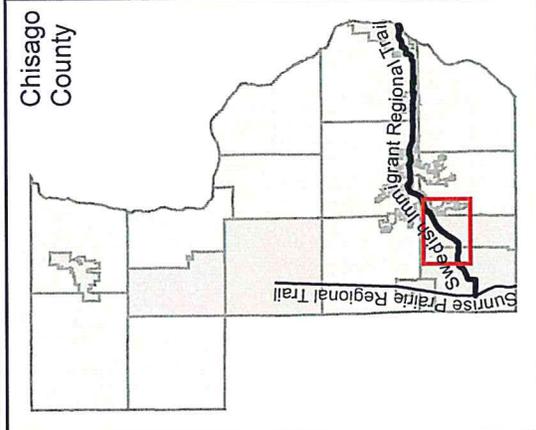
Chisago Lake Twsp

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 Miles



# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segments B1 & B2 - Chisago City

with Wetlands Data and Hydric Soils



## Legend

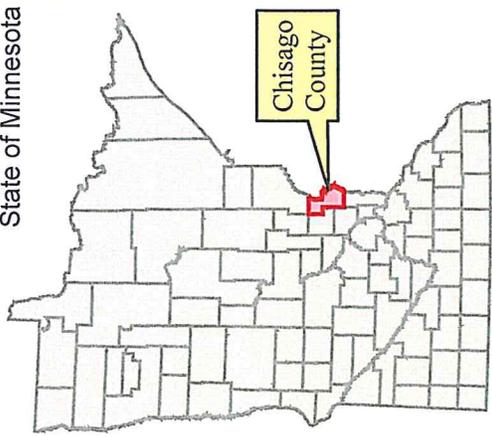
### Swedish Immigrant Trail

- Complete
- Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)
- Segment B-1
- Segment B-2

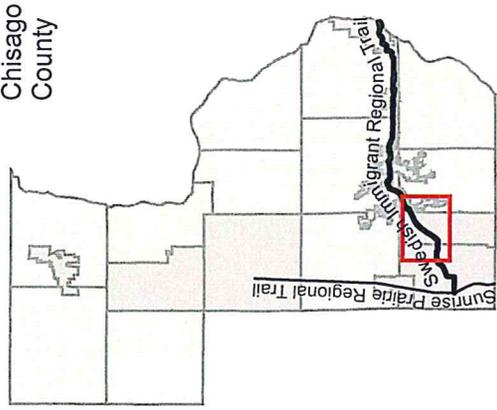
- Hydric Soils
- National Wetland Inventory
- Aquatic Bed
- Emergent Vegetation
- Forested
- Scrub-Scrub Forest
- Unconsolidated Bottom (Basins & Channels)
- Unconsolidated Shore (Banks & Sandbars)



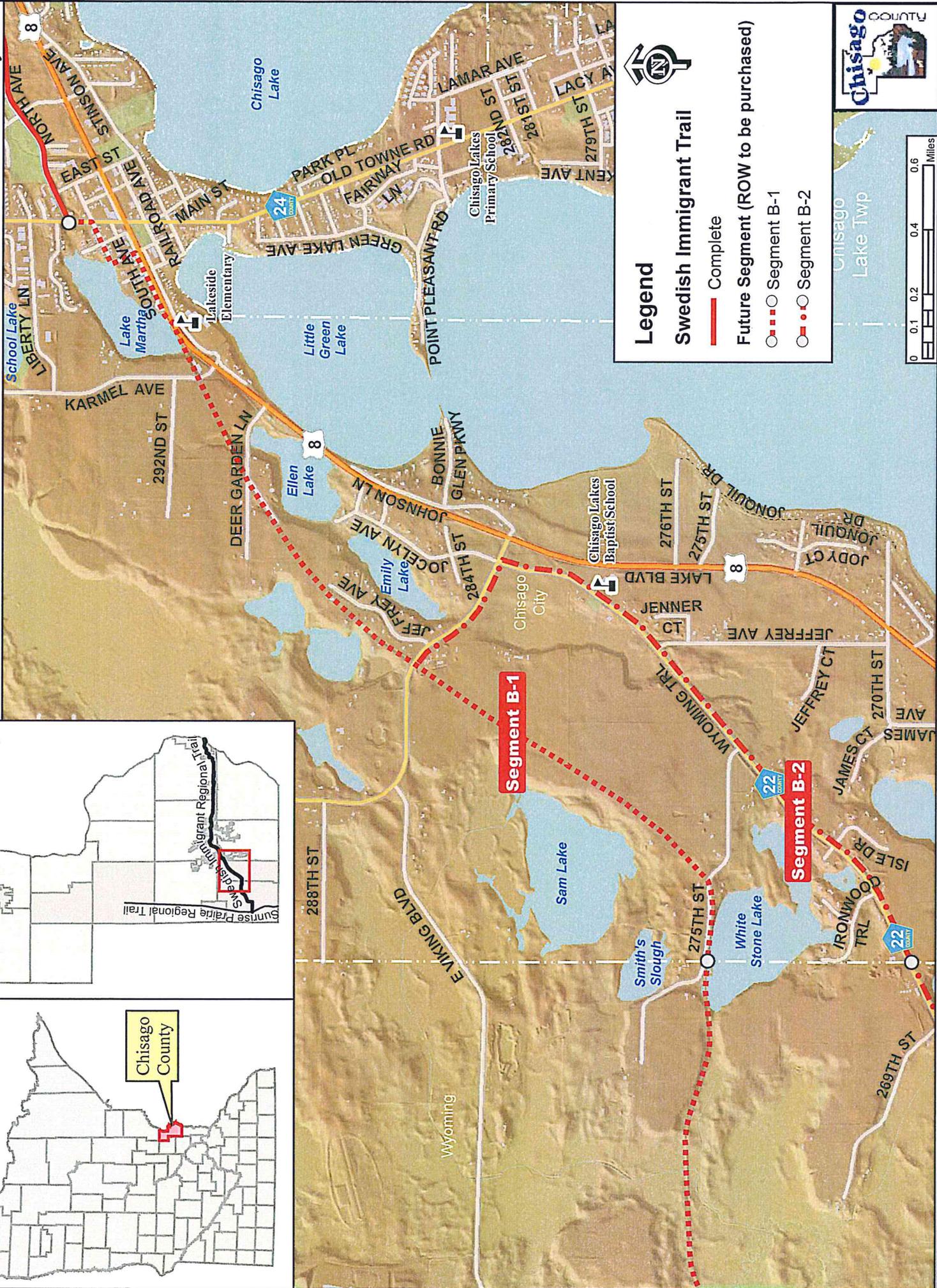
State of Minnesota



Chisago County



Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segments B1 & B2 - Chisago City



**Legend**

**Swedish Immigrant Trail**

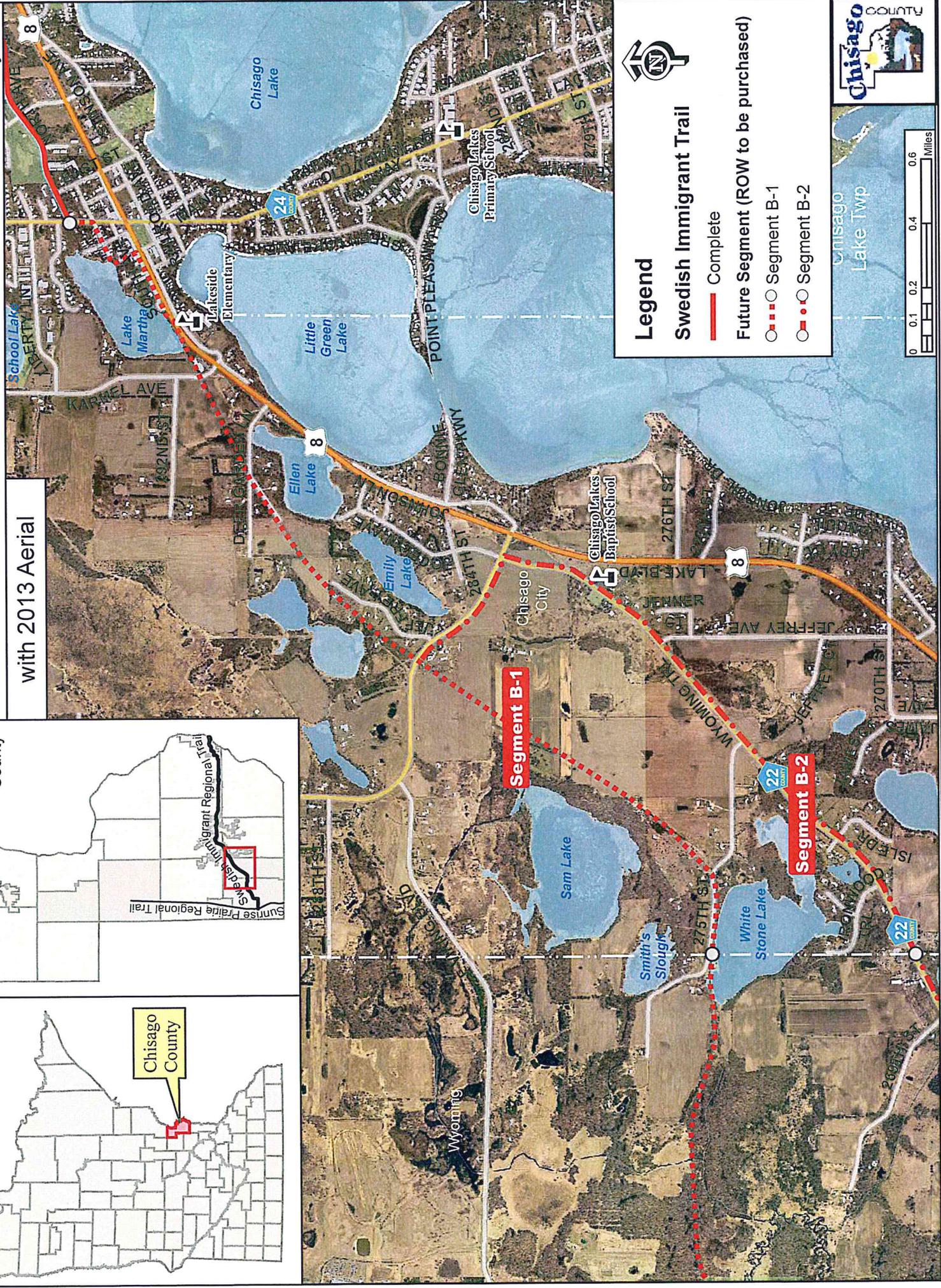
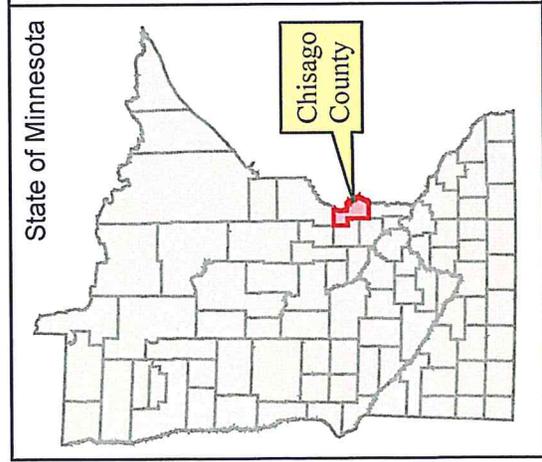
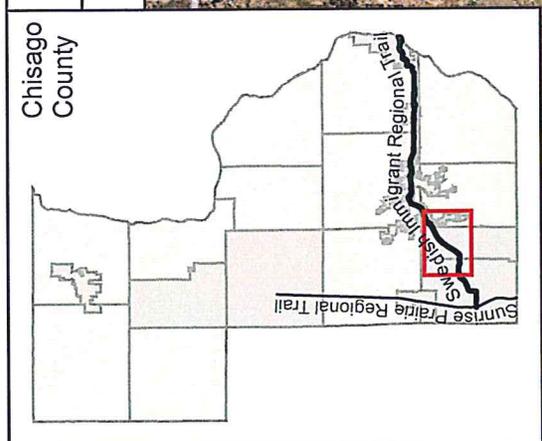
- Complete
- - - Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)
- Segment B-1
- Segment B-2

Chisago County

Scale: 0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 Miles

# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segments B1 & B2 - Chisago City

with 2013 Aerial



**Legend**

**Swedish Immigrant Trail**

- Complete
- Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)
  - Segment B-1
  - Segment B-2

Chisago COUNTY

Chisago Lake Twp

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 Miles

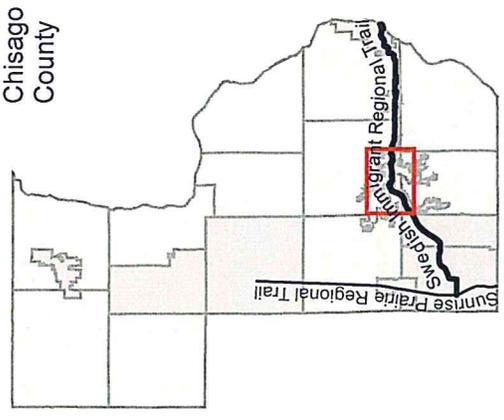
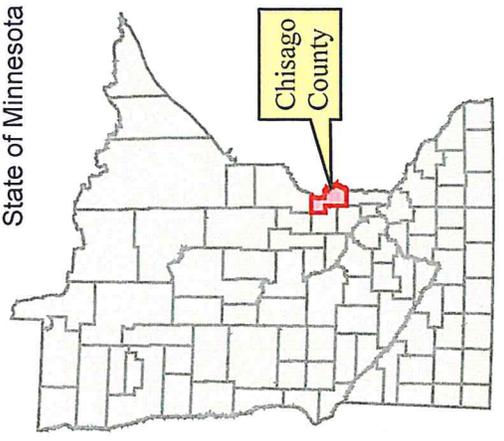


### **Segment C**

This segment of the trail runs through Chisago City and Lindstrom. It consists of a mix of eight-foot-wide, striped, on-road bicycle lanes, along with 10-foot-wide, off-road trails and sidewalks as the trail proceeds through the two cities. Chisago City built part of this trail in 2004 and subsequently a large part of this segment of the trail was completed in 2011-2012 as part of improvements to U.S. Highway 8 in Chisago City and Lindstrom. This segment is currently the longest completed part of the trail with a length of about 4.2 miles.

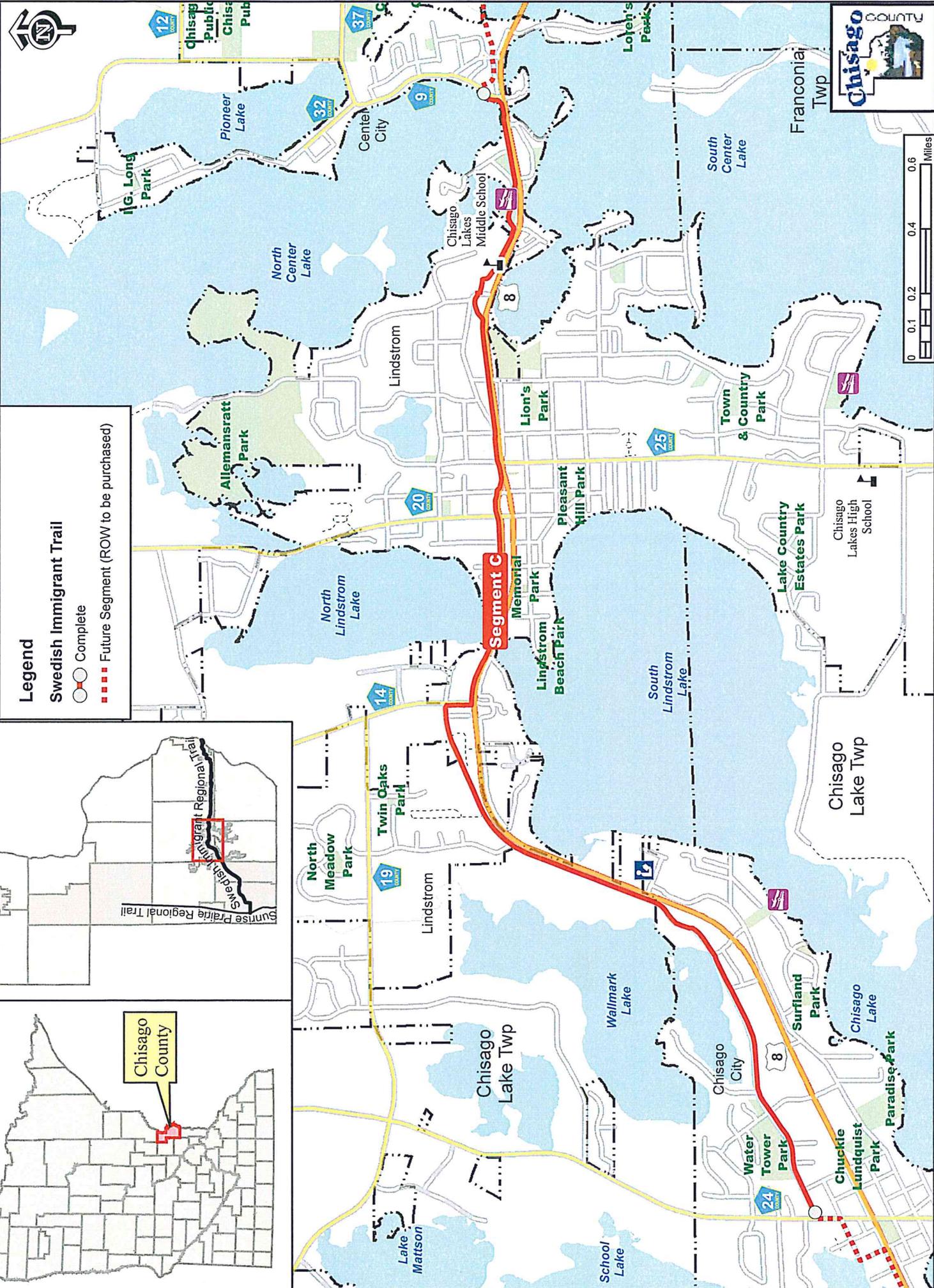
The following three maps (Location with Parcel Data, Generalized Lidar and Aerial Photo) show this segment of the trail.

# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment C



**Legend**

- Swedish Immigrant Trail
- Complete
- Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)







## Segment D

Segment D of the trail runs from Center City to Quandam Lane on the western border of Shafer. The trail in this segment is expected to be a 10-foot-wide, bituminous off-road trail that will generally follow the former railroad bed and will be about 2.1 miles in length. The land uses and land types abutting this segment of the trail include urban and developed properties in Center City, agricultural lands (hay/pasture and cultivated crops), wetlands and small pockets of deciduous forest in the area east of Center City. A preliminary analysis of the likely trail corridor by County staff has not identified any environmental or ecological constraints that would hinder the construction of this part of the trail. Before final design and construction, this part of the trail will require more in depth analysis – including a review of possible environmental effects, wetland delineation, property ownership and acquisition constraints and design considerations. The County will take special care in the design of this segment of the trail to ensure adequate protection for existing water bodies, wetlands and trail users.

Chisago County still needs to acquire the necessary 50-100-foot-wide right-of-way for this segment of the trail. The County has identified five property owners that Chisago County will need to work with to purchase parts of their properties for this segment of the trail.

The series of maps on the following pages show this segment of the trail. They include:

Location Map

Location Map with Parcel Data (Property Lines and Owners)

Contour Map

Wetland Inventory Map

Wetlands and Hydric Soils Map

Generalized LIDAR Map

Aerial Photo

2011 Land Cover Map

The aerial photo that is included after the maps for this segment of the trail is looking west toward Center City along the likely trail corridor. It depicts US Highway 8 on the left and the former railroad corridor in the center of the photograph.

