

SUNRISE PRAIRIE REGIONAL TRAIL

MASTER PLAN

CHISAGO COUNTY, MINNESOTA

APPROVED BY THE CHISAGO COUNTRY BOARD ON AUGUST 5, 2015



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The preparation of the Sunrise Prairie 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 Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail corridor is 30 miles long and will provide, when complete, a paved trail connection running north/south through Chisago County. This trail corridor has two distinct sections. The southern one-half, from the southern border of the County running north through the Wyoming, Stacy, Lent Township to North Branch has a 10-foot-wide bituminous trail that the County installed in 1997 on the bed of a former railroad line. This part of the trail connects to the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail (in Washington County) on the south and to the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail in Wyoming. This Master Plan includes the northern part of the trail corridor, from North Branch to Pine County that will eventually have a paved trail connection to the northern border of the County. This part of the trail will pass through the cities of North Branch, Harris and Rush City and through parts of Rushseba Township.

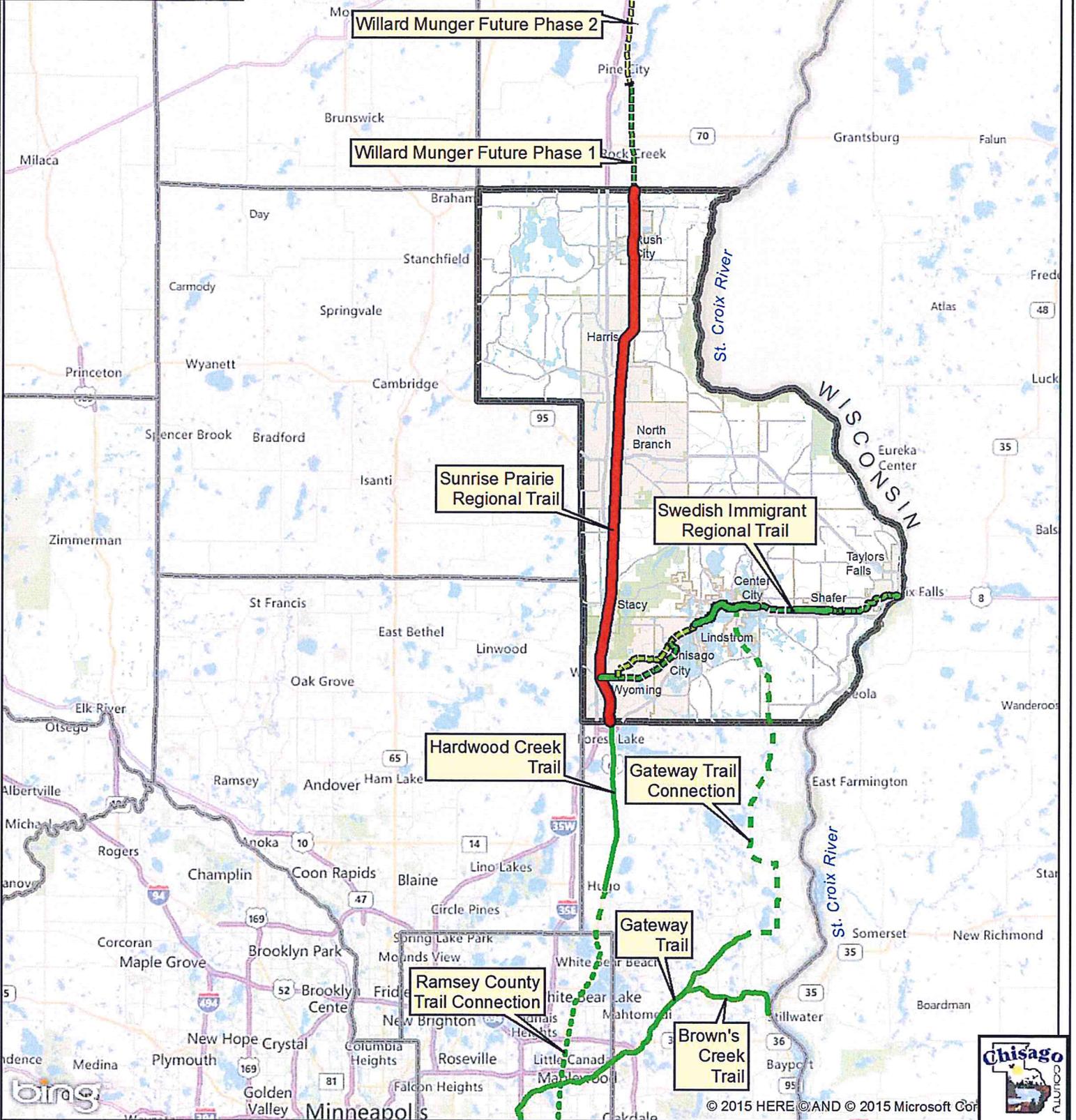
Chisago County has been planning and constructing the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail since 1993. As envisioned in this plan, the cities along the trail will make connections with local parks, schools, libraries and pedestrian systems with the regional trail system. Currently, residents and visitors to western Chisago County have limited access to off-road, multi-use paved trails that support bicycle and pedestrian mobility and commuting. The Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail provides 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. The existing and planned trail provides a range of benefits including economic development, safety, health and improved mobility.

The Burlington Northern Railroad connecting St. Paul and Duluth was completed in this area in the years 1867-1870. The railroad was abandoned between North Branch and Forest Lake in 1992 and the tracks were removed. The existing part of the trail (between Wyoming and North Branch) is on the former railroad bed that is owned by the Chisago County Regional Rail Authority. Future segments of the trail continuing north from North Branch may be constructed following the existing railroad right-of-way (if it becomes available). Preserving this corridor for possible future public uses is an important goal of Chisago County.

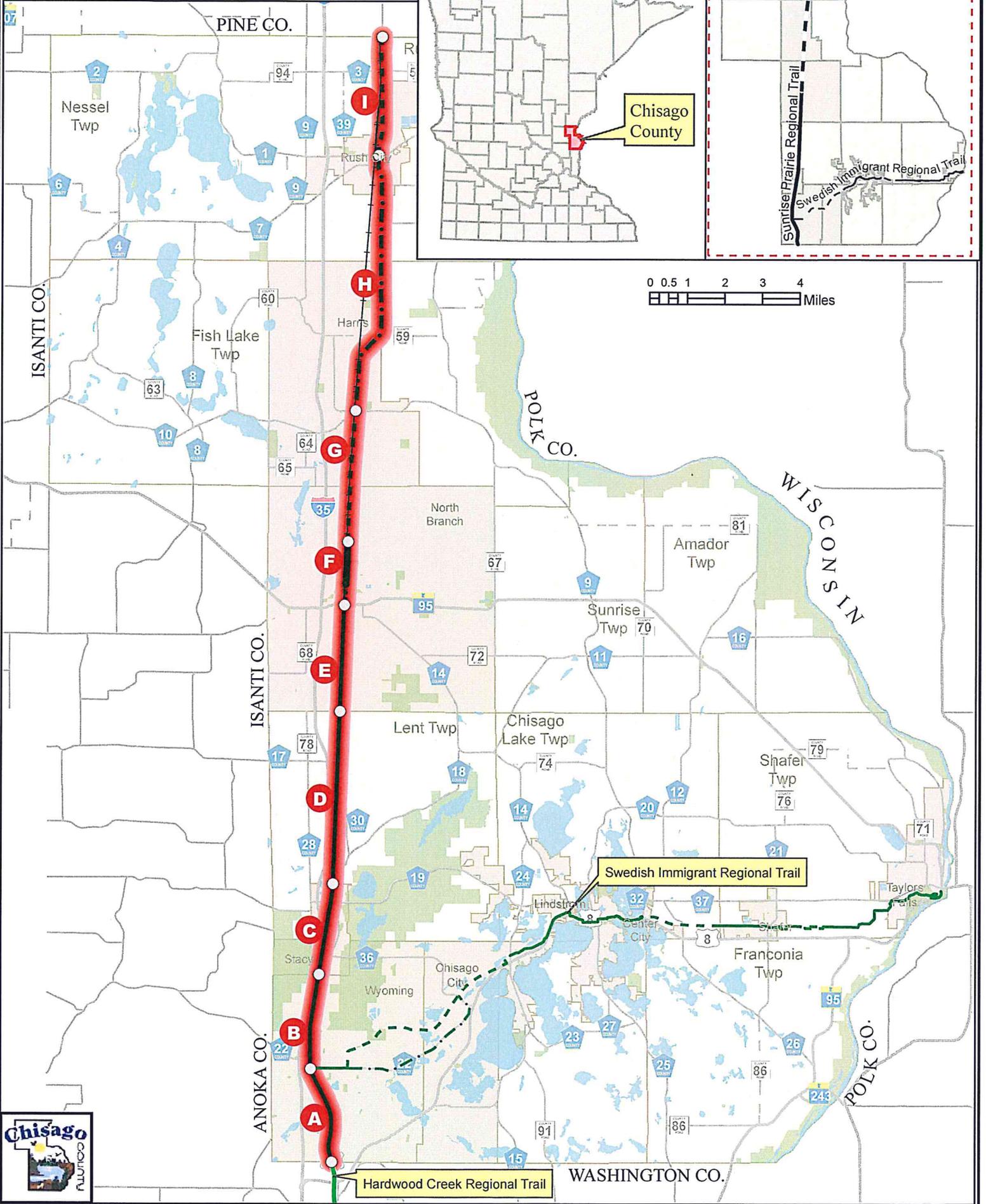
The Chisago County Parks and Trail Foundation was formally organized in 1993 to promote bicycle safety in Chisago County and to help with the public promotion and support of Chisago County Parks and Trails. This group was instrumental in the initial planning and promotion of the first phase of the Sunrise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

Figure One illustrates the regional location and the general route of the trail and several other future connecting trails (Swedish Immigrant, Hardwood Creek and Gateway). **Figure Two** illustrates how the trail will connect the cities, trails and parks in western Chisago County. The Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail Master Plan is a document that Chisago County will use to guide the future development of the trail and to preserve the planned trail corridor.

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail Plan



Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail Connections



It is the intent of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail Master Plan to provide the public with a better understanding of why Chisago County selected the primary trail route 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.

Chisago County may seek funding from a variety of sources to develop the unfinished segments of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail. The length of the trail will 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 Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail. 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 Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail include the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Chisago County Parks and Trails Foundation and the cities of Wyoming, Stacy, North Branch, Harris and Rush City. Chisago County also is aware that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has money earmarked for the study and master planning of the “Oberstar/Twin Ports Trail” (a continuation of the Willard Munger Trail) from Hinckley to Chisago County.

3. Setting/regional context

The Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail corridor generally follows a former railroad right-of-way from Wyoming on the south to North Branch and then generally follows the County Road 30 (old Highway 61) corridor from North Branch to Harris, Rush City and Pine County on the north in western Chisago County. This trail, along with the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail, 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 Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail will complete a missing link 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 Minnesota DNR State trails in Chisago County. The Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail will connect the City of Wyoming and the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail on the south to several cities and local trails to Pine County on the north. 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 on the map 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. The completion of a multi-use trail from the Twin Cities to Duluth (the Oberstar/Twin Ports Trail) has long been a vision of outdoor enthusiasts along the corridor and across the state. When all the sections of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail in Chisago County are completed, they will help bridge the gap in this trail and will facilitate the completion of this important Minnesota recreational opportunity.

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 also connects 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 30 mile length, the County has completed 15 miles of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail (from the southern County border with Washington County to Highway 95 in North Branch). In addition, the City of North Branch has completed about 1.5 miles of an off-road trail that is located on the east side of County Road 30 extending north between Birch Street and 403rd Street.

4. **Site Information**

A primary objective of the Master Plan process is to document the existing improvements of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail and to locate the remaining parts of the trail (from North Branch to Pine County) in a north/south corridor parallel to County Road 30 and/or the existing railroad line. The County has identified four general options to consider for completing the trail. They include:

1. Placing the trail in the County Road 30 right-of-way – in the ditch, or near the road or both.
2. Placing the trail in the existing railroad right-of-way. (The railroad corridor is 100 feet wide and features gradual grades, making it ideal for the installation of a regional trail for bicycling and walking (if it is ever abandoned).
3. Locating the trail in both the County Road 30 right-of-way and along the railroad.
4. Widening the shoulders of County Road 30 thus locating the trail near the existing road.

Chisago County has not yet acquired any of the necessary additional right-of-way for the uncompleted part (the northern 15 miles) of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail. Once this Master Plan is approved, the County will work closely with the cities and the area property owners to ensure the preferred trail route and associated 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.

For any of the new parts of the trail that will be on or crossing private property, the County will need to acquire land or easements from private property owners 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 segment 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 acquisition offers.