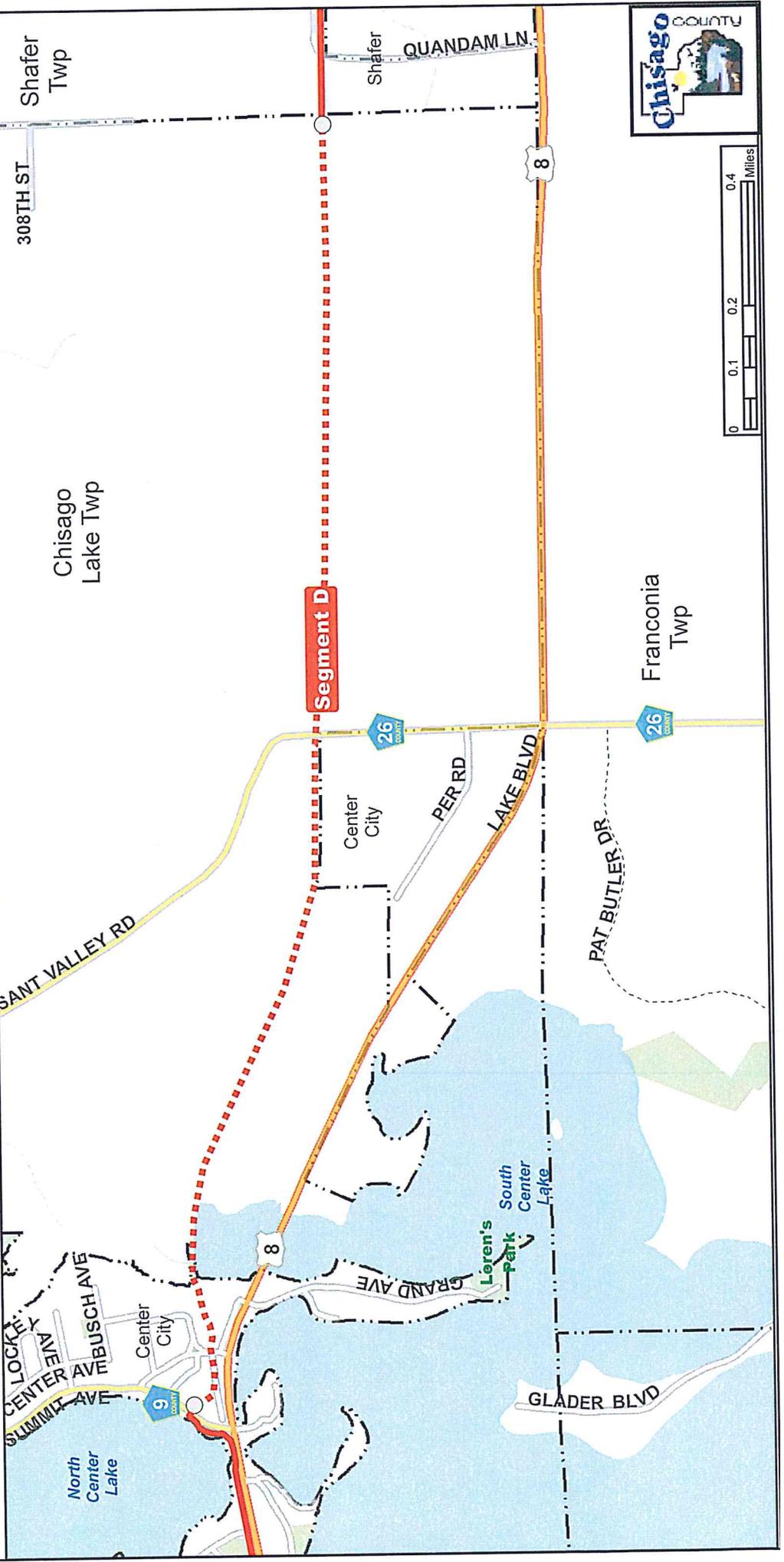
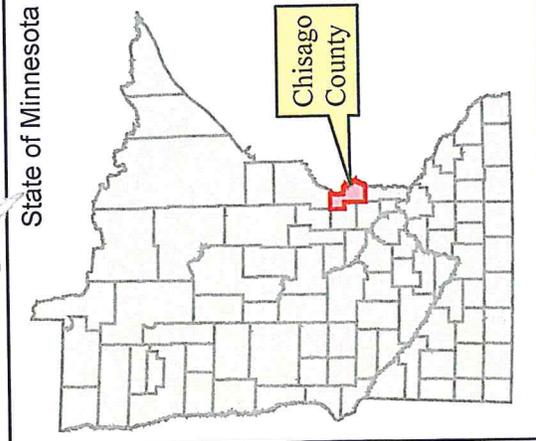
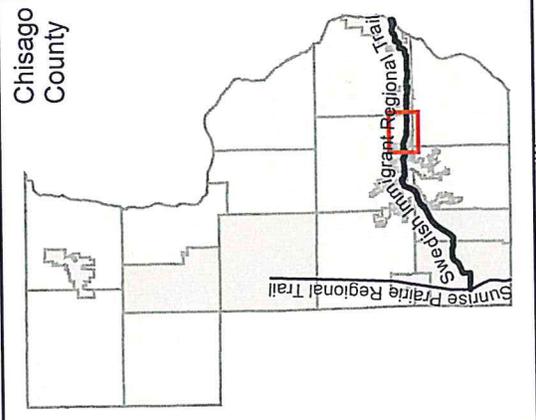
# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment D



## Legend

### Swedish Immigrant Trail

- Complete
- - - Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)

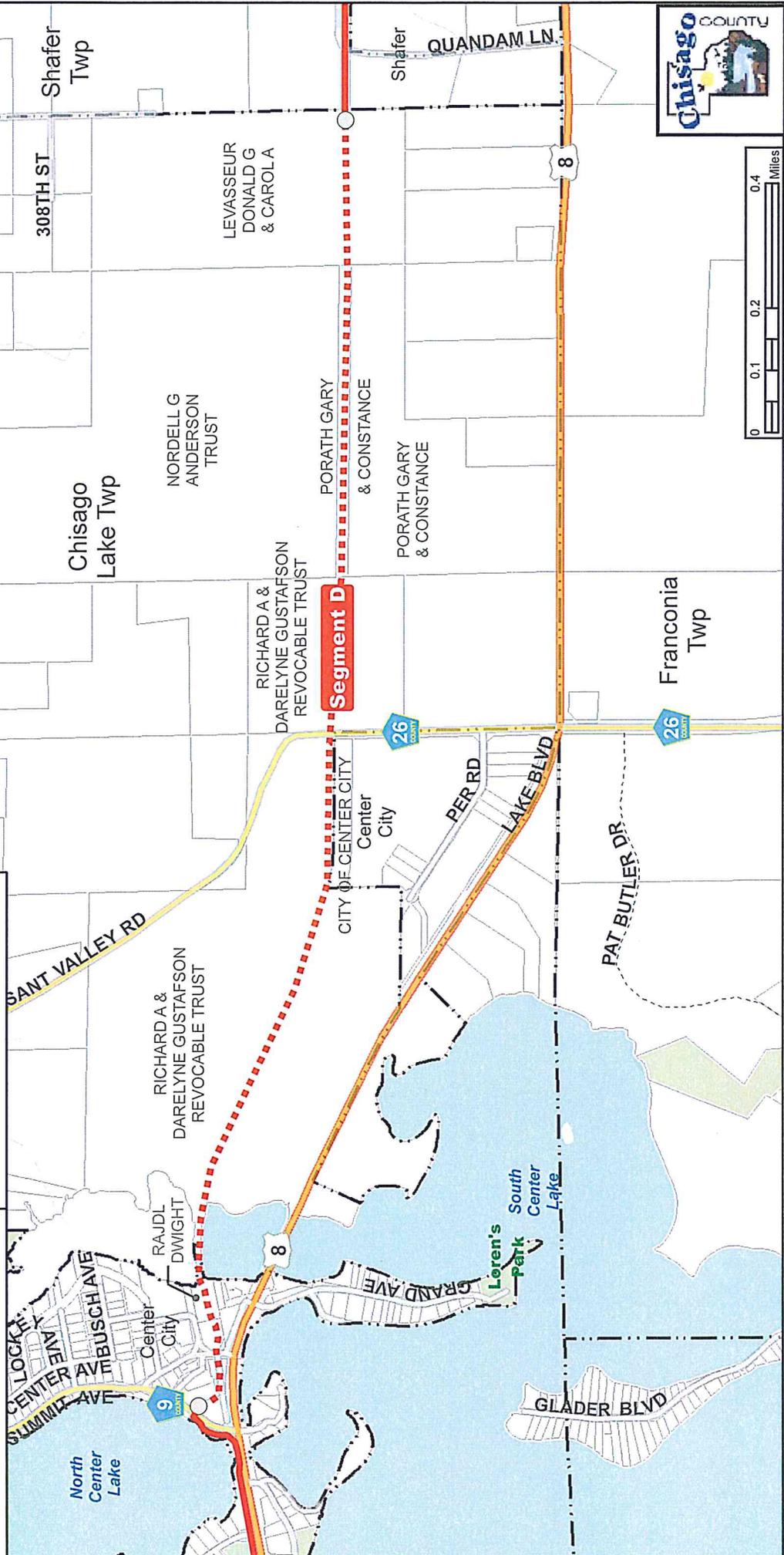
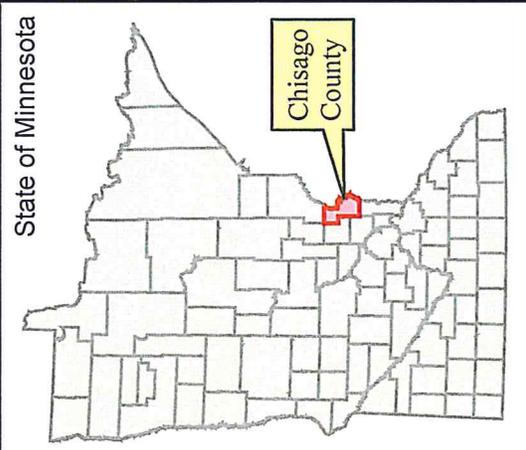
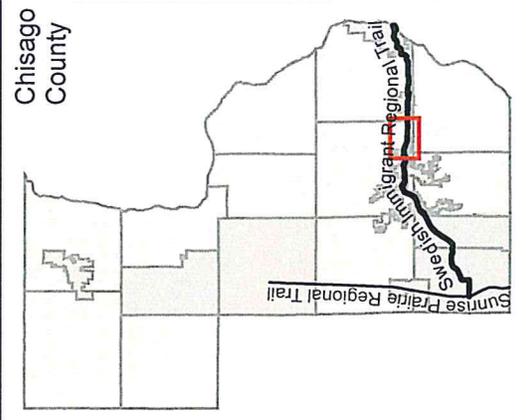


# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment D with Parcel Data

**Legend**

Swedish Immigrant Trail

- Complete
- - - Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)

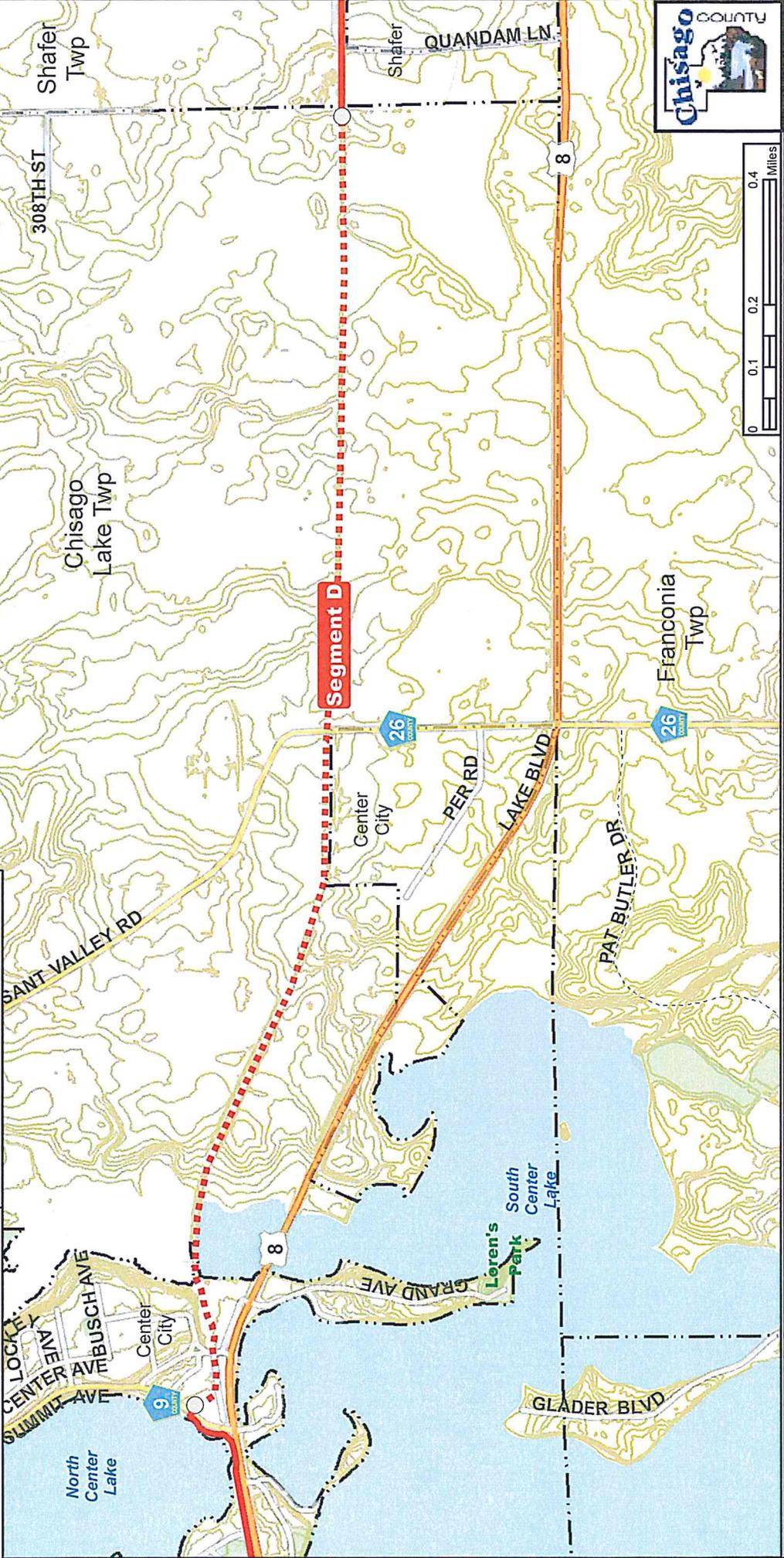
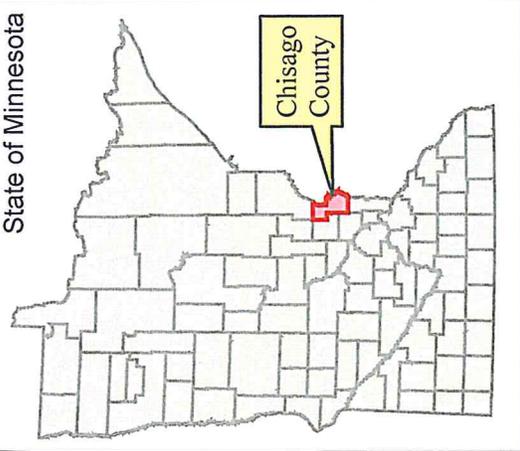
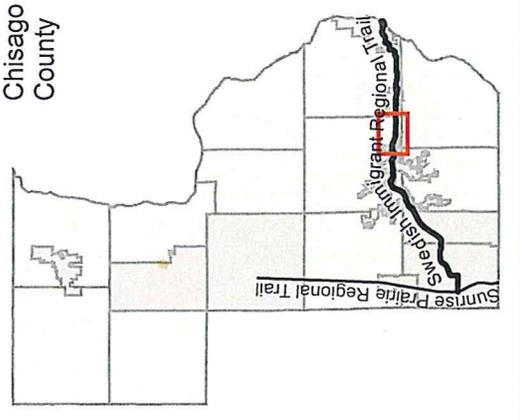


Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment D with 5' Contours

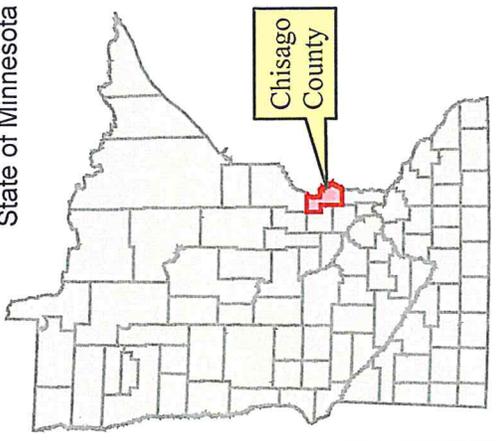


**Legend**

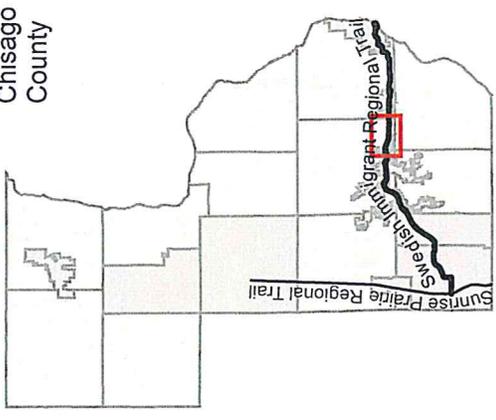
- Swedish Immigrant Trail**
- Complete
- Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)
- 5' Contours