The land uses and areas surrounding the trail corridor are a mix of suburban, agricultural and rural residential uses, with the land types generally consisting of intermittent wetlands, forest areas and several lakes. On the northern end of the trail corridor, (Segments G, H and I in North Branch, Harris and Rush City) the County has not yet completed a detailed alignment survey or analysis of the possible trail corridors. The County will need to gather more complete information about adjacent land uses, property ownership, creeks and streams, 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.

Natural Resource Description

As identified in the Chisago County Comprehensive Parks and Trail Plan, Chisago County consists of three major landforms. The following three 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 the 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 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 Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail will connect the rolling topography of northern Chisago County with several cities and the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail and the Hardwood Creek Trail in the more level southern part of the County.

The Minnesota Land Cover and Classification System (MLCCS) identifies a large part of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail route as agricultural land. On the north end of the trail corridor (Segments G, H and I in North Branch, Harris and Rush City), the trail route extends through a mix of agricultural land cover, wetlands and forest. For the parts of the trail that will be north of downtown Harris (Segments H and I), the trail corridor passes through land cover that is a mix of cropland and pasture with a few wetlands and pockets of forest. North of Rush City, (Segment I) the MLCCS identifies the land cover in the corridor as primarily agricultural with intermittent wetlands and forest areas.

Section 7 of the Master Plan (starting on page 33) has more detailed information about the natural and other ecological resources in the trail corridor.

General Topography

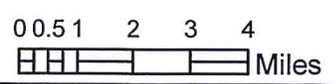
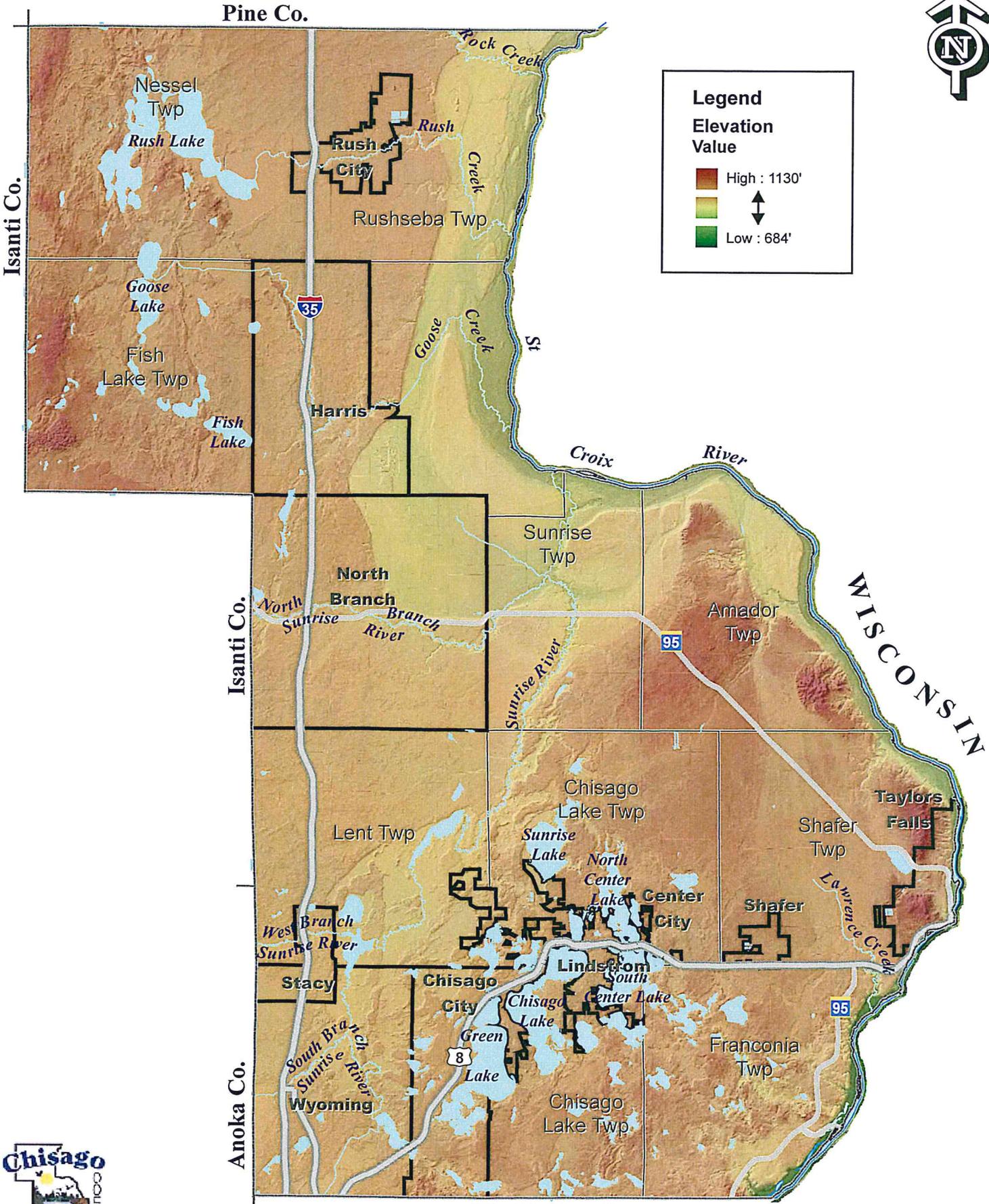


Legend

Elevation Value

High : 1130'

Low : 684'