State of Minnesota



Chisago County

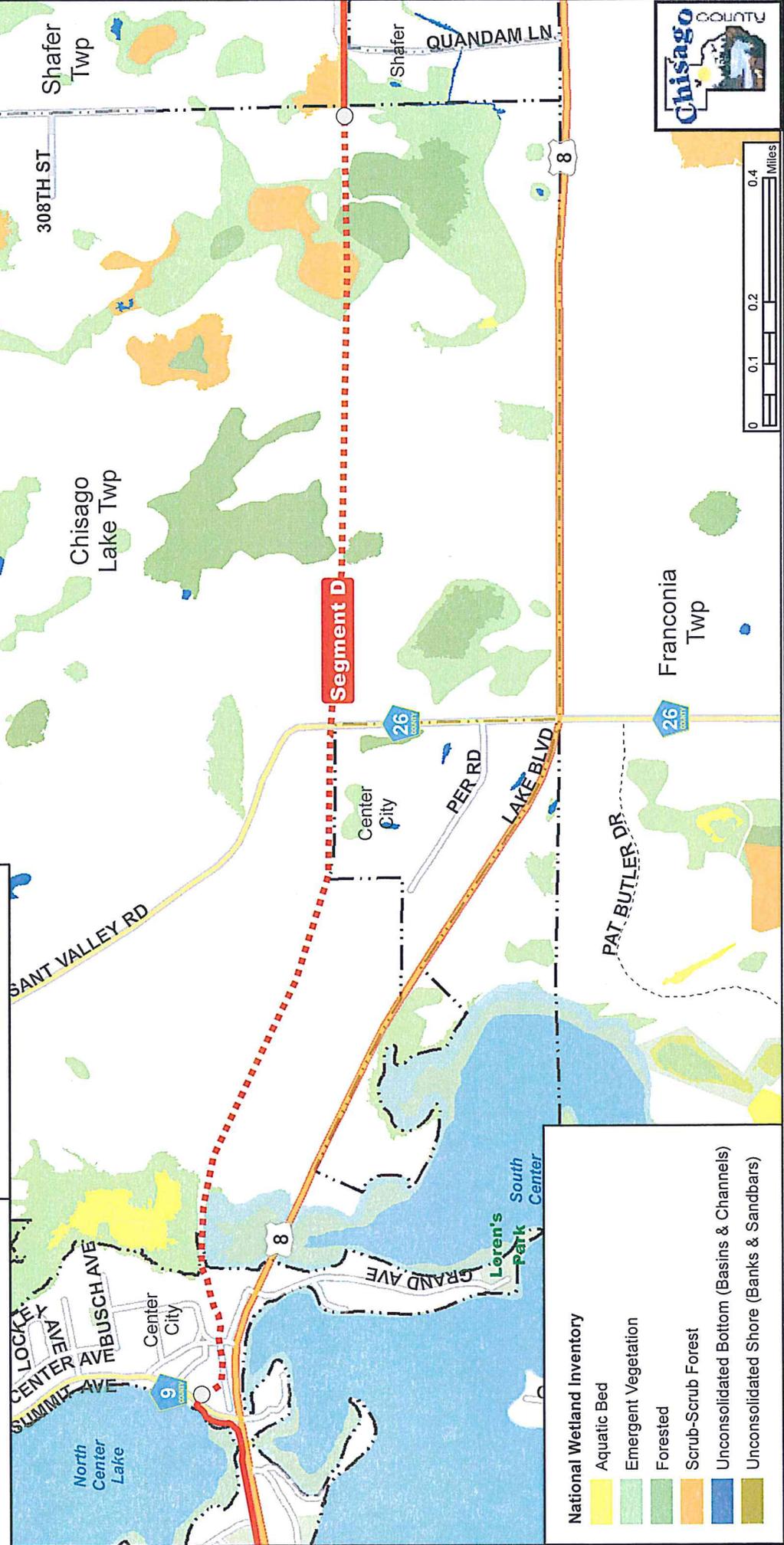


Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment D with Wetlands Data

**Legend**

**Swedish Immigrant Trail**

- Complete
- Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)

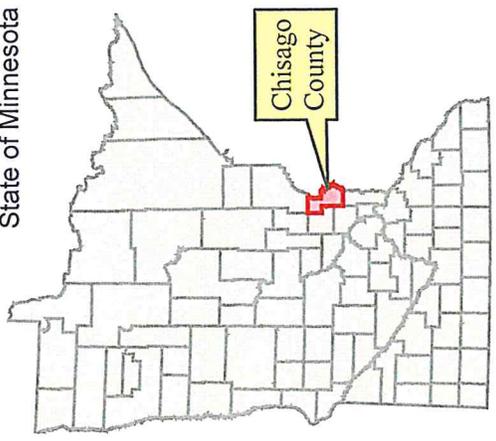


**National Wetland Inventory**

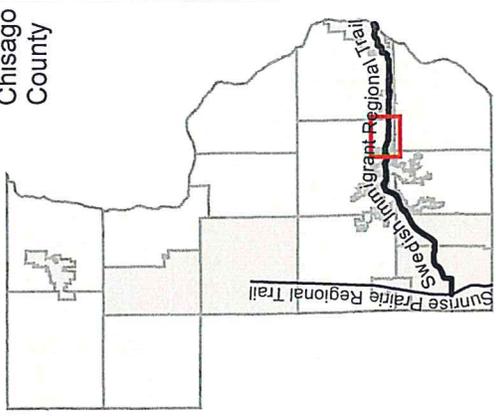
- Aquatic Bed
- Emergent Vegetation
- Forested
- Scrub-Scrub Forest
- Unconsolidated Bottom (Basins & Channels)
- Unconsolidated Shore (Banks & Sandbars)



State of Minnesota



Chisago County



Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment D

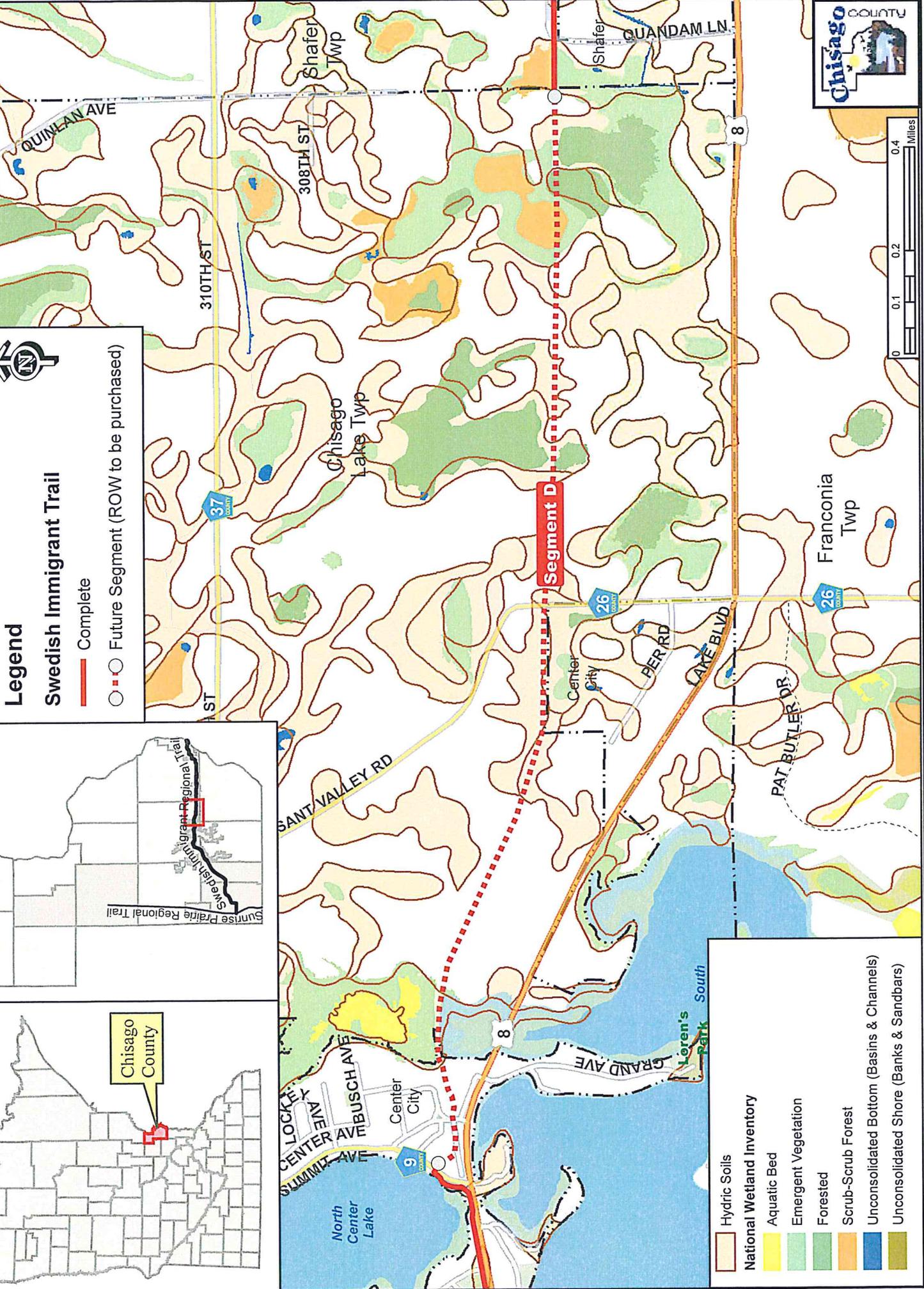
**Legend**

North

**Swedish Immigrant Trail**

- Complete
- Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)

with Wetlands Data and Hydric Soils



**National Wetland Inventory**

- Hydric Soils
- Aquatic Bed
- Emergent Vegetation
- Forested
- Scrub-Scrub Forest
- Unconsolidated Bottom (Basins & Channels)
- Unconsolidated Shore (Banks & Sandbars)

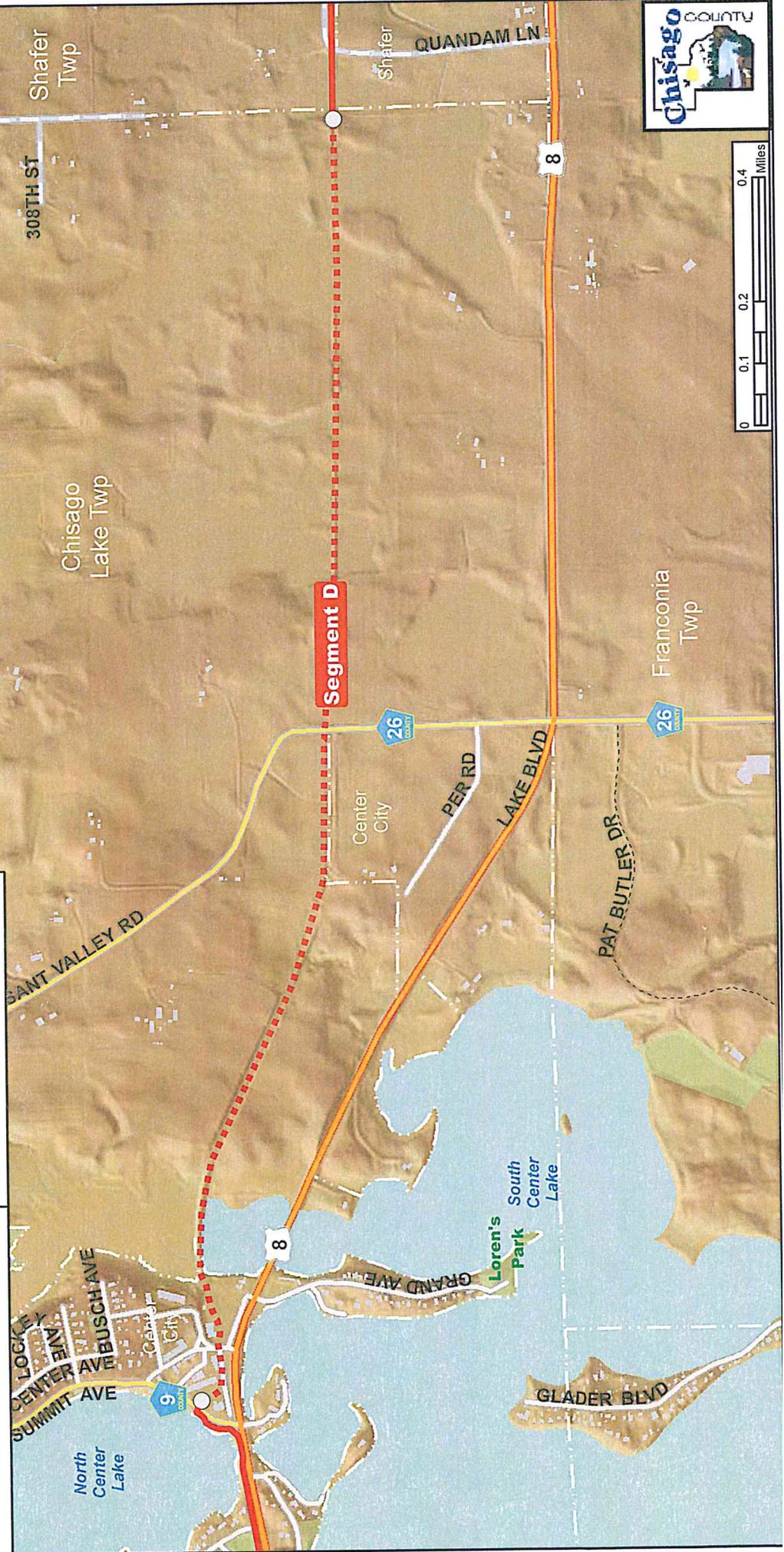
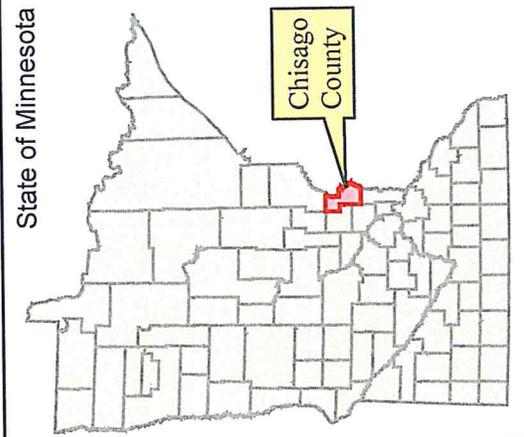
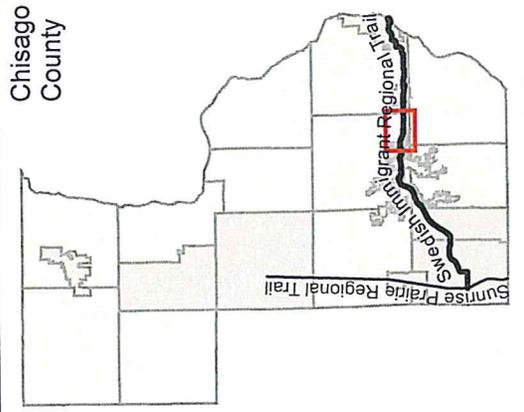


# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment D

## Legend

### Swedish Immigrant Trail

- Complete
- - - Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)

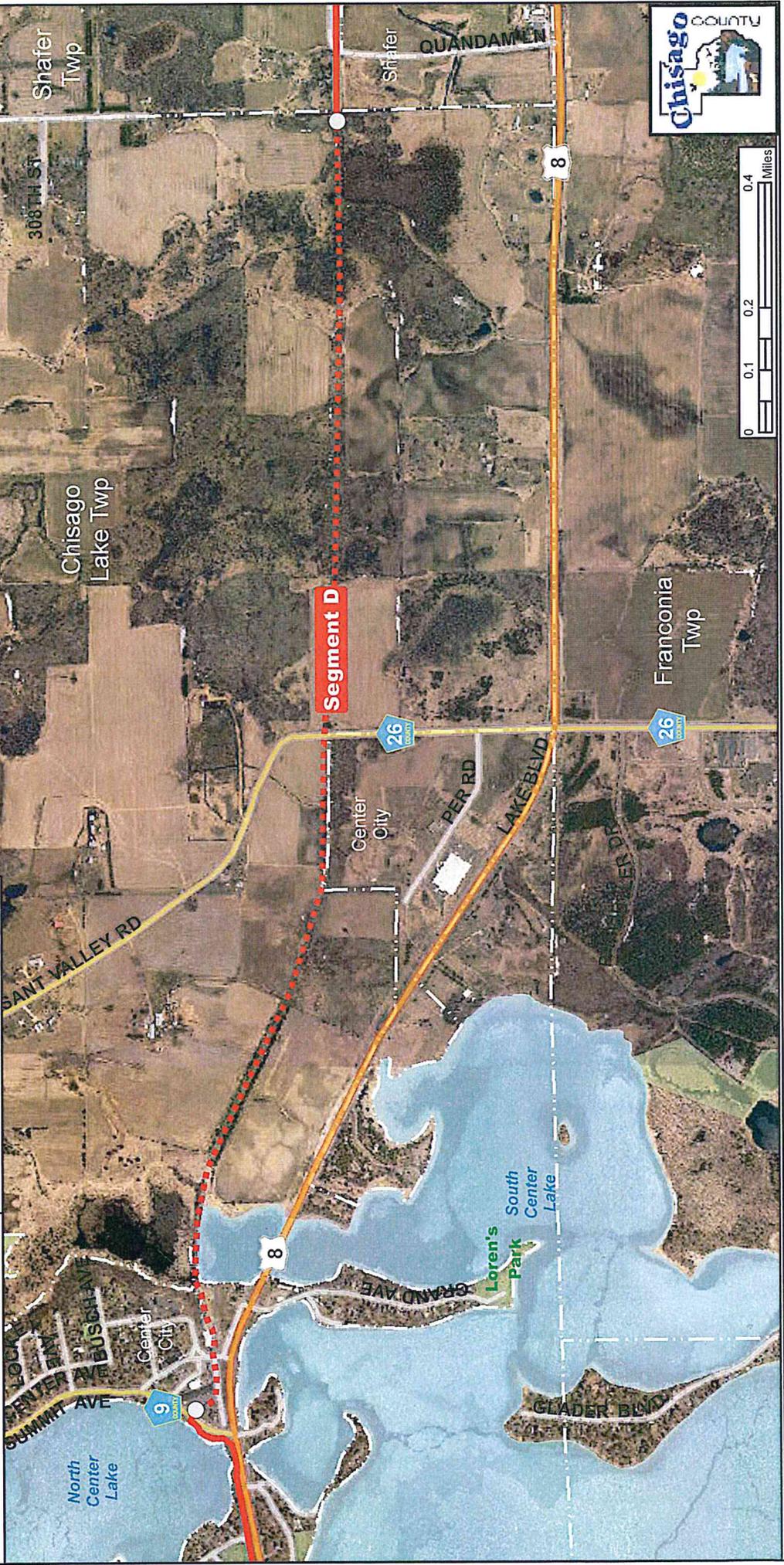
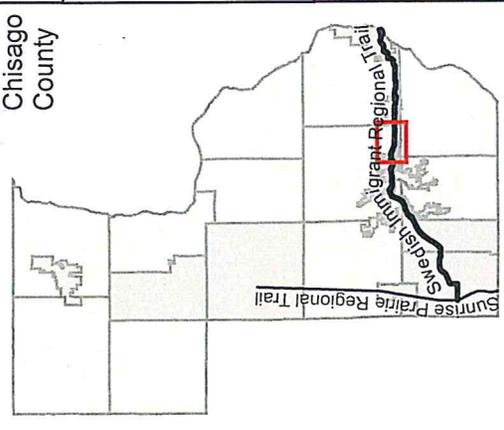
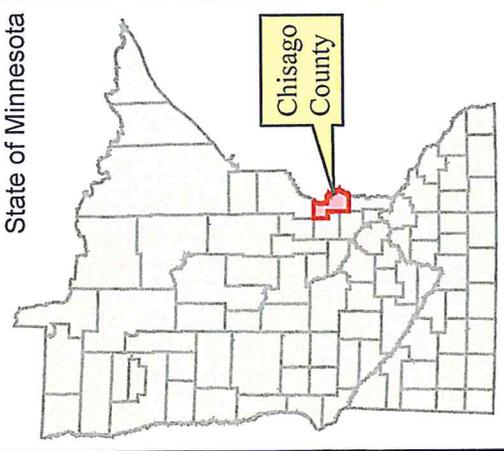


Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment D with 2013 Aerial

**Legend**

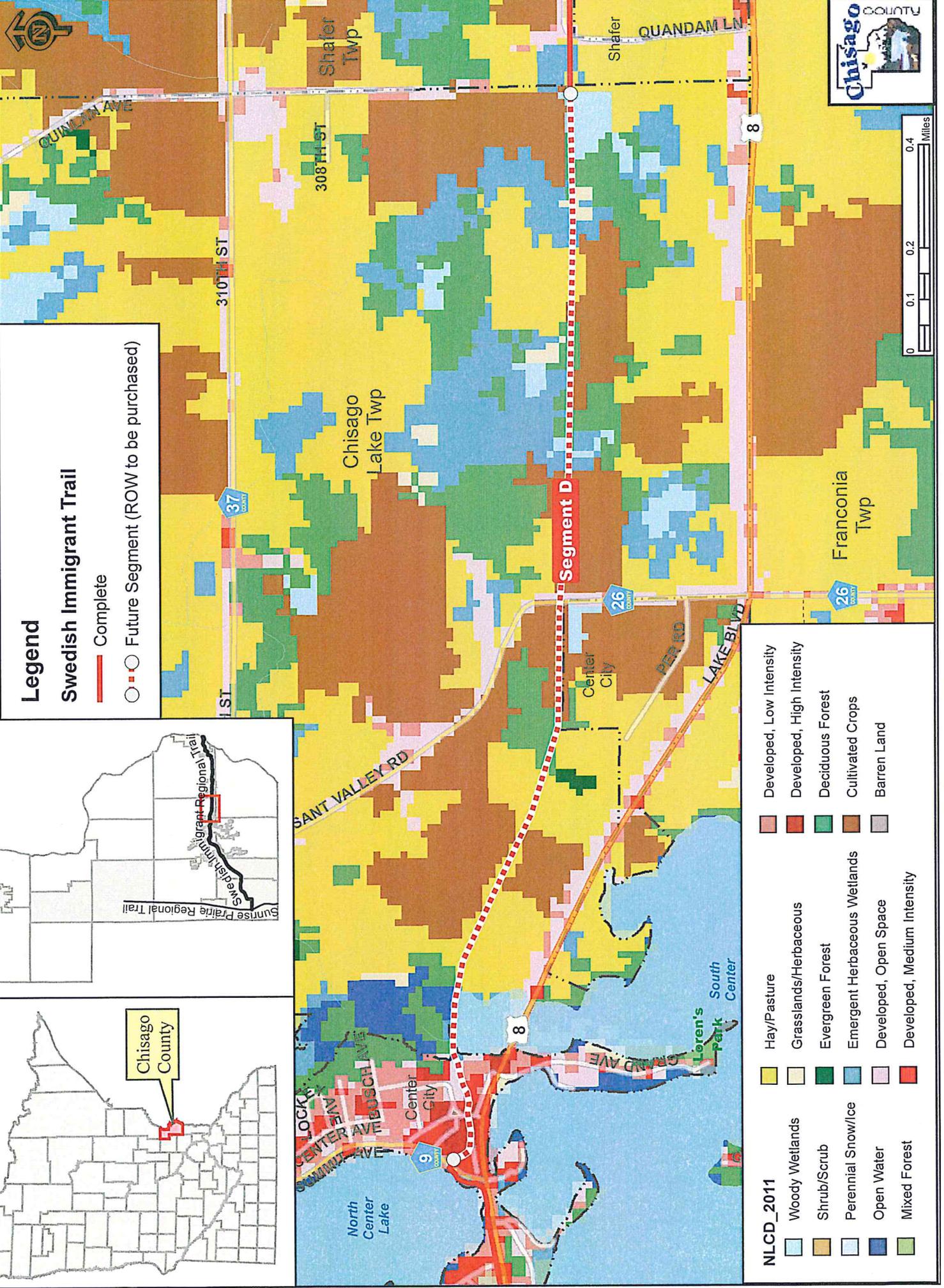
**Swedish Immigrant Trail**

- Complete
- - - Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)



with 2011 Land Cover

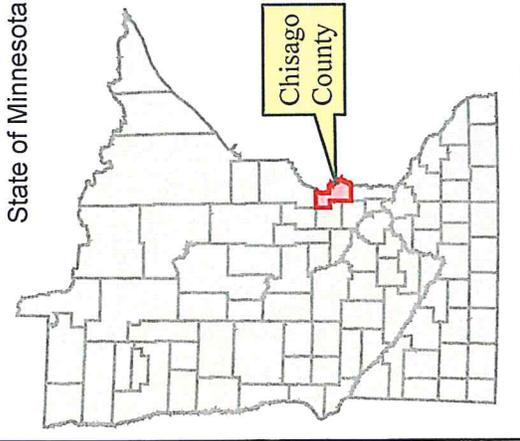
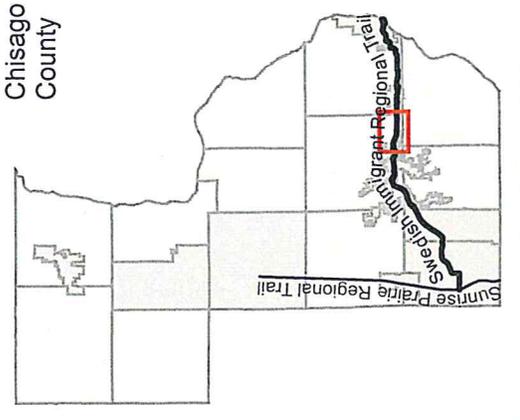
# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment D



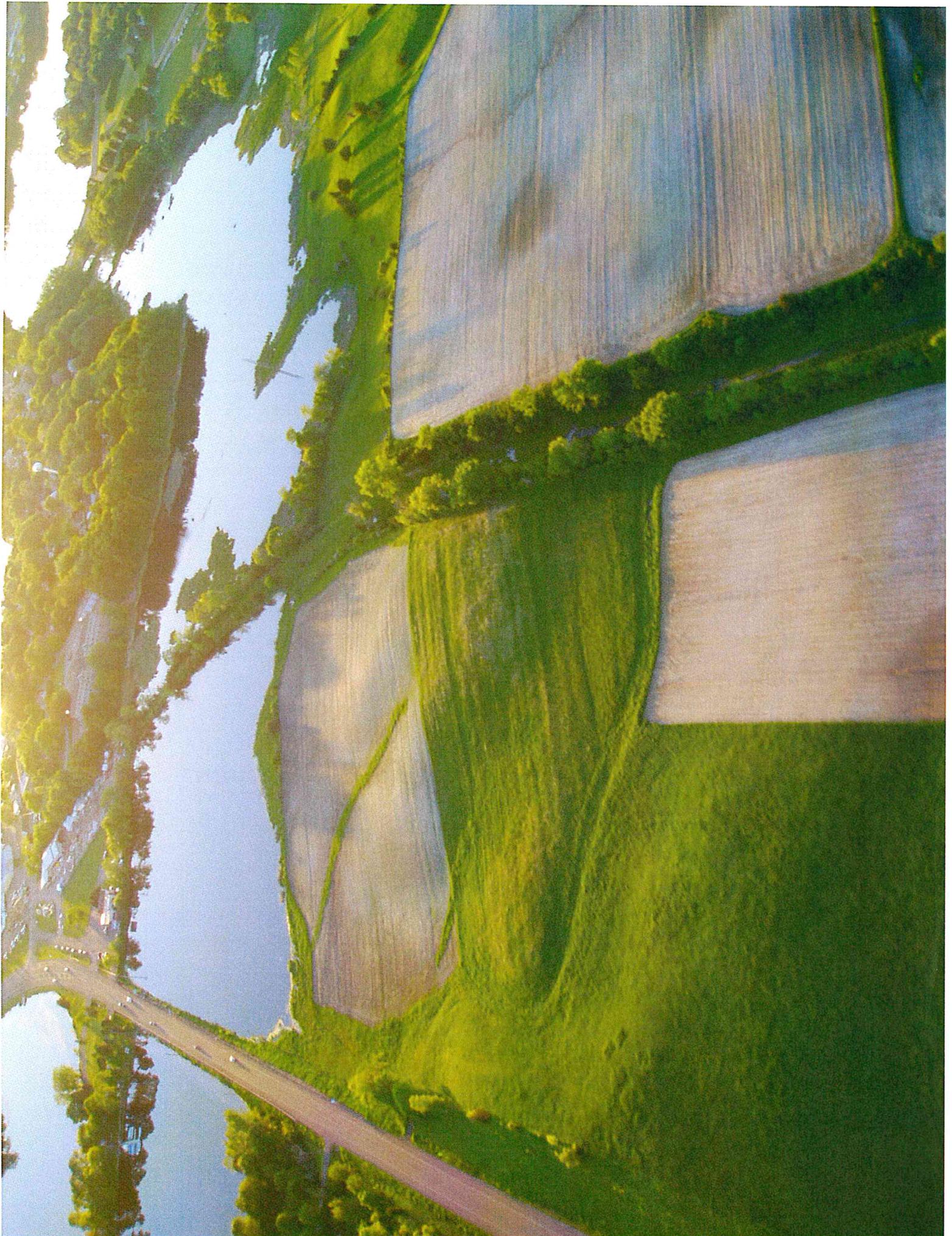
### Legend

**Swedish Immigrant Trail**

- Complete
- Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)



NLCD_2011	
Woody Wetlands	Developed, Low Intensity
Shrub/Scrub	Developed, High Intensity
Perennial Snow/Ice	Deciduous Forest
Open Water	Cultivated Crops
Mixed Forest	Barren Land
Hay/Pasture	Developed, Medium Intensity
Grasslands/Herbaceous	
Evergreen Forest	
Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands	
Developed, Open Space	



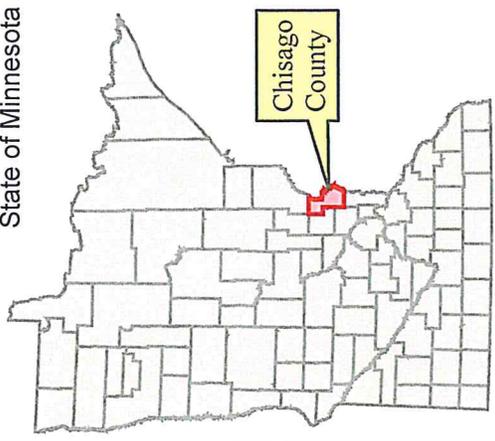
## **Segment E**

Chisago County completed this segment of the trail in 2007 as a demonstration project. It is 2.2 miles in length, running through Shafer from Quandam Lane on the west past Rydeen Avenue on the east. It is a 10-foot-wide bituminous trail that generally follows the former railroad bed.

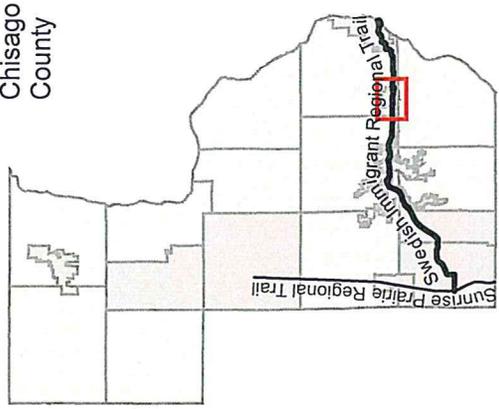
The following three maps (Location, Generalized LIDAR and Aerial Photo) show this segment of the trail. There also is a photograph of the bison on a farm in Shafer that are often visible from this segment of the trail.



State of Minnesota



Chisago County

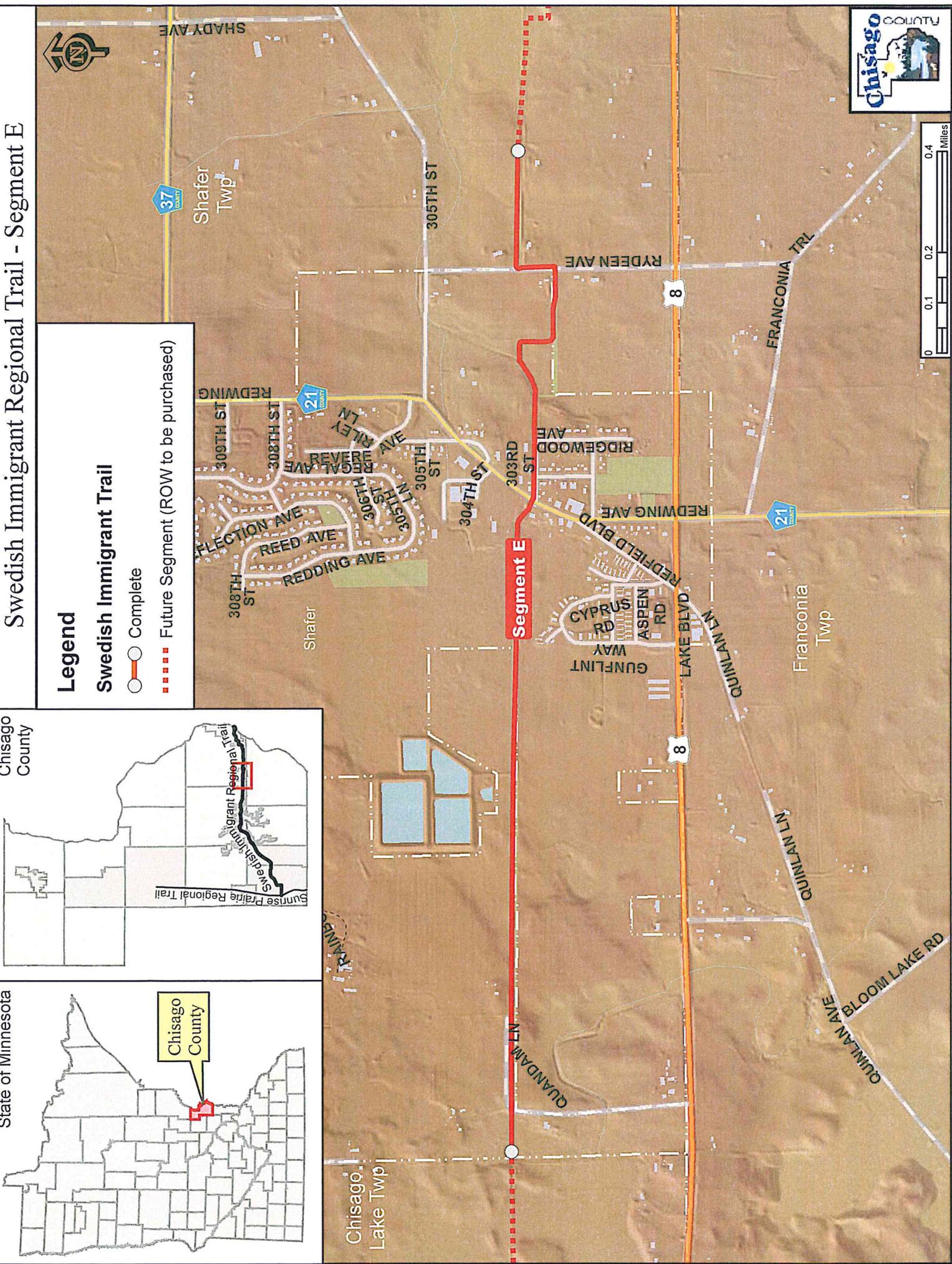


# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment E

## Legend

Swedish Immigrant Trail

- Complete
- Future Segment (ROW to be purchased)







## Segment F

Segment F of the trail will run from Rydeen Avenue on the eastern edge of Shafer to Tern Avenue. As with other segments of the trail, the County is expecting this part of the trail to be a 10-foot-wide bituminous path that would be constructed on the bed of the former railroad line (shown as F-1) – much of which is still intact. As an alternative, Chisago County has identified a southern route for part of this segment of the trail. Shown as F-2 on the maps, this route would require the County to acquire property from fewer separate owners than route F-1. This segment of the trail will be 1.5 miles long.

The land uses and land types in the area of this segment of the trail include agricultural lands (hay/pasture and cultivated crops), wetlands and small pockets of deciduous forest. As with Segment D, a preliminary analysis of the likely trail corridor by County staff has not identified any environmental or ecological constraints that would hinder the construction of this part of the trail. Before final design and construction, this part of the trail will need more evaluation – including a review of possible environmental effects, wetland delineation, property ownership and acquisition constraints and design considerations. The County will need to take special care in the design of this segment of the trail to ensure adequate protection for existing water bodies, wetlands and trail users.

Chisago County now owns about one-half of the necessary right-of-way for this segment of the trail but still needs to acquire about another 0.75 miles of right-of-way. The County has identified the few property owners with whom the Chisago County will need to negotiate with to purchase parts of their properties for this segment of the trail.

Chisago County also is planning to eventually develop a trail connection from the east end of Segment F of Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail (in the area of Tern Avenue) to Highway 8 to the south, near its intersection with Highway 95. The Minnesota Department of Transportation will be reconstructing this intersection in 2016 and installing a roundabout. The Franconia Sculpture Park is located on the southwest quadrant of this intersection making it another attraction for users of the trail.

The following maps (listed below) provide more information about this segment of the trail.

Location Map

Location Map with Parcel Data (Property Lines and Owners)

Contour Map

Wetland Inventory Map

Wetlands and Hydric Soils Map

Generalized LIDAR Map

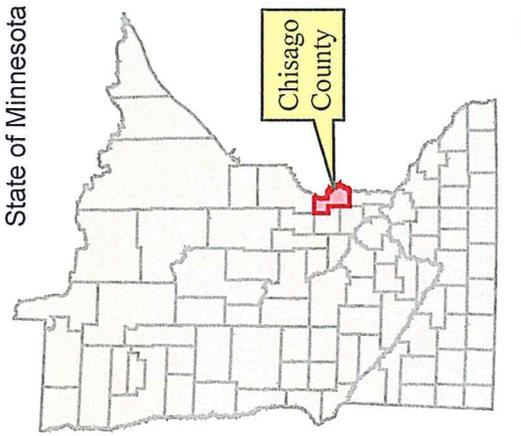
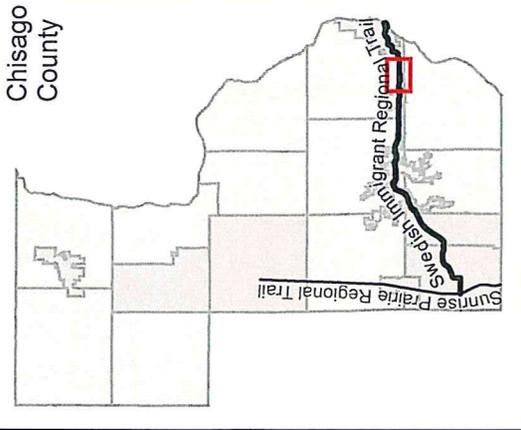
Aerial Photo

2011 Land Cover Map

# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment F

## Legend

- Swedish Immigrant Trail
- Complete
- Planned Construction 2015-16
- Future Segment (ROW County Owned)
- Future Segment (ROW to be Purchased)