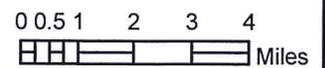
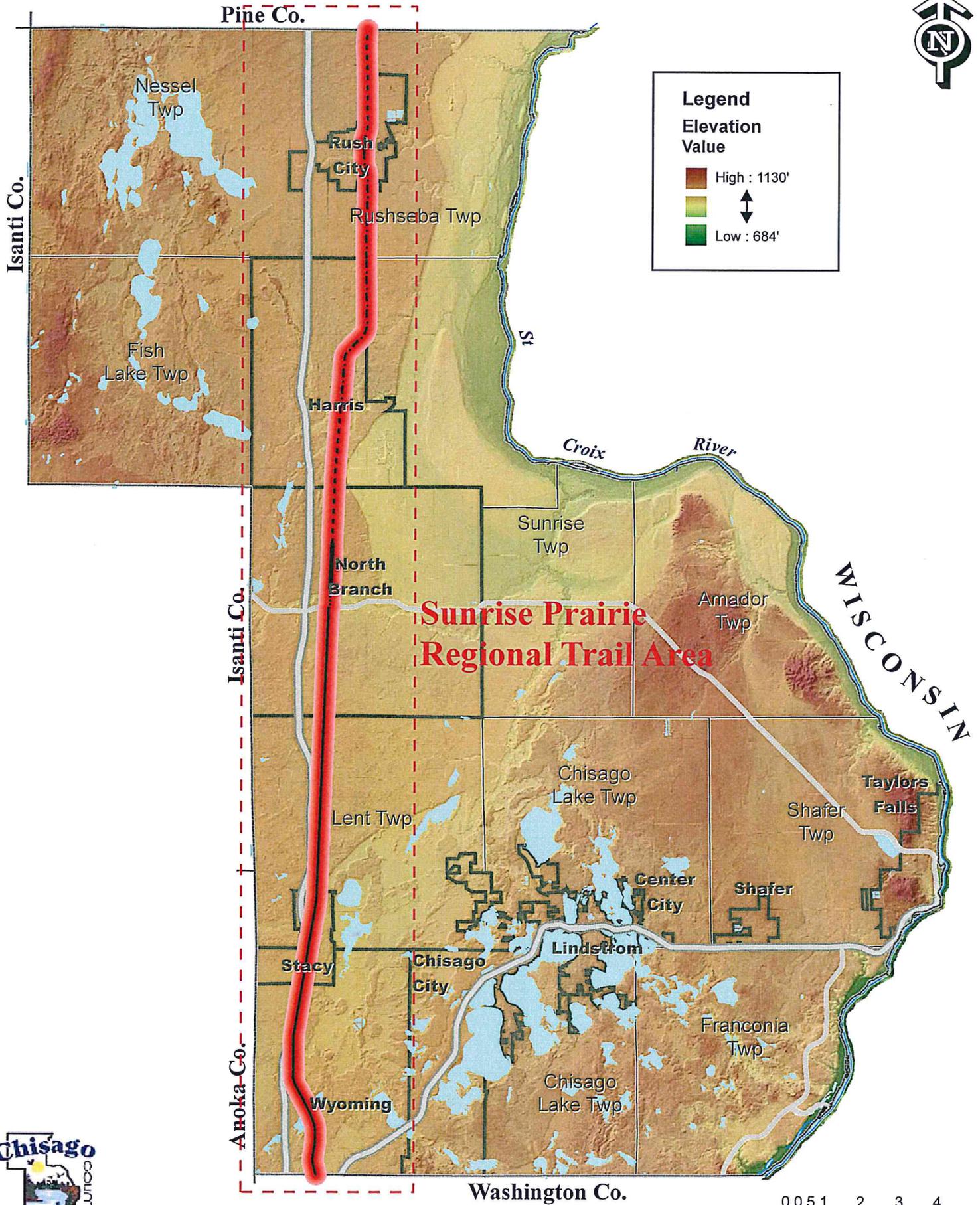
Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail



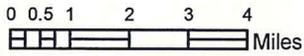
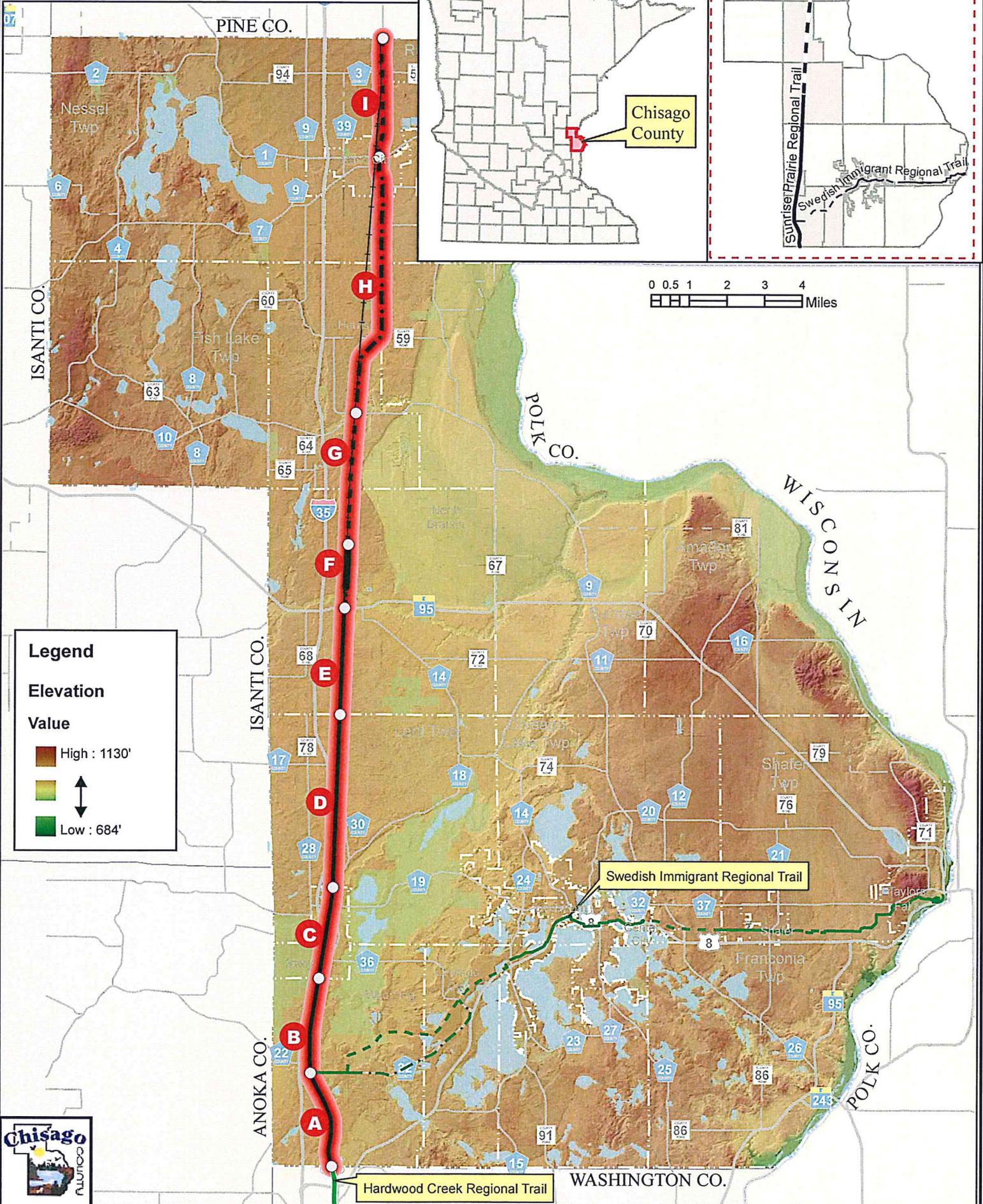
Legend
Elevation Value

	High : 1130'
	Low : 684'

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Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail Connections



Legend

Elevation Value

High : 1130'

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Low : 684'



Hardwood Creek Regional Trail

Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail

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ISANTI CO.

ISANTI CO.

ANOKA CO.

POLK CO.

WISCONSIN

WASHINGTON CO.

POLK CO.

Nessel Twp

Fish Lake Twp

Amador Twp

Shafter Twp

Franconia Twp

Taylor

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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. Business and industries 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 population 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 can 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 is 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 a consistent commitment by the County to invest 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 be aware of 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 people 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 35 and U.S. Highway 8 corridors. Because most of the existing and future development is and will be along these corridors, they provide 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 Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail parallels the Interstate 35 and County Road 30 (the former Highway 61) corridors for about 30 miles running north to south in 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 Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail provides recreation opportunities for both visitors to the area and for the residents of Chisago County. The trail serves two primary roles. First, it serves as a destination trail that draws visitors for the specific purpose of recreation. Secondly, the trail links and will link several communities, providing a safe, multi-modal transportation option for underserved communities.

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. Several local communities in Chisago County (North Branch, Wyoming, Chisago City, Lindstrom, Center City, Shafer 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 Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail is located in western 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 (nationally) in five years. Outdoor recreation added three million participants in 2011- a significant improvement over the past few years when participation either dropped or remained stagnant."

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

Projected Trail Use

The existing 15 miles of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail is heavily used by County residents and visitors. As the trail is extended north (eventually connecting to the Willard Munger Trail in Hinckley), the County expects the trail to get even more use. The trail's south end now draws users from the Hardwood Creek Trail in Washington County while local users traveling short distances and visitors traveling up to 50 miles will use the trail to experience the landscape and scenic beauty of Chisago County. During the non-winter months, the County sees 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 allows snowmobiles on certain segments of the trail. The policy for use of snowmobiles on specific segments of the trail is subject to approval by the Chisago County Board.

When fully constructed, Chisago County is projecting that the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail will generate between 30,000 and 50,000 annual visits. The County used the visitor numbers from the Hardwood Creek Trail and the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail to estimate the annual use of the trail. Active use by visitors on the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail in Washington County (which connects to the Sunrise Prairie Trail) adds to the number of users on the south end of the Sunrise Prairie Trail. Similarly, Chisago County is anticipating heavier local use of the regional trail in and near Wyoming, Stacy and North Branch where the trail connects 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 Statewide 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 both 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 extension and eventual completion of the Sunrise Prairie 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

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 that a visitor who travels to a trail for a day's ride will spend four times as much money as a local user. 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 Sunrise Prairie 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 western Chisago County have limited access to off-road, paved trails that support bicycle and pedestrian mobility. The Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail provides interconnection between several cities, schools, parks and attractions. In addition, the trail provides 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.

There is an Old Highway 61 coalition comprised of persons, government agencies, chambers of commerce and business owners along the Old Highway 61 (now known as County Road 30 in Chisago County) corridor. This group has representatives from Chisago, Pine and Carlton counties and they have been meeting since 2012. This committee has identified the completion of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail along this corridor as an important priority for their marketing and tourism plans. When completed, the trail will have new trailheads in Harris and Rush City that would connect with local restaurants, businesses and other service related activities.

The Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail is within a 30-minute drive of much of the Twin Cities Metropolitan area and serves many functions in Chisago County. When completed, it will provide a 30-mile long north/south link in Chisago County. It will extend from Wyoming and the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail on the south to several cities including North Branch, Harris, Rush City and Pine County on the north end making it a regional tourist destination. Because of its location and features, the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail provides a high-quality recreation opportunity, making the trail a destination

itself. The County has been developing and maintaining the trail to include easy access, secure parking, access to drinking water and other necessary amenities for its users.

In summary, having a continuous north/south regional trail in 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 and the East Central region of Minnesota.

Citizen Participation and Public Outreach

Public Involvement Process – Planning History

The development of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail is the outgrowth of local and county-wide interest in increasing recreation opportunities for residents and visitors. 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 on the former railroad line in western Chisago County in 1993-1994. These groups gained the support and approval of the Chisago County Board to develop the plans for Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail. The County Board recognized the need as well as the opportunity to create additional recreation amenities between the cities of North Branch, Stacy and Wyoming.

Public Involvement - Input Process

There is strong commitment from Chisago County to repair and finish the Sunrise Prairie 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 contributions from private organizations, businesses and individuals with more than \$125,000 in local contributions that supported the development of the trail.

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 the 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 Chisago 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. Those 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 Sunrise Prairie 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.

County Park Board

The County Park Board reviewed drafts of the trail Master Plan in June and July 2015 and recommended approval of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail Master Plan on July 16, 2015.

County Board Approval

The Chisago County Board has the authority to approve the Sunrise Prairie 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 process, a review and recommendation by the County Park Board and a formal approval of the proposed Plan amendment by the Chisago County Board.

The Chisago County Park Board recommended approval of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail Master Plan on July 16, 2015 and County staff is expecting the Chisago County Board to approve the Master Plan in August 5, 2015.

Public Comments

The Chisago County HRA/EDA recently submitted a letter of support to Chisago County for the completion of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail. It is included in the appendix of this Master Plan.

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 completion of the north end of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail is well-qualified to count another 15 of those newly paved trail miles. The Parks and Trails Legacy Plan sets nine criteria for prioritizing State investment in trails. The Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail meets these criteria as follows:

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

The Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail now connects the cities of Wyoming, Stacy and North Branch and Lent Township with the Hardwood Creek Trail in Washington County. When completed, the trail also will connect North Branch, Harris and Rush City and their corresponding work opportunities and also several major employers including Polaris, Fairview and Halberg Marine. The completed part of the trail connects schools (Wyoming Elementary) and libraries in Wyoming and North Branch and is within blocks of Sunrise River Elementary, North Branch Middle and High Schools.

When the northern segments of the trail are completed, they will be within blocks of Jacobson Elementary and Rush City High School and the public library and airport in Rush City.