TERN AVE

Shafer  
Twp

Segment F

Future Trail Connection

LAKE BLVD

8

THRUSH AVE

Franconia  
Sculpture  
Park

ST CROIX TRL

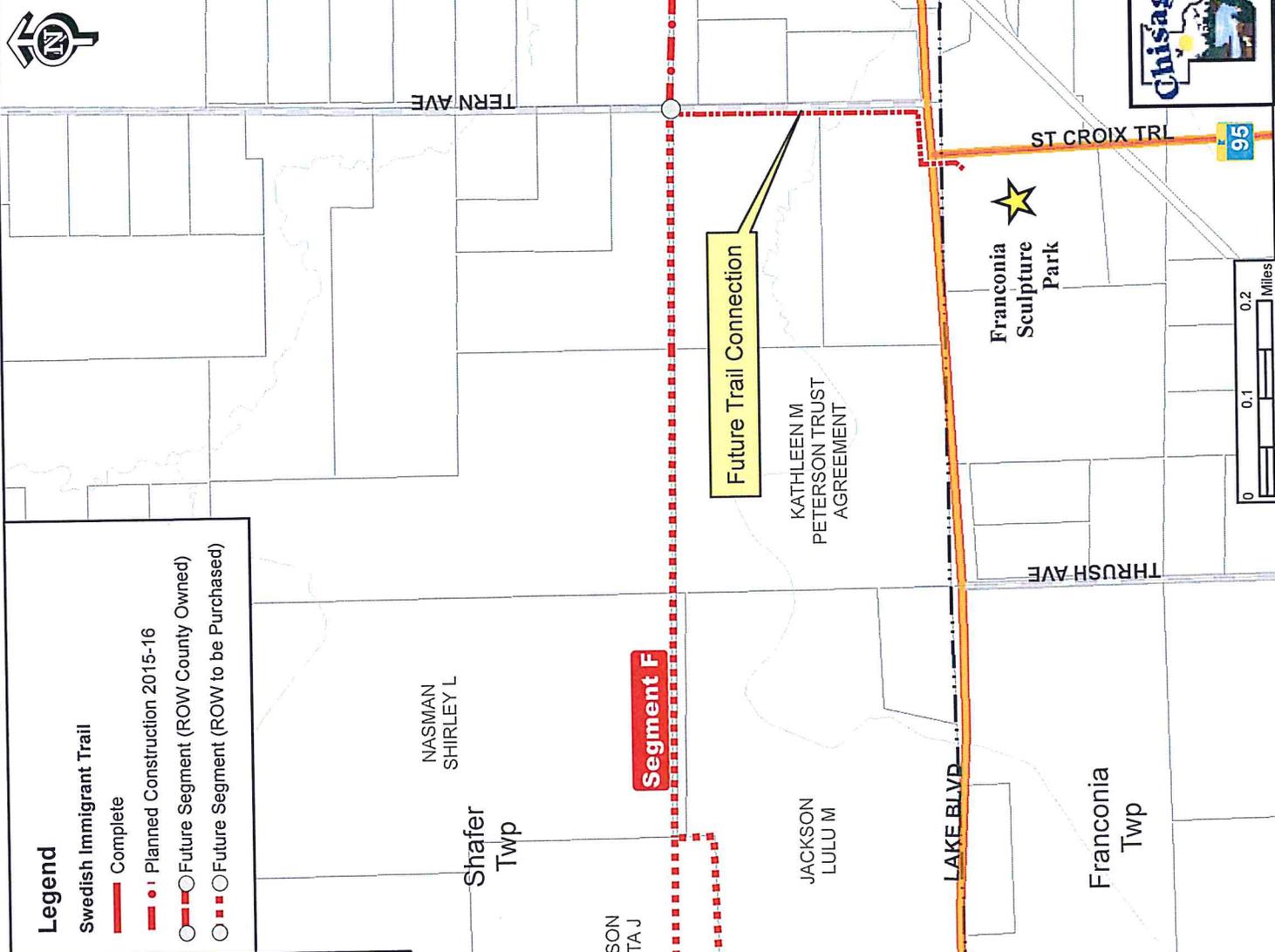
95

Franconia  
Twp

FRANCONIA\_TRL

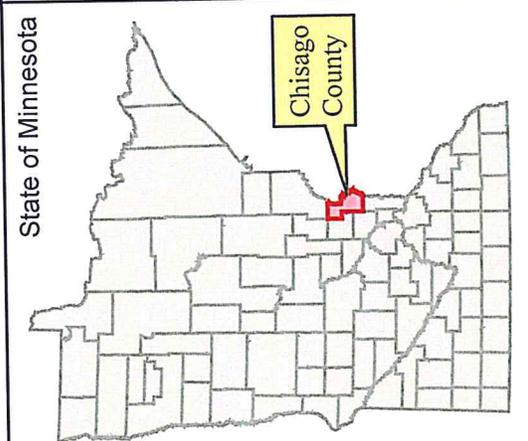
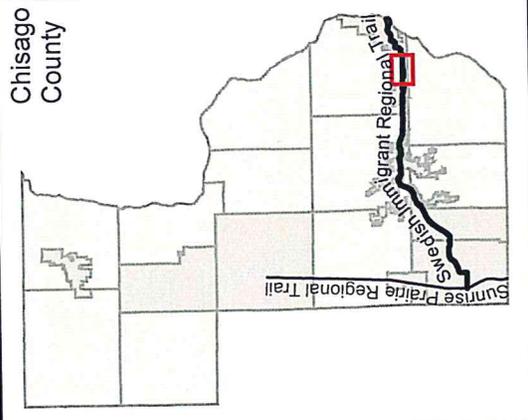


# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment F with Parcel Data



## Legend

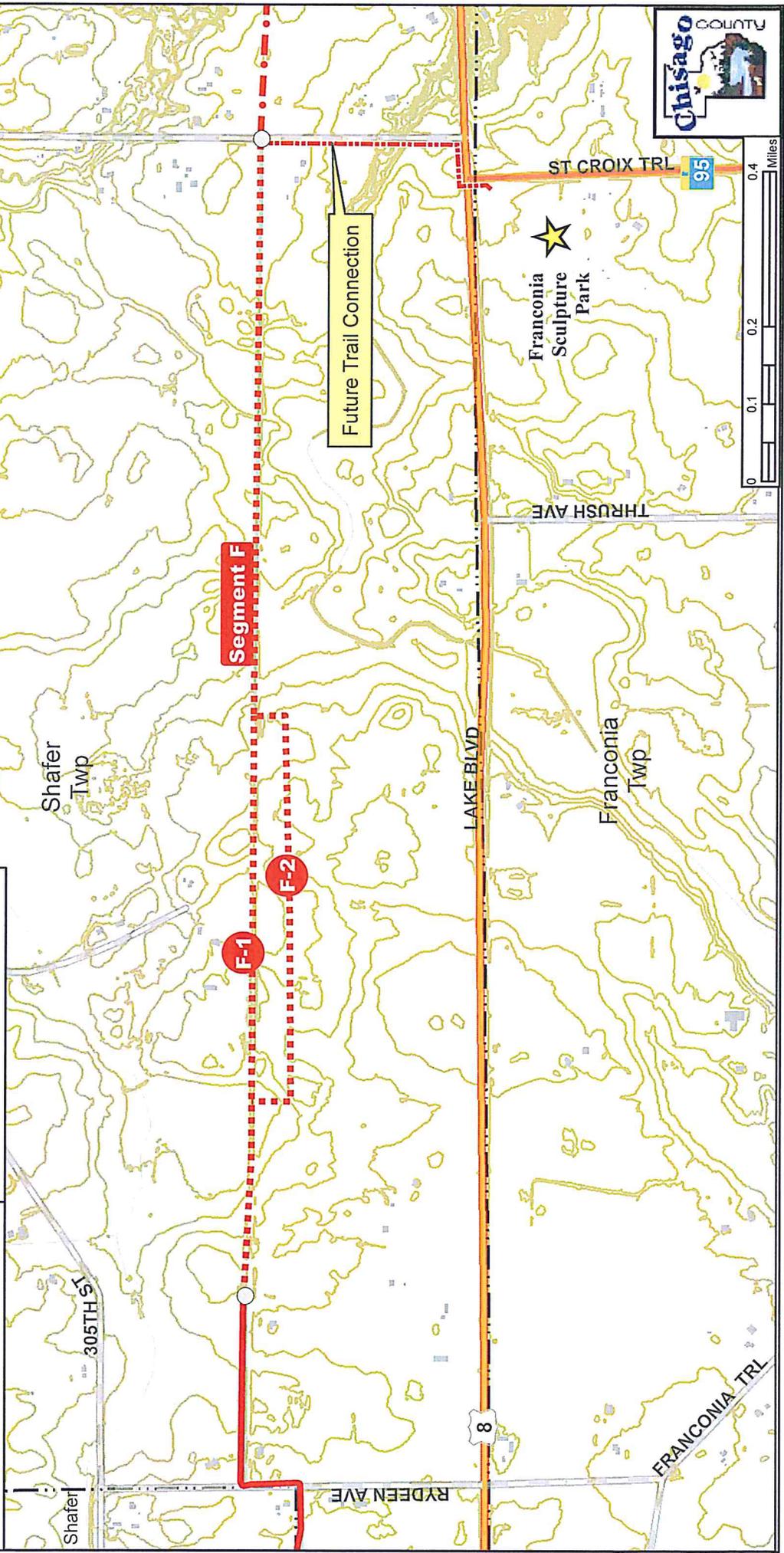
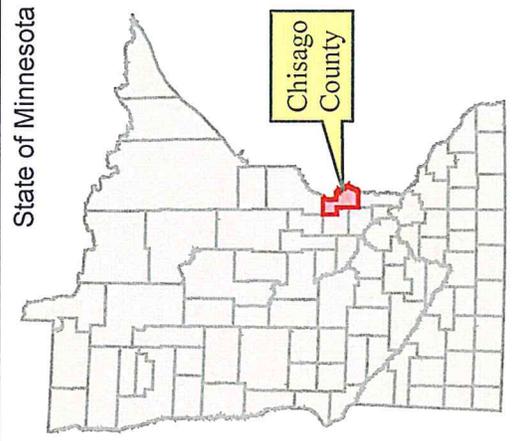
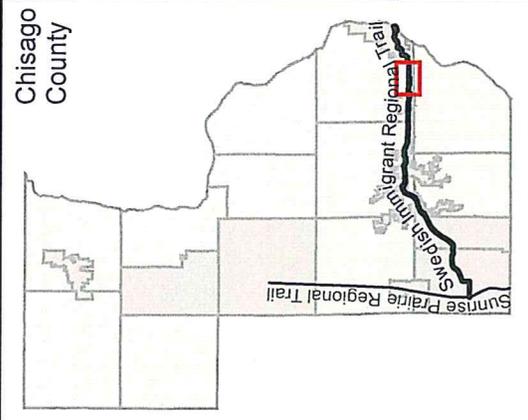
- Swedish Immigrant Trail
- Complete
- Planned Construction 2015-16
- Future Segment (ROW County Owned)
- Future Segment (ROW to be Purchased)



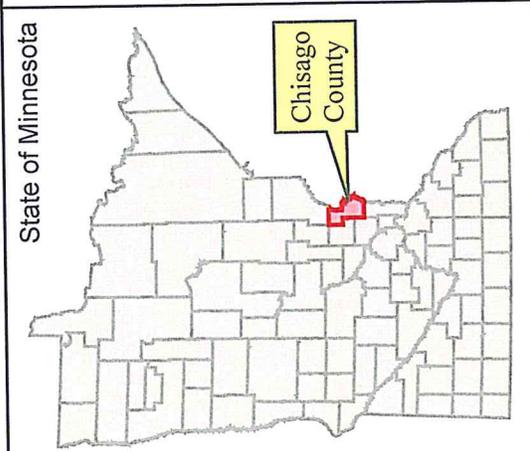
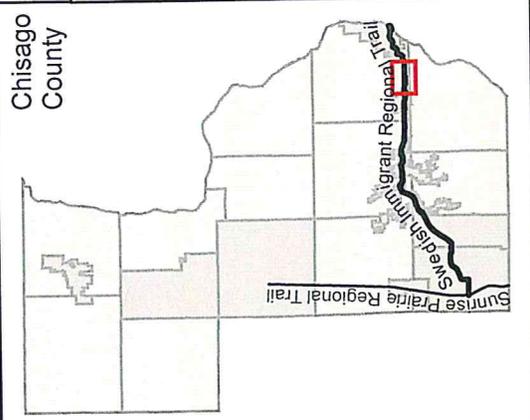
# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment F with 5' Contours

## Legend

- Swedish Immigrant Trail
- Complete
- Planned Construction 2015-16
- Future Segment (ROW County Owned)
- Future Segment (ROW to be Purchased)
- 5' Contours



# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment F with Wetlands Data



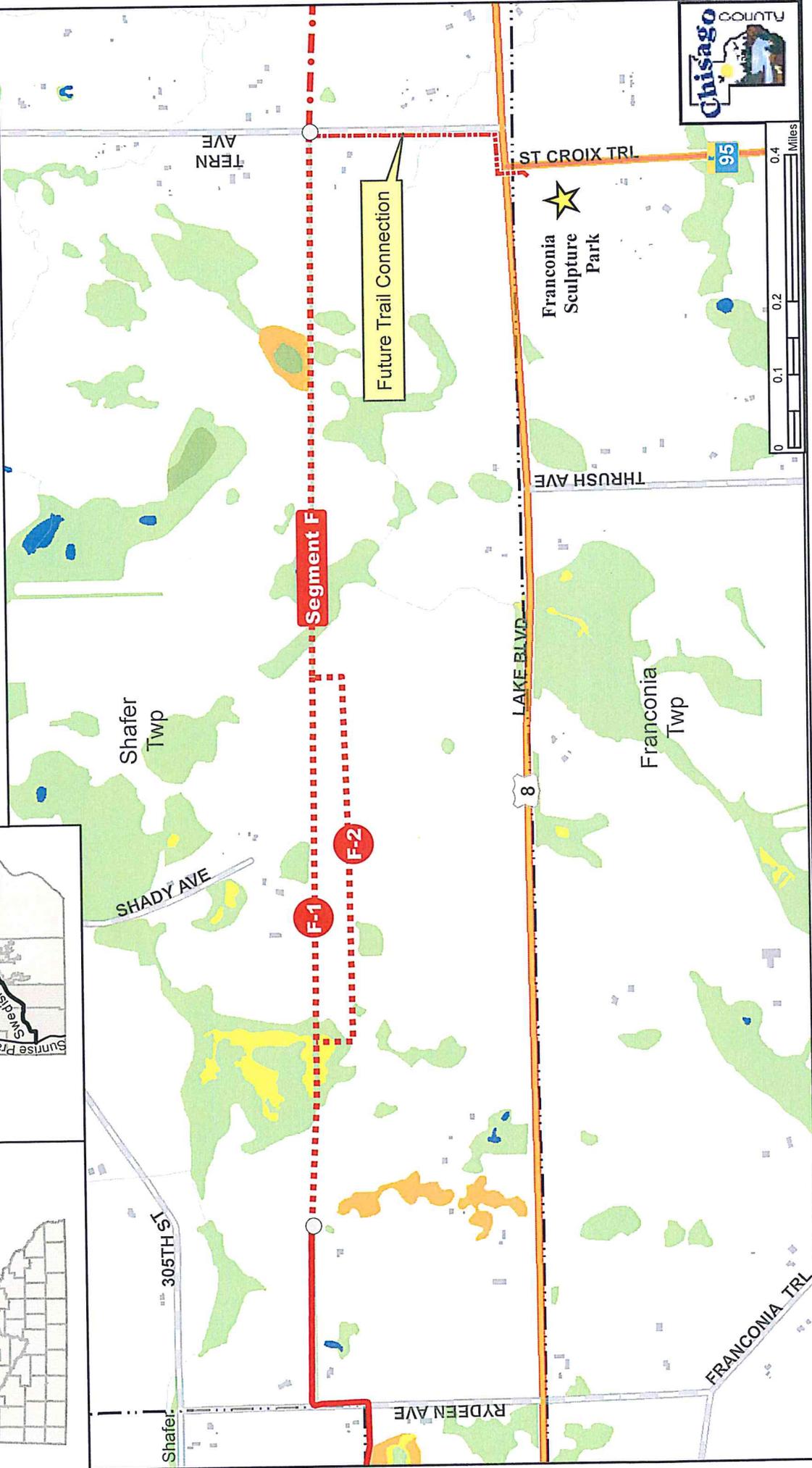
**Legend**

**Swedish Immigrant Trail**

- Complete
- Planned Construction 2015-16
- Future Segment (ROW County Owned)
- Future Segment (ROW to be Purchased)

**National Wetland Inventory**

- Aquatic Bed
- Emergent Vegetation
- Forested
- Scrub-Scrub Forest
- Unconsolidated Bottom (Basins & Channels)
- Unconsolidated Shore (Banks & Sandbars)

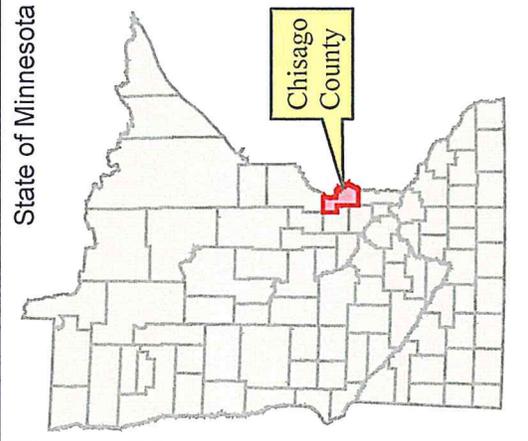
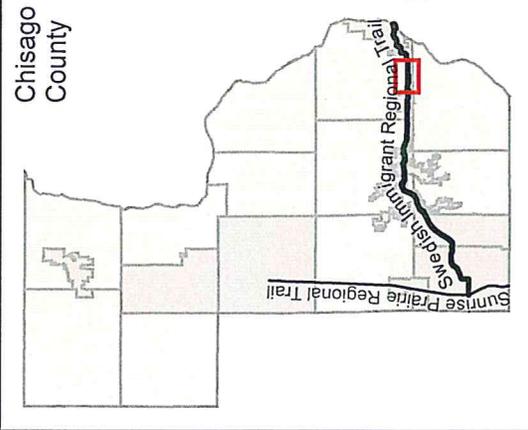


# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment F

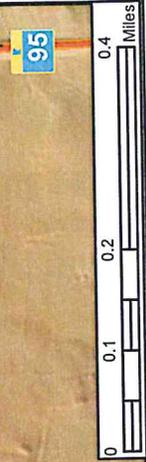
## with Wetlands Data and Hydric Soils

### Legend

- |  |                                      |  |   |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|
|  | Complete                             |  | Aquatic Bed                               |
|  | Planned Construction 2015-16         |  | Emergent Vegetation                       |
|  | Future Segment (ROW County Owned)    |  | Forested                                  |
|  | Future Segment (ROW to be Purchased) |  | Scrub-Scrub Forest                        |
|  | Hydric Soils                         |  | Unconsolidated Bottom (Basins & Channels) |
|  |                                      |  | Unconsolidated Shore (Banks & Sandbars)   |



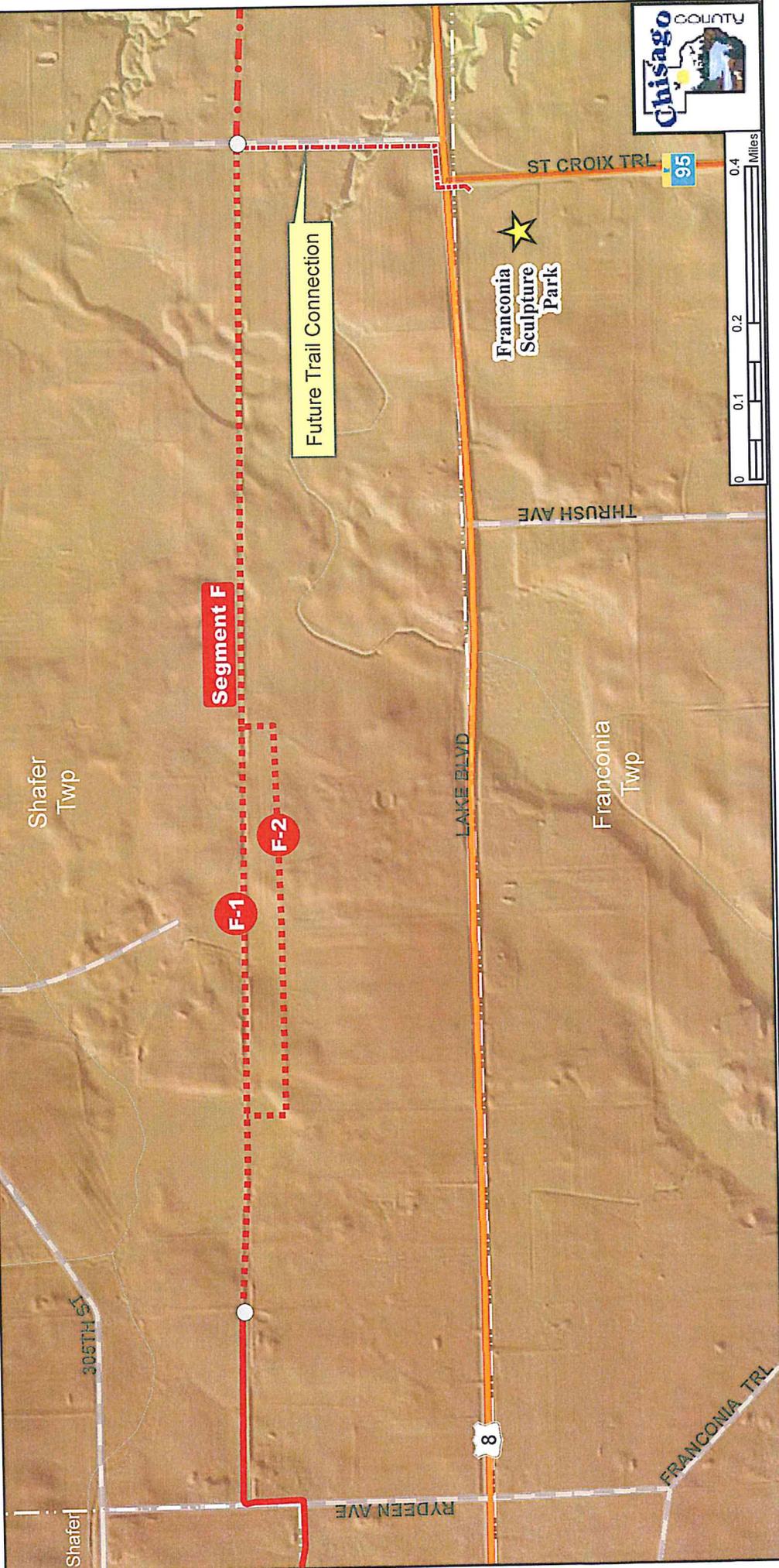
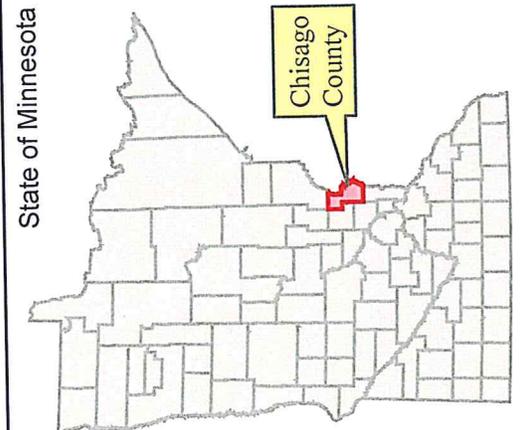
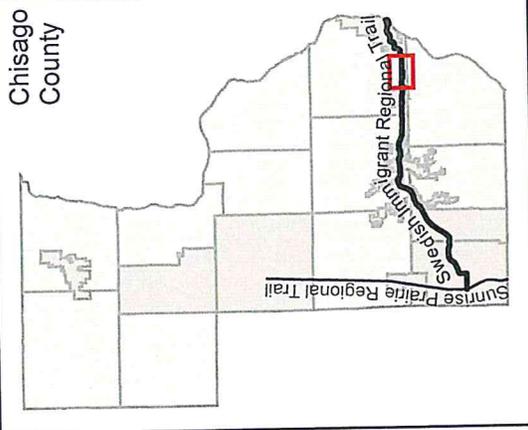
# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment F



**Legend**

Swedish Immigrant Trail

- Complete
- · - · - Planned Construction 2015-16
- - - - - Future Segment (ROW County Owned)
- Future Segment (ROW to be Purchased)



**Segment F**

**F-2**

**F-1**

Future Trail Connection

Franconia Sculpture Park

Shafer Twp

Franconia Twp

LAKE BLVD

THRUSH AVE

TERN AVE

ST CROIX TRL

FRANCONIA TRL

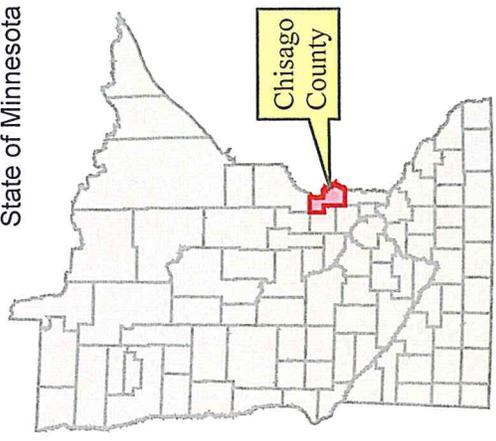
RYDEEN AVE

305TH ST

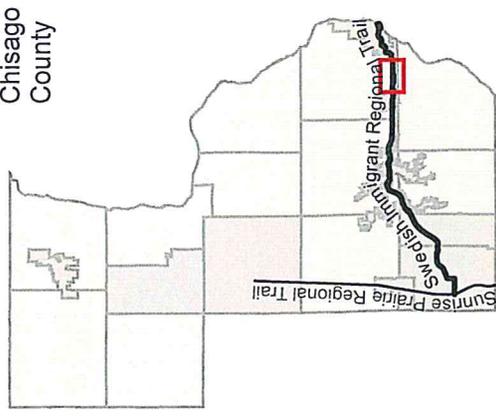
8

95

State of Minnesota



Chisago County

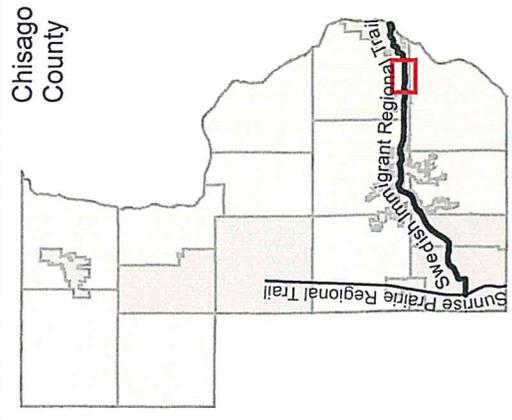


Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment F with 2013 Aerial

Legend

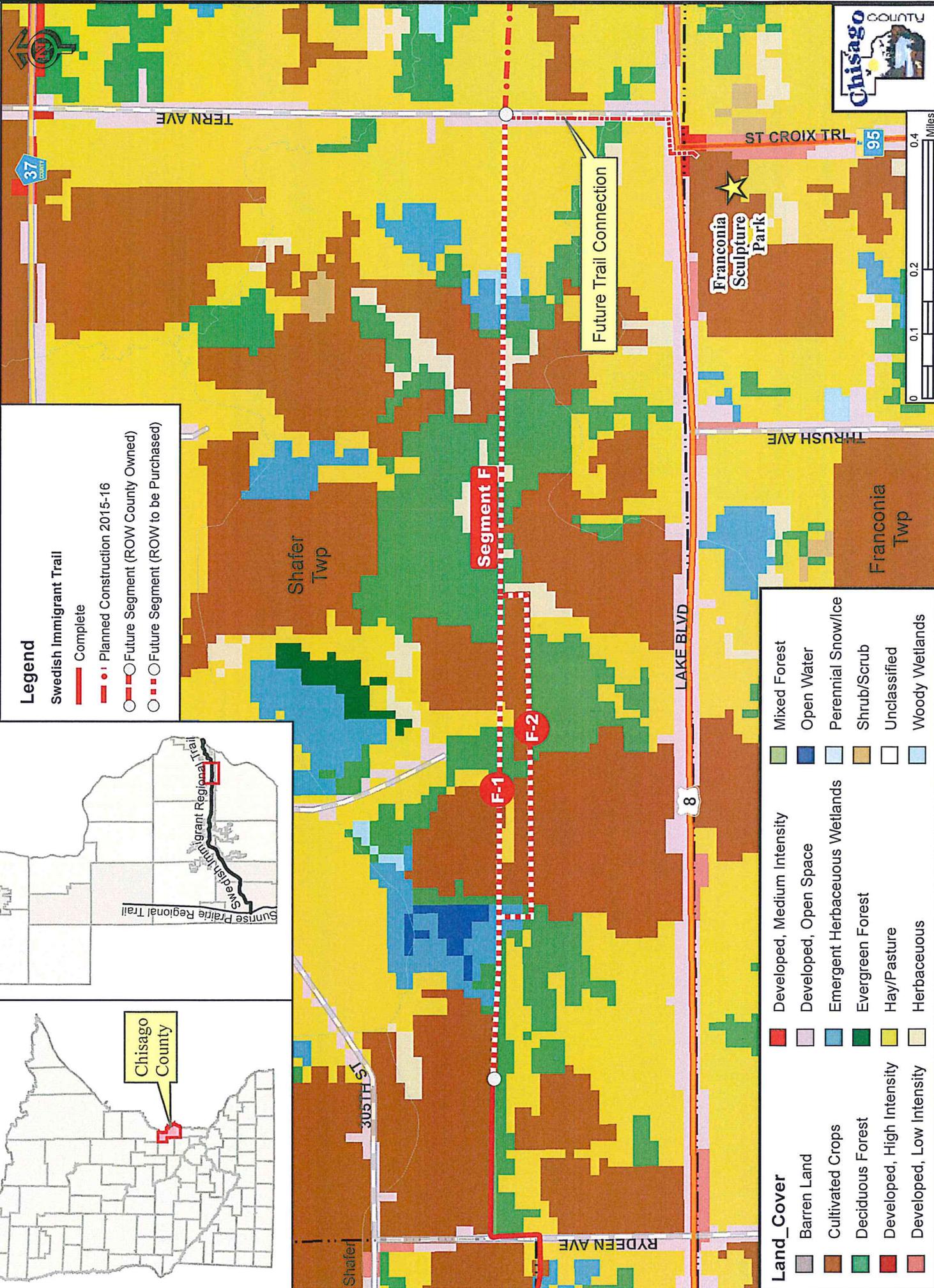
- Swedish Immigrant Trail
- Complete
- Planned Construction 2015-16
- Future Segment (ROW County Owned)
- Future Segment (ROW to be Purchased)





# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment F

with 2011 Land Cover



## Legend

- Swedish Immigrant Trail**
- Complete
  - - - Planned Construction 2015-16
  - Future Segment (ROW County Owned)
  - Future Segment (ROW to be Purchased)

## Land\_Cover

- |                           |                              |                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Barren Land               | Developed, Medium Intensity  | Mixed Forest       |
| Cultivated Crops          | Developed, Open Space        | Open Water         |
| Deciduous Forest          | Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands | Perennial Snow/Ice |
| Developed, High Intensity | Evergreen Forest             | Shrub/Scrub        |
| Developed, Low Intensity  | Hay/Pasture                  | Unclassified       |
|                           | Herbaceous                   | Woody Wetlands     |



Shafer Twp

Franconia Twp

Franconia Sculpture Park

Future Trail Connection

Segment F

F-1

F-2

8

ST CROIX TRL 95

THRUSH AVE

LAKE BLVD

RYDEEN AVE

305TH ST

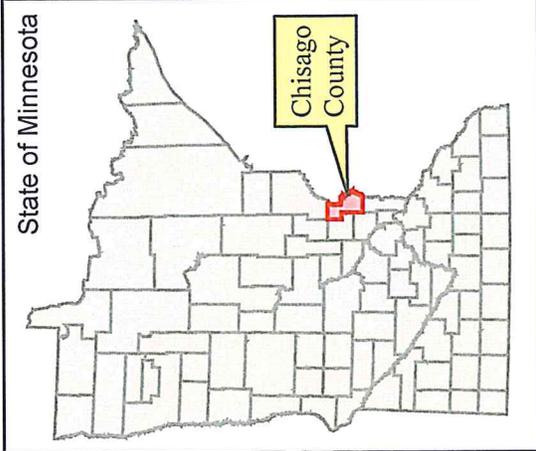
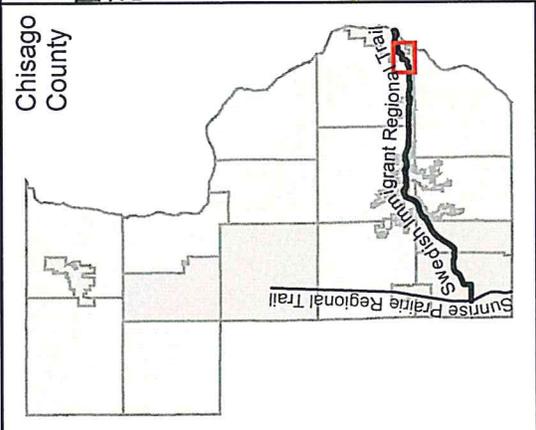
TERN AVE

## **Segment G**

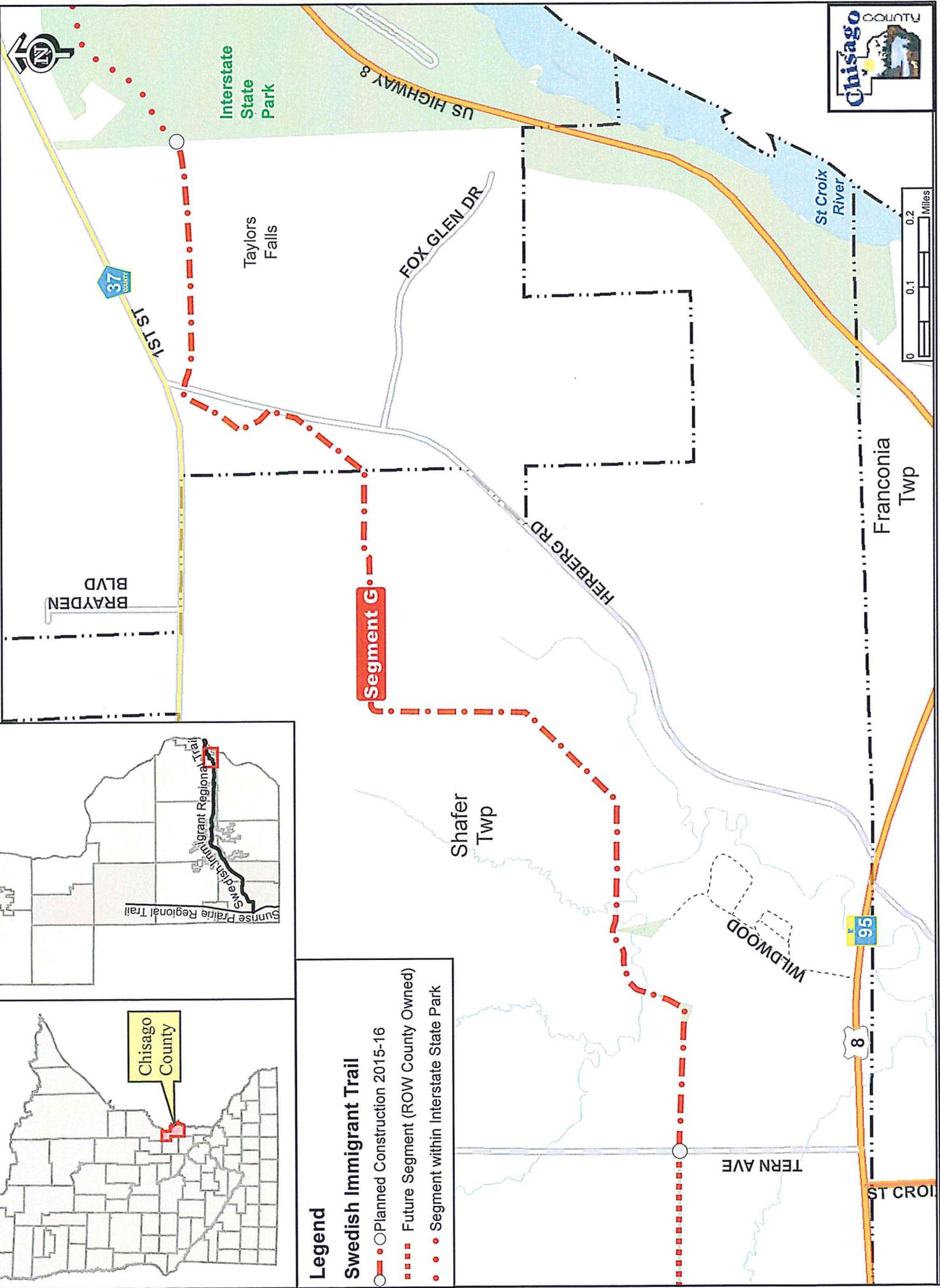
Chisago County will be constructing this part of the trail will in 2015-2016. It will be 2.2 miles long – running from Tern Avenue on the west to Interstate State Park on the east. This segment will have 3 bridges crossing streams or gullies and will be a 10-foot-wide bituminous path with an off-road parking area for motor vehicles at Tern Avenue.

The three maps on the following pages show this part of the County and the trail in more detail. In addition, the three photographs show parts of the trail route after the tree-removal contractor cleared the trees and stumps in the spring of 2015 in preparation of the construction of this part of the trail.