In addition, the trail now connects the central business districts of Wyoming, Stacy and North Branch and in the future will connect the business districts of Harris and Rush City to the rest of Chisago County.

Connects with existing state or regional trails:

The Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail will eventually connect to future trails in Pine County and now connects to the Swedish Immigrant and Hardwood Creek Regional Trails. 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 regional Trails in Chisago County. The map on Figure One shows the regional and state trails in and near Chisago County and how the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail fits into the areas trail system.

Connects with high-quality natural resources or recreation areas:

The Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail now connects to several local parks and provide connections to the Carlos Avery State Wildlife Management Area and the south and north branches of the Sunrise River. The trail route will pass through rolling hills, will abut lakes and wetlands and traverse a mix of prairie and forested landscapes.

Connects to multiple destinations:

As noted above, the existing and proposed trail will connect five cities, a wildlife management area and regional trail. In addition, the trail will connect to local trail and parks and at least three public libraries along its route.

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

When completed, the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail will fill a critical gap in recreation opportunity in Chisago County by providing a safe, continuous, paved trail from north to south in the County (where now there is only a partial trail opportunity). Access to many of the recreation facilities and cities in the area are now only available by motor vehicle. The Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail now (and 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 Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail will secure a critical piece of the regional and state trail system by connecting the Hardwood Creek and Swedish Immigrant Regional Trails on the south with the local trails in the cities in which it will pass through with Pine County and a future link to the Willard Munger Trail to the north thus creating a more complete regional trail system for Chisago County and all of east central Minnesota.

Secures a unique opportunity or experience:

The users of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail will enjoy small-town experiences, biking, walking, jogging or in-line skating among the diverse flora and fauna (including grouse, deer, wild turkey and waterfowl) as well as the native prairie and wildflowers that are common along the trail corridor. The completed part of the trail in Wyoming and Stacy provides easy access to all the unique amenities and natural features of Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area.

Fills a critical gap for commuting:

The Sunrise Prairie 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 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 Sunrise Prairie 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 Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail will provide residents and visitors in western Chisago County with access to a regional trail that connects them to the St. Croix River valley, area lakes and the cities of Wyoming, Stacy, North Branch, Harris and Rush City. Harris and Rush City are now deficient in regional trail access and have to travel south to North Branch to use the existing part of 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. The Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail provides easy access for all interested users including walkers, joggers, hikers, bicyclists, dog walkers, in-line skaters and other mobility units and 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 Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail using design standards that are consistent with quality outcomes and accepted standards and practices. The County expects that much 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 away from the roadway through grade and distance separation for as much of the remaining 15 miles of the corridor as possible. 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 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 of the centerline of the trail.

Chisago County will be considering several elements that will affect 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 ditches, 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 or other water bodies. 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 at the time of construction. For example, in certain jurisdictions, water quality treatment for a trail can be accomplished by using a minimum of a five-foot-wide vegetated filter strip or vegetated open space located down-gradient of the trail.

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.

Trail Design Elements

Trail Crossings

Because much of the Sunrise Prairie 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 or 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 Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail (SPRT) into nine planning segments – progressing from south to north through western 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 ten-foot-wide off-road bituminous trail that is located on the bed of the former railroad line. It is the south end of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail proceeding north from the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail in Washington County for about 2.6 miles to the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail in the City of Wyoming.

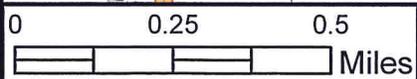
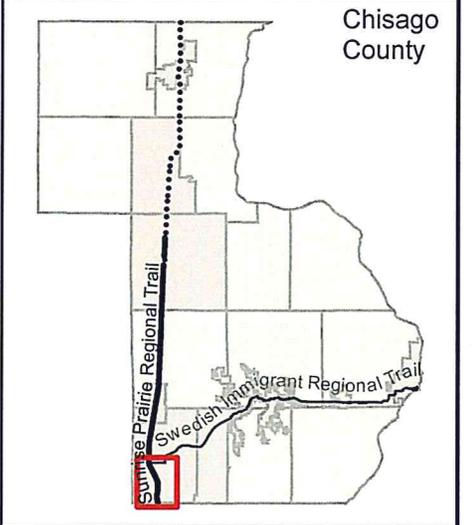
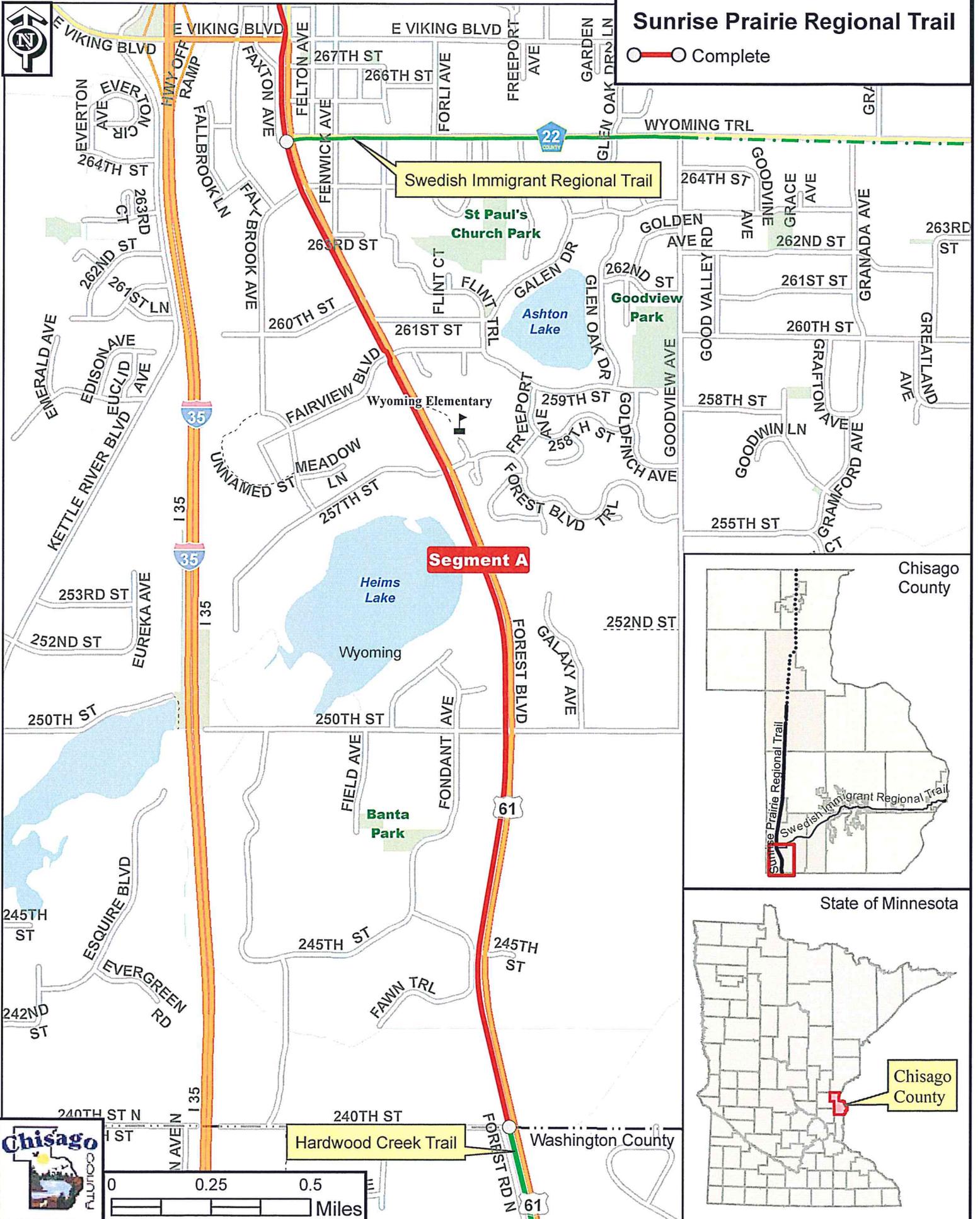
The land uses along this part of the trail include a mix urban and suburban land uses including residential, commercial, industrial and institutional.