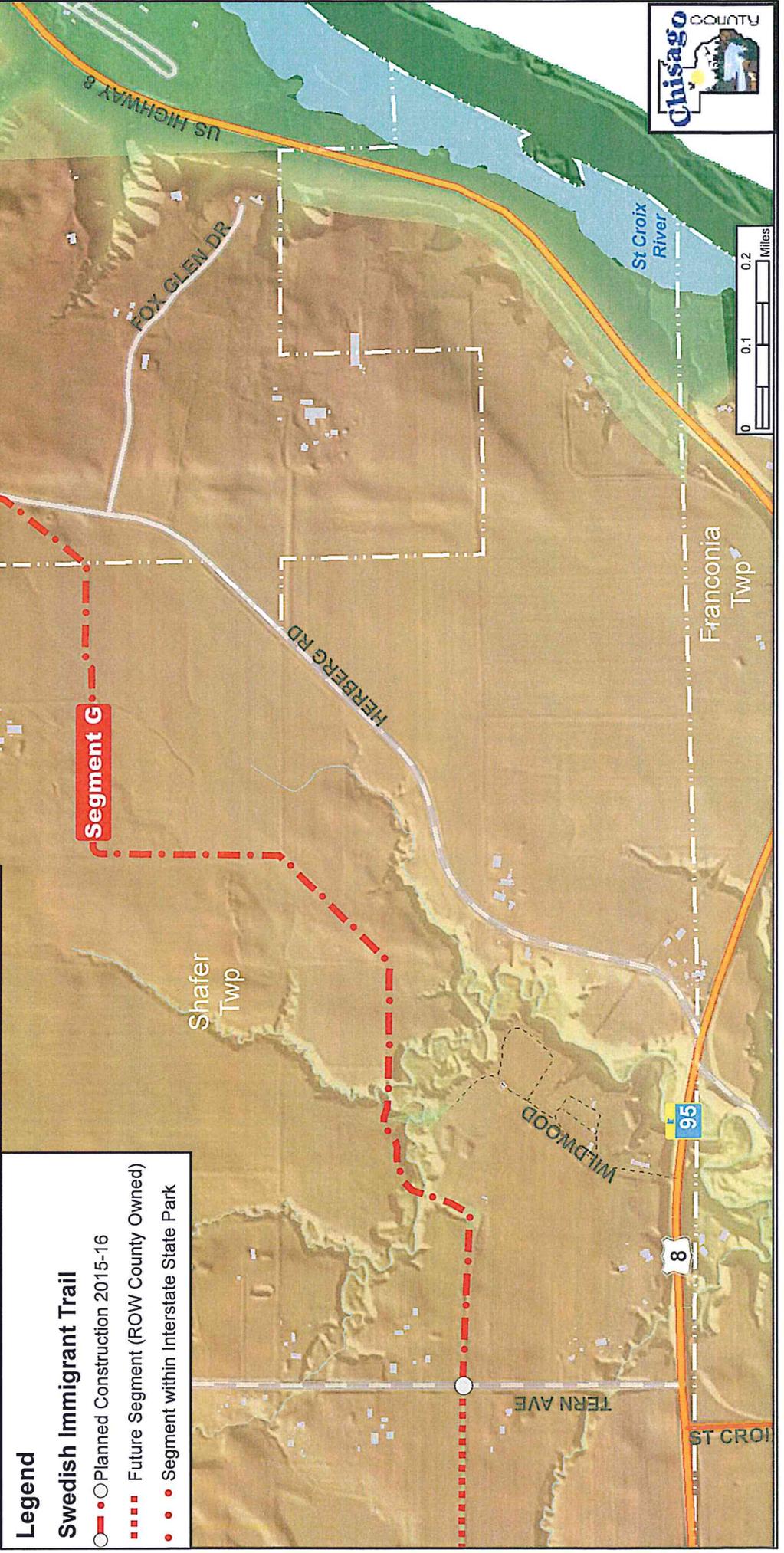
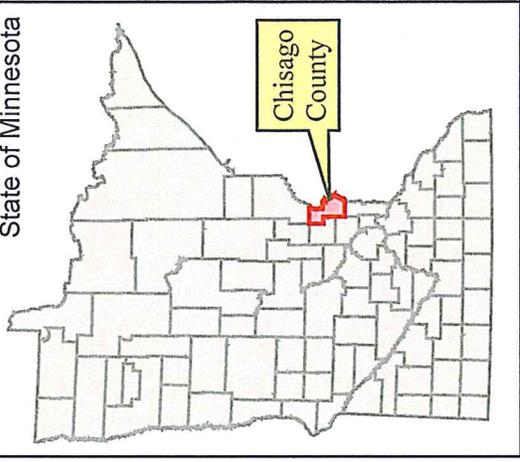
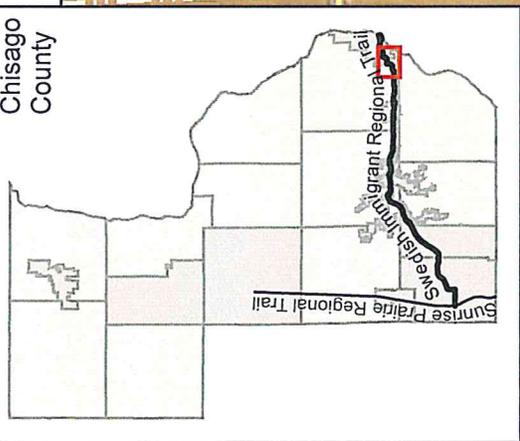
# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment G



- Legend**
- Planned Construction 2015-16
  - Future Segment (ROW County Owned)
  - Segment within Interstate State Park

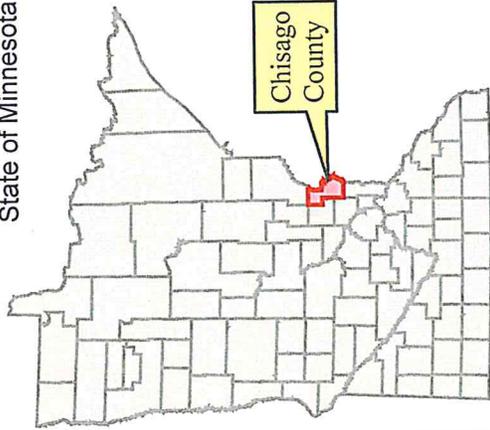


# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment G

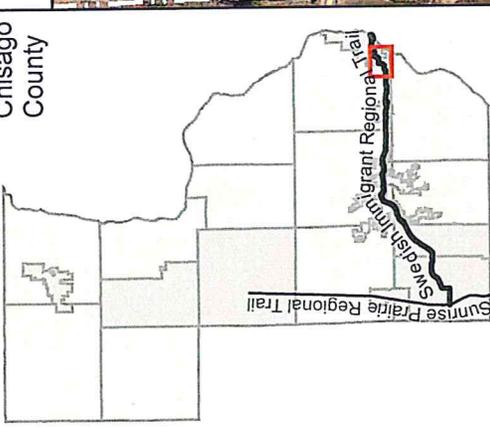


- Legend**
- ○ Planned Construction 2015-16
  - Future Segment (ROW County Owned)
  - ● Segment within Interstate State Park

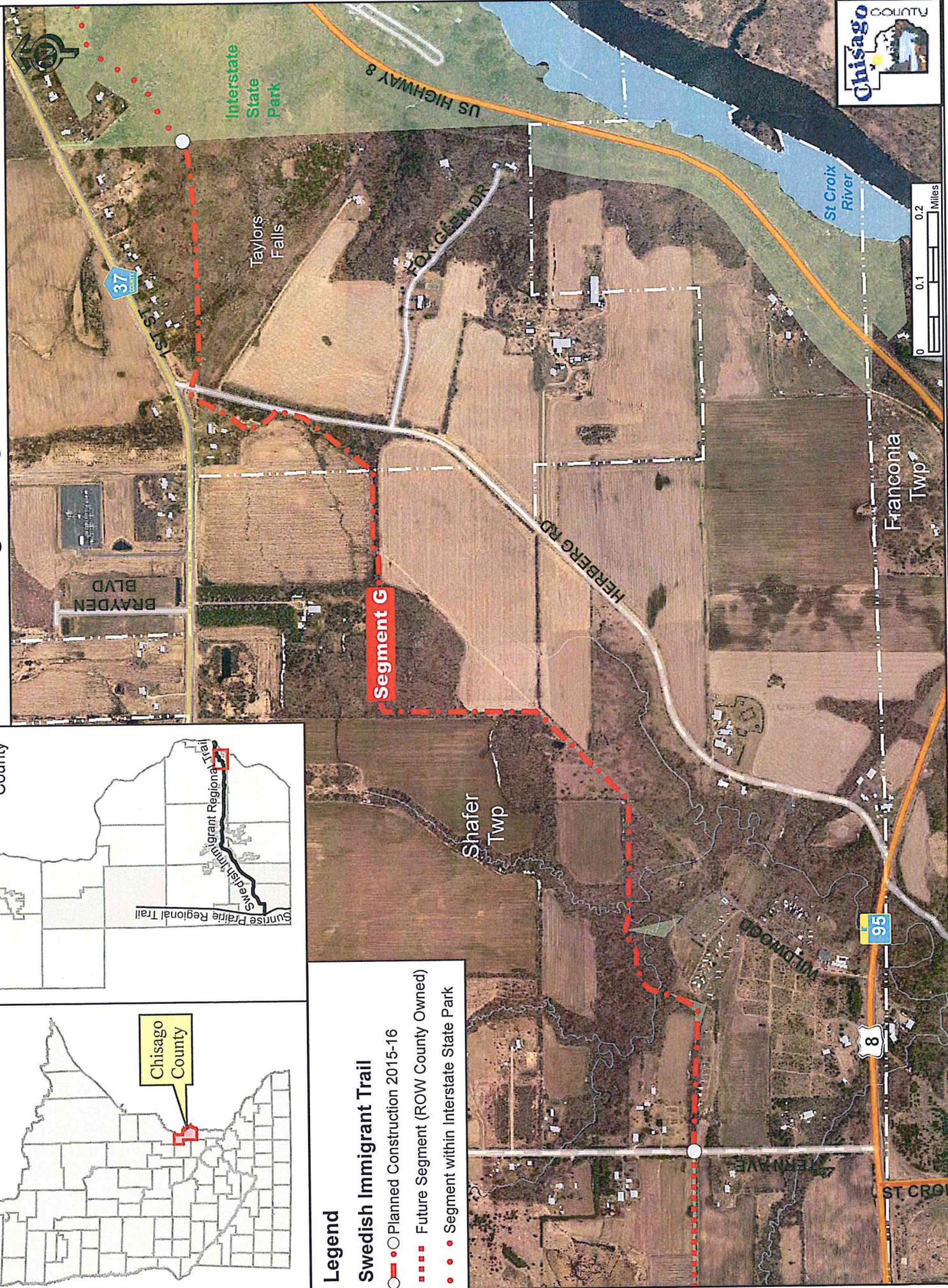
State of Minnesota



Chisago County



Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment G with 2013 Aerial



**Legend**

- Swedish Immigrant Trail
- Planned Construction 2015-16
- Future Segment (ROW County Owned)
- Segment within Interstate State Park







## **Segment H**

The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will connect to and go through Interstate State Park on the eastern end of the trail (near Taylors Falls). The State Park is an important component of the trail because it will serve as a destination for outside trail users and can provide trail services such as picnic facilities, rest rooms and camping. Most of this segment of the trail will be in Interstate State Park but the final route and design for this segment of the trail is not yet complete. The Minnesota DNR Parks and Trails Unit is responsible for trail planning, development and operation within state parks and will be working to create the trail through the State Park. Trail planning and development within Interstate State Park will be dependent on the planning and budgeting of the DNR and may not coincide with trail development outside of the park. The DNR will conduct a more in-depth planning and analysis within Interstate State Park to identify the best trail route within the park while taking into consideration elements such as heritage sites, slopes and land cover. Some of the terrain in the preliminary trail corridor in and near Interstate State Park is undulating and has slopes that will make it challenging to build all of the trail in this segment to ADA standards.

As a part of Segment H, the County is expecting to have a trail connection from the trail to Taylors Falls City Hall (which can serve as a trail head). The eastern end of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail is expected to be the Taylors Falls Community Center just outside Interstate State Park. This location, as well as the State Park, will serve as trail heads for the trail. The County is estimating that this part of the trail will be about 1.6 miles long.

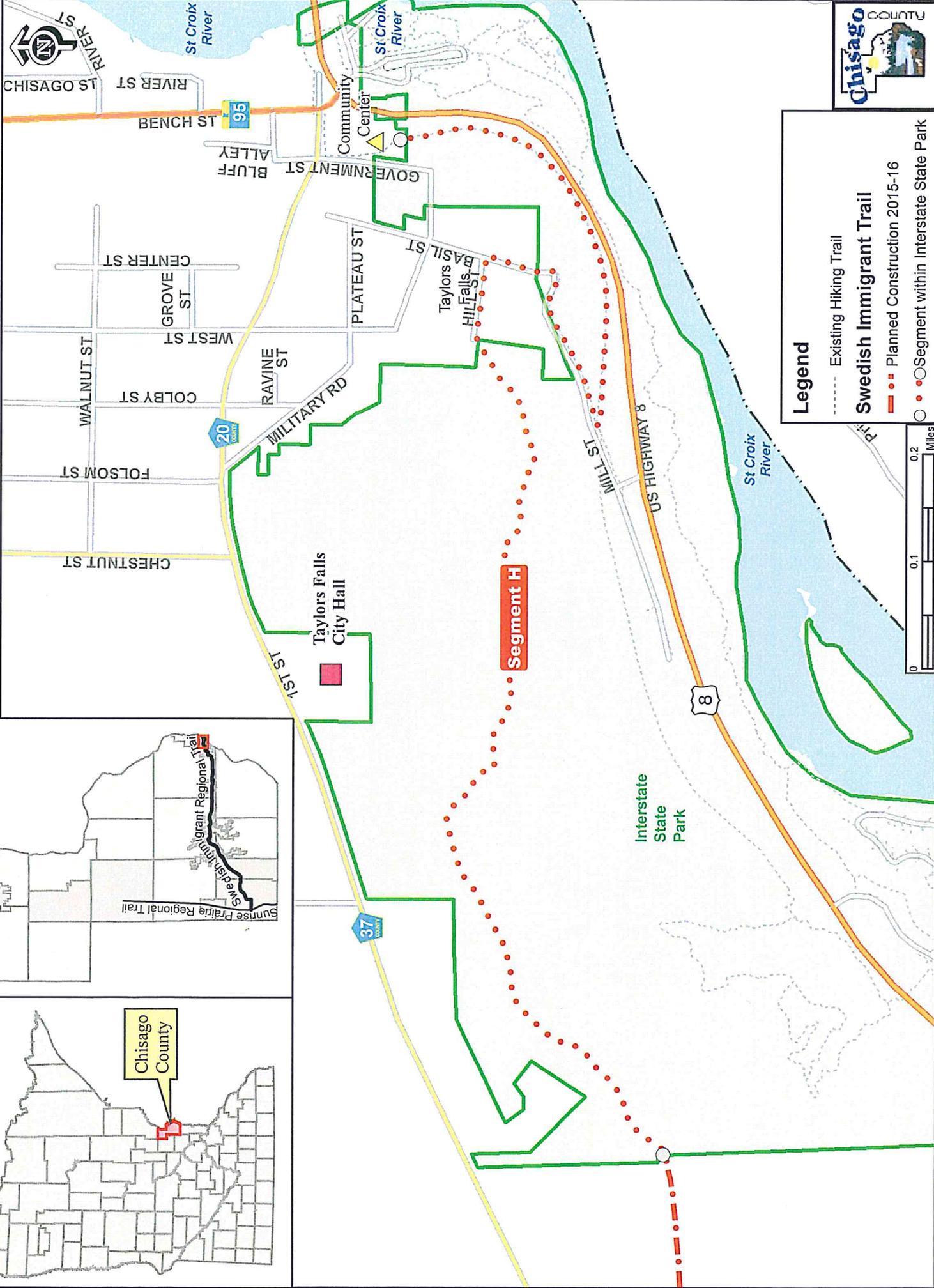
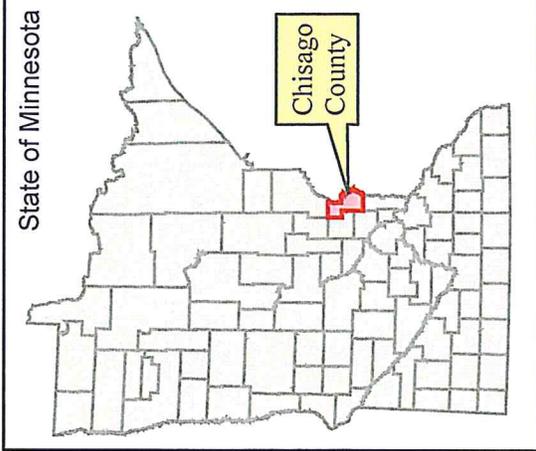
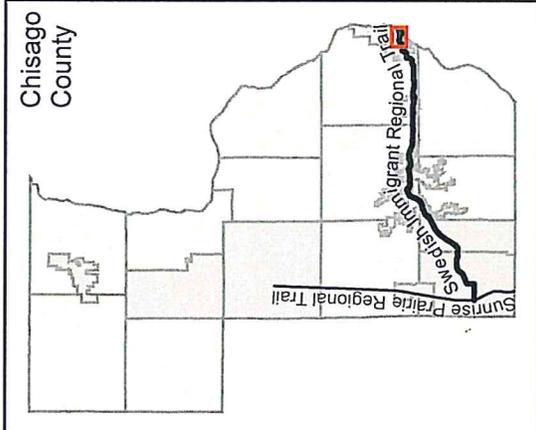
The three maps on following pages show the state park and this part of the trail corridor in more detail.

# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment H



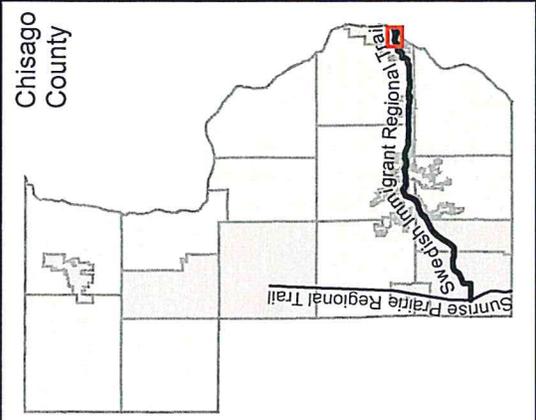
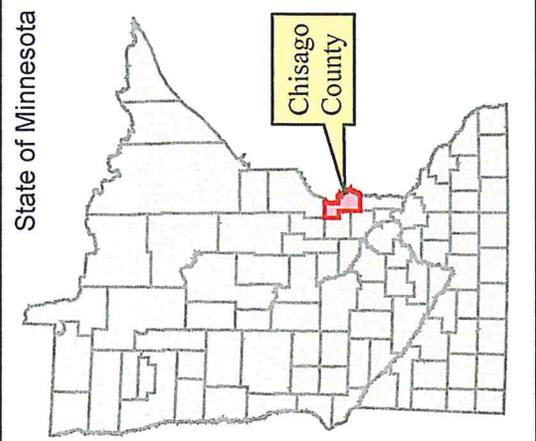
**Legend**

- Existing Hiking Trail
- Swedish Immigrant Trail
- Planned Construction 2015-16
- Segment within Interstate State Park





# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment H with 2013 Aerial

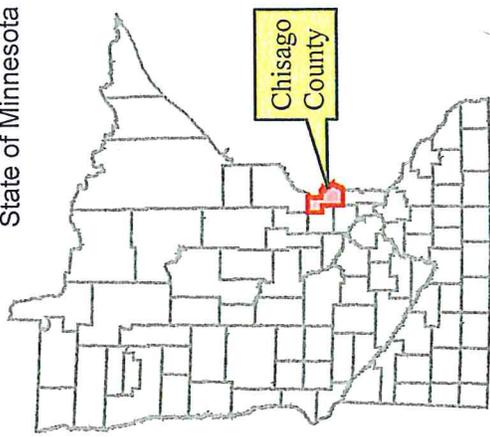


**Legend**

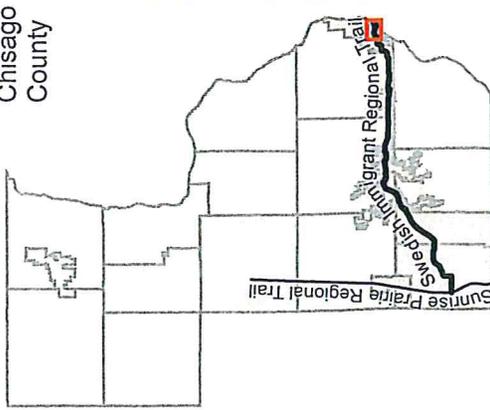
- Existing Hiking Trail
- Swedish Immigrant Trail**
- Planned Construction 2015-16
- Segment within Interstate State Park



State of Minnesota



Chisago County



# Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail - Segment H with 2013 Aerial



**Legend**

- Existing Hiking Trail
- Swedish Immigrant Trail**
- Planned Construction 2015-16
- Segment within Interstate State Park



## **Implementation**

Given the overall length of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail, Chisago County is anticipating that the development and construction of the remaining trail segments will occur in phases. This may mean that the County will construct the remaining segments of the trail at different times, depending on right-of-way acquisition, future development along the trail corridor, funding availability and other roadway or capital improvement projects. Therefore, Chisago County has not set an exact schedule for the completion of the trail.

Determining when the County will design and construct each phase of the trail will depend on several variables, including the support of project partners such as cities, townships and land owners and the availability of funding sources, both local matching dollars and regional, state or federal grants. The County Parks Department will continue to work with local cities and the Chisago County Highway Department to implement this trail as development and redevelopment occurs.

The County also will be considering the available opportunities to connect to existing local trails and to the existing segments of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail when determining which trail phases to design and develop. The development and implementation of the remaining trail segments will require additional activities by Chisago County beyond the Master Plan phase. These activities typically include the preparation of construction documents, additional property acquisition, environmental and natural resource analysis, final cost estimates and public input meetings such as open houses, County Park Board meetings and County Board approval.

In addition, before the development of each of the remaining trail segments, the County will conduct a review of the Natural Heritage Information System to determine if any rare species or rare natural resources features are located within one mile of the proposed trail alignment. The County also will complete a wetland delineation for each segment of the trail to help develop a trail alignment and design for the trail that will reduce and/or mitigate the impacts of the project on any wetlands. Since the County expects parts of this trail to traverse open and green space areas, the County will use wildlife-friendly erosion control materials and native seeding in these areas when constructing the trail.

## **Cost Estimates**

Chisago County has not yet completed detailed cost estimates for the remaining segments of the trail. However, based on the estimated length of the remaining trail segments and using a substantiated construction cost estimate of \$200,000 per mile for both acquisition and construction costs, the County expects that it will cost \$2 to \$3 million (in 2015 dollars) to complete the remaining parts of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail. It should be noted, however, that costs can vary greatly depending on the complexity of the construction, wetland mitigation and land acquisition variables. As an example, the construction costs for Segment G (to be built in 2015-2016) includes 2.2 miles of 10-foot-wide trail and 3 bridges (for a total of about 370 feet) is \$1.4 million and will be the most complex and expensive stretch of the trail.

## **Conflicts**

Chisago County is not anticipating any conflicts with the existing or planned land uses along the trail corridor. The County will keep conflicts related to the development of the remaining trail segments to a minimum through proper planning and community involvement.

With any new development or redevelopment, there are common concerns among the area residents that are adjacent to the trail. One of these concerns is the effect the increased usage of the trail will have on their safety, security and privacy. Generally, regional trails do not have a high number of criminal activities related to the use of the trail. A typical concern is vandalism and damage to vehicles. The County provides Sheriff's patrols for much of Chisago County and works with the local police departments (Lakes Area and Wyoming Police Departments) to ensure the regional trails in Chisago County are safe and secure.

Privacy also is a concern for property owners adjacent to a regional trail so Chisago County typically works with affected residents to lessen the perceived impacts. For the segments of the trail that will be adjacent to a public road, the development of those parts of the trail will most likely occur when the roadways are upgraded. Resident concerns about those parts of the trail can be addressed with any concerns about the roadway construction. For the segments of the trail that will not be adjacent to a public road, the County will use a variety of mitigation techniques to lessen the impacts to the neighbors. Chisago County will determine the best methods of mitigation for each trail segment as the County develops the plans and specifications for each part of the trail.

Conflicts between pedestrians and vehicular traffic will be kept to a minimum by working with the County Highway Department and the local cities to ensure safe crossing at road intersections and driveways for pedestrians and bicyclists. In addition, the County will use signage along the trail to alert trail users to potential conflicts such as street crossings, driveway crossing, pedestrian cross-traffic, etc. and the County also will provide way-finding and interpretive information at key points along the trail.

### **Public Services**

There are no new non-recreational related public services that will be required for the completion of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail. Local parks, Interstate State Park and Taylors Falls City Hall will provide the necessary facilities needed by trail users. These amenities and facilities include parking lots, drinking fountains, restrooms and benches. A variety of services and facilities also are available in the existing retail businesses in each of the six cities along the trail.

### **Accessibility and Special Needs**

Chisago County is committed to providing access to recreation opportunities to all people, including persons with disabilities and other special population groups. The County meets this obligation through appropriate facility design and programming considerations.

Park and trail use in Chisago County is open to any and all citizens. While there is a nominal parking fee at Fish Lake Regional Park, the County does not charge a fee for trail use. This eliminates any economic barriers for trail users.

The Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will provide a link between residential and commercial areas and will provide a safer connection for pedestrians and bicyclists. The trail also will connect users to the area's transit service, Heartland Express that provides transportation services in Chisago and Isanti Counties for a minimal fee. This service offers rides to specific locations and is available to those in need.

## **Trail Design Elements**

### **Design Guidelines**

Chisago County will design and construct the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail and all associated facilities with a commitment to standards that are consistent with quality outcomes and in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local codes. In addition, the County will be following the current standards and guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will be referring to the standards and practices set forth in the most current editions of the following documents when designing and constructing the remaining segments of the trail:

Minnesota Bikeway Facility Design Manual (MnDOT)

Trail Planning, Design and Development Guidelines (MnDOT)

Trail Planning, Design and Development Guidelines, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR)

Designing Sidewalks and Trail for Access, Part 1 and II: Best Practices Design Guide (FHWA)

ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas (U.S. Access Board)

Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)

ADA and ABA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (U.S. Access Board)

The County will design all trailheads, rest stops and trail amenities, such as all benches, bike racks, rest rooms and parking lots that are associated with the regional trail to accommodate individuals with disabilities. In addition, Chisago County will construct the trail in accordance with regional trail standards that allows for two-way traffic and that will provide periodic rest stops with benches for users to stop and take a break. The County may incorporate rest stops with scenic overlooks to provide the trail users with opportunities for interpretation and education while using the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail.

It is necessary for the trail to cross local, township, county and state roads because, when finished, the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail will extend 20 miles through several cities and two townships. The County will design and install appropriate trail and roadway signage for intersection crossings to alert motorists and trail users of upcoming traffic changes.

## 7. Ecological (natural/land resources) stewardship plan

The Minnesota Land Cover and Classification System (MLCCS) identifies a large part of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail route as agricultural land. On the west end of the trail corridor (Segment B in Chisago City and Wyoming), the trail route extends through a mix of agricultural land cover, wetlands and forest. For the parts of the trail that will be east of Center City (Segments D-G), the trail corridor passes through land cover that is a mix of agricultural land with a few wetlands and pockets of forest. East of Shafer, the MLCCS identifies the land cover in the corridor as primarily agricultural with intermittent wetlands and forest areas. The area east of Herberg Road (in Segments G and H) has areas of old growth forest – including parts of Interstate State Park.

The County has started to evaluate and will continue to study a one-mile buffer surrounding the project limits for the presence of rare plants, animals, native plant communities and other rare features using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) in conjunction with the DNR’s Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS). (License Agreement # \_\_\_\_\_). The natural heritage data is provided by the Division of Ecological Resources, Minnesota DNR. These data sets, however, are not based on an exhaustive inventory of the state.

The NHIS review indicates the following species within one-mile of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail corridor include:

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>State Protection Status</u>	<u>Adjacent to Corridor</u>
Haliaeetus leucocephalus	Bald Eagle	Watchlist	
	Blanding’s Turtle		
	Leonard’s Skipper		

In addition, the County contracted for had a more thorough natural resources inventory that was completed in October 2014 in preparation for the construction of Segment G of the trail in 2015-2016. This inventory showed the following rare plant and animal resources in the areas near that part of the trail corridor (but not on the route of the trail):

Areas of red oak-sugar maple-basswood forest  
Pockets of stemless tick-trefoil (Desmodium nudiflorum)

## Wetlands

Chisago County has mapped the wetlands in the likely corridors for Segments B, D and F of the proposed trail using existing state and federal wetland and soils information. The County has included maps of the wetlands and the hydric soils for each of the uncompleted segments of the trail as a part of this Master Plan. These maps show there are several locations where the trail will be near wetlands or water bodies. Chisago County will need to perform a thorough evaluation, including a review of possible environmental effects and a wetland delineation, before completing the final design and construction for each remaining trail segment.

The maps show that there are wetland areas in Segments B, D and F of the trail that the County will need to have formally delineated as part of the development of construction plans for each of these particular trail segments. Chisago County will use these delineations to determine in detail the exact shape and type of each of the wetlands in the trail corridor. The County will then decide, as part of the final design process, what methods of construction should be used or the type of trail that should be built to minimize the impact of the trail on the wetlands.

As stated earlier, in areas near wetland and water bodies, the County will take special care when designing the trail in these locations. There may be a need to use retaining walls and guard rails to lessen the impacts to adjacent wetlands. In addition, the County also will determine if the trail should be moved around the wetlands or if any of these wetlands could be altered to construct the trail. In certain circumstances, constructing a boardwalk across a water body or wetland may be the best solution to minimize impact in sensitive environmental areas. It is the intent of Chisago County to minimize the impact to wetlands and surface waters with any trail construction.

Surface water protection and storm water management for the proposed trail will meet the requirements of the Minnesota DNR, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, local watershed districts and organizations and all other permitting and regulatory agency's requirements at the time of construction. For example, in certain jurisdictions, water quality treatment for a trail can be accomplished through the installation of a minimum of a five-foot-wide vegetated filter strip or vegetated open space located down-gradient of the trail. The ownership and maintenance of the storm water management facilities built with the trail will be the responsibility of Chisago County.

As the agency responsible for the implementation and operation of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail, Chisago County is committed to long-term ecological stewardship of the trail, the trail corridor and to all County-owned projects and facilities. For the purpose of this Master Plan, the County will develop the trail for a 100-year life span. Chisago County anticipates that with proper routine and regularly scheduled maintenance, the trail will not need a full reconstruction for up to 50 years. This is one example of the County's commitment to long-term ecological stewardship as proper maintenance of the trail (and all County facilities) will lessen the impact on the environment and reduce need for demolition and/or reconstruction of County facilities).

## 8. Research Plan

Chisago County will use the protocol established by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trail Commission for collecting visitation information for the trail.

## 9. Implementation, management and sustainability plan

Implementation: See the information on pages 28 and 29.

Physical Sustainability: This information is included on pages 18-20 and 30 of this plan.

Special Needs and Accessibility: Please see page 29 of this plan.

Programming Sustainability: Chisago County does not provide any formal programming for the trail. Programming for trail use and activities is done through cooperative agreements with other agencies and organizations. Examples of events that use the trail include:

MS 150  
Freeze Your Buns 5K  
Walk the Dog  
March for Schools  
Lakes Region Triathlon  
Fairview Clinics Annual Bike Ride

O and M Sustainability: This is included on pages 35 and 36.

Ecological Sustainability: Please see pages 31 and 32 for this information.

## **10. Other needed information:**

### **Estimated Costs and Funding**

Regional trail implementation has both initial costs (acquisition and development) and ongoing costs (operations and maintenance). Trail development of the remaining segments will occur as opportunities to coordinate with other projects and agencies arise and funding becomes available. The County may construct individual segments of the trail faster than planned, if trail development coincides with a county or state highway improvement project or similar development project along the proposed trail route.

### **Boundaries and Acquisition Costs**

As stated earlier, the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail route primarily follows the route of a former railroad line that connected Taylors Falls and Wyoming across southern Chisago County. One objective of the County with the development of this trail is to follow and use the former railroad line to lessen the construction costs and to minimize the need for additional easements or acquisitions of private property.

### **Development Costs**

Regional trail development costs include the cost to prepare the site, reconfigure roadways as needed, change drainage patterns where necessary, install bridges, pave the trail and install signage, striping and landscaping. As noted earlier in this Plan, in total, the estimated development cost of the remaining segments of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail (about 10.5 miles including about 1.6 miles in Interstate Park) is \$2 – 3 million in 2015 dollars.

## **Operations and Maintenance**

Chisago County will manage, operate and maintain the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail. County Ordinances will govern the trail for segments outside Interstate State Park. The DNR will have jurisdiction over and will maintain and operate the regional trail within the boundaries of Interstate State Park.

### **County Ordinances and State Law**

All existing State of Minnesota traffic laws, Chisago County Ordinances and the County's Parks and Trail Operation Manual will govern the use of the trail. The County will develop and finish the trail for the use and enjoyment of the public for recreational, educational and transportation purposes.

### **Operations – Public Safety**

There are several Chisago County Ordinances that regulate parks and trails under the jurisdiction of Chisago County. Education and enforcement of the provisions of the County parks and trails is provided by the Chisago County Sheriff's Department, County parks staff and local police departments. Their role will be to protect trail users and the County property along the trail corridor. The Sheriff's Department also will aid and assist the public when needed and gain their cooperation and compliance with the applicable rules, regulations and laws.

The County is not anticipating the need for any additional deputies to patrol the trail because much of the trail follows or is in existing road right-of-way and is within sight of patrol vehicles driving on adjacent roads. Some of the trail segments are or will be in the cities of Wyoming, Chisago City and Lindstrom where the Wyoming Police department and the Lakes Area Police department have jurisdiction to enforce laws and regulations and to protect the public and public property. Any licensed peace officer will have jurisdiction to drive on the trail to maintain a safe operating environment.

### **Operations - Maintenance**

Chisago County typically partners with local cities through wither a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) to provide services for public facilities – including trails. To date, Chisago County has been providing all routine and minor maintenance of the two regional trails in the County. If the County deems it necessary, a MOU or a JPA will be executed before trail construction that outlines which agency is responsible for general routine maintenance of the trail and which agency is responsible for capital improvements to those trail segments in their jurisdiction.

The County is responsible for the routine maintenance and operations of the regional trails. This includes mowing, sweeping, plowing, clearing, debris removal, etc. Solid waste is typically collected from trash receptacles located along the trail in strategic locations by County maintenance staff. Chisago County staff also inspects the trail on a regular basis and follows-up with the necessary maintenance actions. The inspections address possible safety issues, vandalism and non-routine maintenance concerns. The County also will provide the capital improvements that the trail needs and will provide the required long-term maintenance for the trail, such as bituminous overlays and crack sealing. The County also will provide and maintain signage for the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail.

As indicated above, for the purpose of this Master Plan, the County will develop the trail for a 100-year life span. Chisago County anticipates that with proper routine and scheduled maintenance, the trail

will not need a full reconstruction for up to 50 years. Routine maintenance such as crack filling, sealcoating and bituminous overlays/resurfacing will help extend the life of the trail.

Proposed maintenance activities for the trail include the following:

Sign inventory and replacement, spring cleanup, blowing off debris, trash pickup, erosion repair, bituminous patching, storm cleanup and striping replacement as is needed.

Mowing adjacent to the trail in clear zones and at trail head and rest stop locations.

Chisago County will negotiate with local snowmobile clubs for winter maintenance of the trail segments that the County will make available for snowmobile use.

### **Operating Costs**

After the trail is fully developed, Chisago County will cover the maintenance and operating costs of the SIRT. Chisago County estimates that annual routine maintenance costs for the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail (outside of Interstate State Park) will be about \$1,100 per mile, for a total of \$20,900 in 2015 dollars. This cost includes expenses for sweeping, sign maintenance and replacement, striping, mowing and minor trail repair.

Additional costs for trail preservation and rehabilitation activities, such as surface repairs and striping replacement, are anticipated but these will depend upon trail conditions as identified through routine inspections. Chisago County will be incorporating these costs, along with scheduled major maintenance items such as crack filling and sealing, into the County's annual capital improvement programs.

## **Funding Sources**

### **Trail Development**

Chisago County is in the process of identifying funding sources to help cover the costs of developing and constructing of the remaining sections of the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail, including state bonding funds. Additionally, the State of Minnesota provides funding for trail design and development through the Parks and Trails Legacy Program.

### **Annual Operations and Maintenance**

Revenue for the operation and maintenance of the trail comes from the Chisago County Parks Department's annual operations and maintenance budget which includes revenues from picnic shelter rentals, park entrance fees and the County general fund.

Chisago County also expects financial assistance with some trail maintenance from the various cities along the trail. It also is anticipated that voluntary community help with trail maintenance and trash pick-up will come from local civic groups. Some future rehabilitation costs could be covered by grants from the State of Minnesota.

# CHISAGO COUNTY

Housing and Redevelopment Authority  
Economic Development Authority

April 16, 2015

Chisago County Board of Commissioners  
313 North Main Street  
Center City, MN 55012

Dear Board of Commissioners,

On behalf of the Chisago County HRA-EDA, this letter is in support of the efforts of the Chisago County Parks and Trails Board to complete the Swedish Immigrant Trail. This trail will stimulate the economy by attracting tourism as well as enhance the quality of life for the residents of Chisago County.

The League of American Bicyclists state, the average tourist cyclist spends \$83.00 per day. They are spending at local restaurants and stores along the trails. Communities along a scenic trail with connections to retail areas will see an increase in commercial businesses and developments that accommodate the needs of a cyclist.

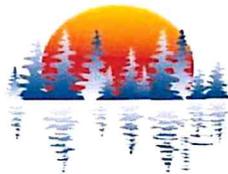
There are also many benefits for the residents. The residents have safe alternative options for transportation, they have additional local recreation opportunities, and it encourages health benefits. According to the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota, trails positively affect land values. Real estate agents use trails as a selling feature. In Minnesota, homeowners generally believe trails increase the value of their home.

As there are many economic and social benefits of bike trail, the Chisago County HRA-EDA is in support of the Swedish Immigrant Trail and the Parks and Trails Board's pursuing financing opportunities to complete the trail.

Sincerely,



Nancy Hoffman  
Executive Director



**A NATURAL RESOURCE FOR BUSINESS**

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(651) 674-5664 · [www.chisagocounty.org](http://www.chisagocounty.org)

**LETTERS OF SUPPORT**  
**FOR A MULTI-USE TRAIL DEVELOPMENT**  
**SWEDISH IMMIGRANT TRAIL**

**1. State**

- |                  |                          |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1.1. Bob Barrett | State Representative 17B |
| 1.2. Sean Nienow | State Senator Dist. 17   |

**2. County**

- |                 |                                   |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2.1. Joe Sausen | Parks and Trails Foundation Board |
| 2.2. Laird Mork | Chisago County Park Director      |

**3. City**

- |                         |                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 3.1. Michael D. Buchite | Mayor Taylors Falls          |
| 3.2. John Tangen        | Council Member Taylors Falls |
| 3.3. Larry Julik-Heine  | Council Member Taylors Falls |
| 3.4. Ross Rivard        | Vice Mayor Taylors Falls     |
| 3.5. Mary Jo Murphy     | Council Member Taylors Falls |
| 3.6. Keith Carlson      | Mayor City of Lindstrom      |
| 3.7. John J. Olinger    | City Administrator Lindstrom |
| 3.8. Shari Bachman      | Council Member Lindstrom     |
| 3.9. Matt Rein          | Council Member Lindstrom     |
| 3.10. Rusty Johnson     | Council Member Lindstrom     |
| 3.11. Pam Schultz       | Council Member Lindstrom     |
| 3.12. Ian Dudley        | Council Member Lindstrom     |
| 3.13. Kyle Johnson      | Mayor City of Shafer         |
| 3.14. Patty Mattson     | Council City of Shafer       |
| 3.15. Corey Sellman     | Council City of Shafer       |
| 3.16. Jesse Keeney      | Council City of Shafer       |
| 3.17. Matt Dunham       | Council City of Shafer       |
| 3.18. Eric Peterson,    | Mayor Wyoming MN             |
| 3.19. Jill Behnke       | Mayor Center City MN         |

**4. Education**

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|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 4.1. Joe Thimm | Principal City of Taylors Falls |
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**5. Chamber Of Commerce**

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| 5.1. Cindy Stimmler | Falls Chamber of Commerce<br>Executive Director |
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**6. Memorandum Of Understanding**

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| 6.1. Chisago County, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and City of Taylors Falls |  |
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