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment A

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

○ — ○ Complete

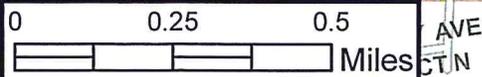
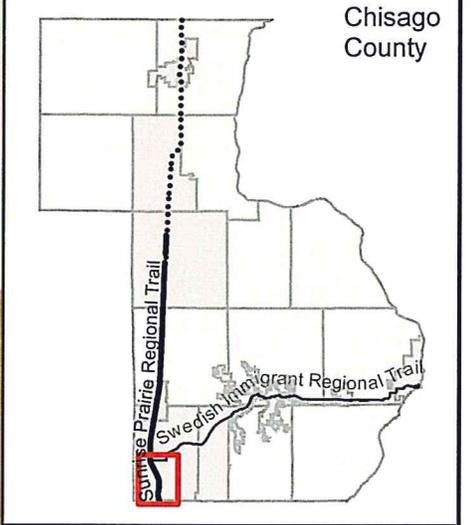
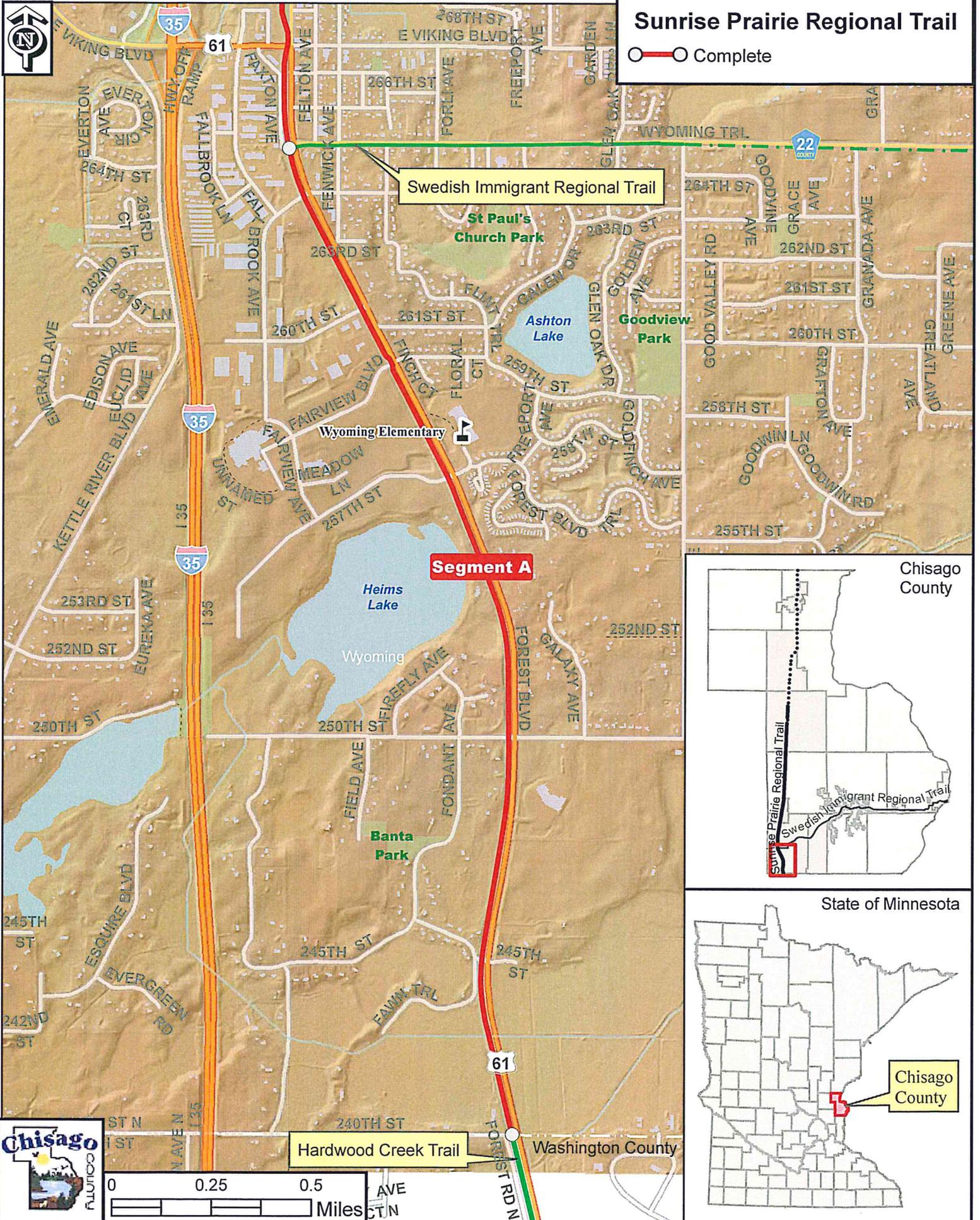


Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment A

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

○ Complete



Hardwood Creek Trail

Washington County

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment A

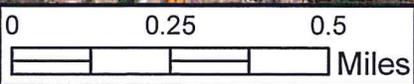
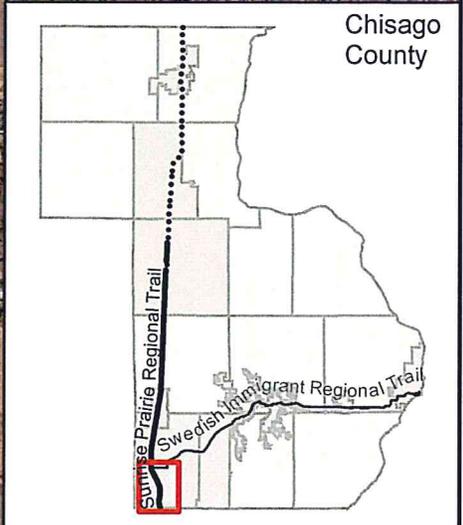
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Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

○ — ○ Complete



with 2013 Aerial



Hardwood Creek Trail

Washington County

Segment B

For Segment B of the trail, it continues north through the City of Wyoming from the Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail for 2.5 miles to the City of Stacy. The trail in this segment passes near the public library and Wyoming City Hall and is a 10-foot-wide off-road trail that was constructed on the bed of the former railroad line. In addition, there is a motor vehicle parking lot and trail head for the trail just north of Viking Boulevard.

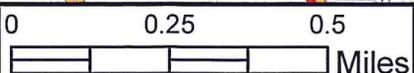
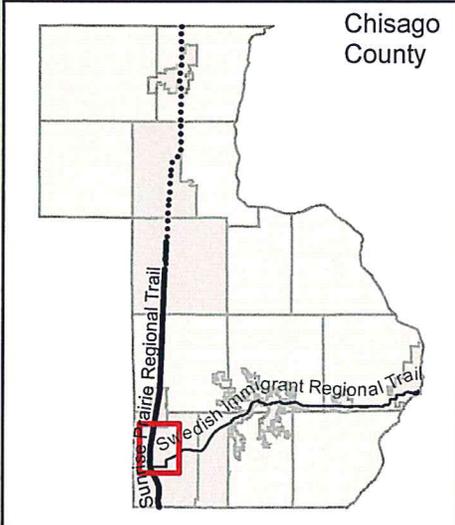
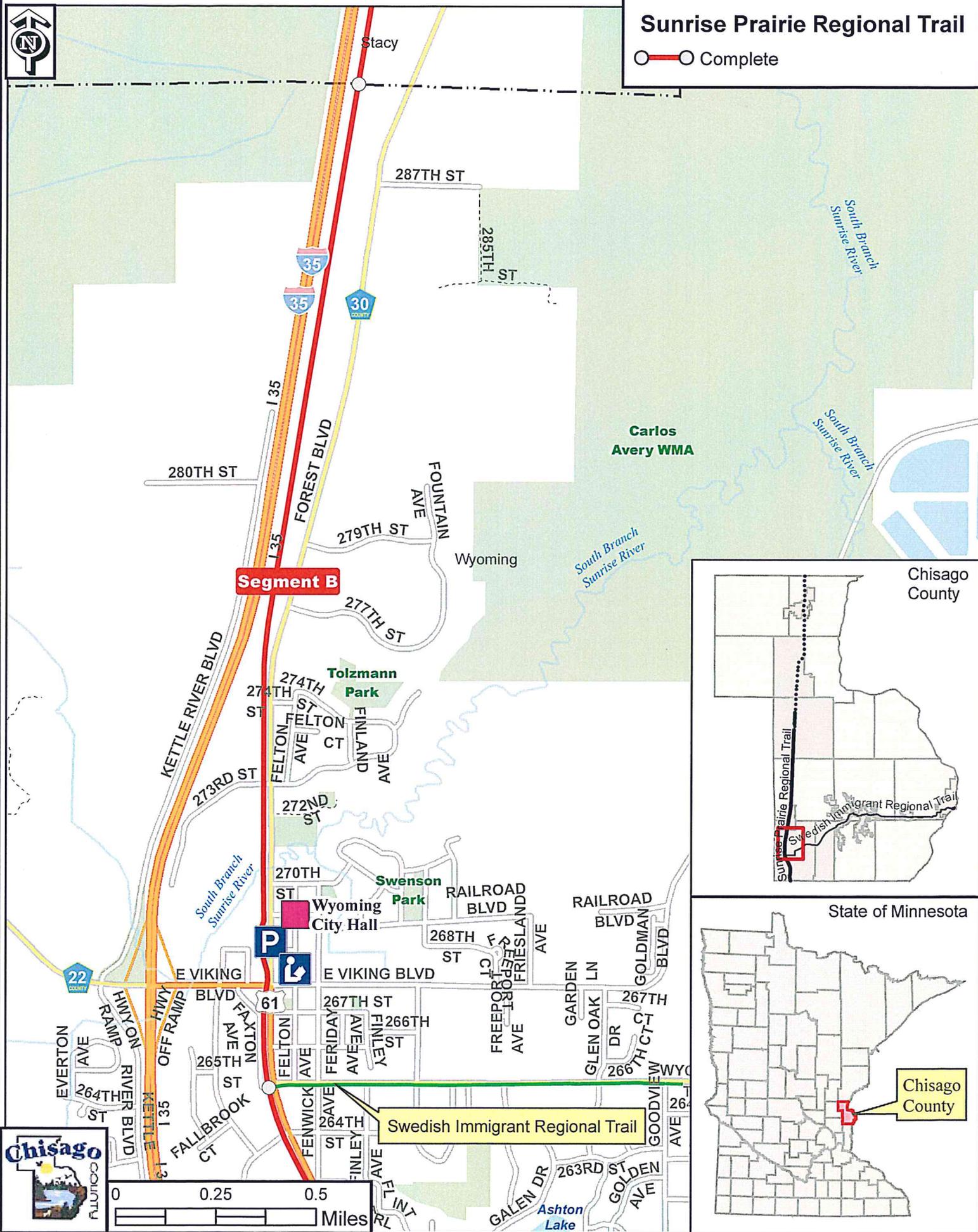
The land uses along this part of the trail include a mix urban and suburban land uses including residential, commercial, industrial and institutional.

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment B

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

○—○ Complete

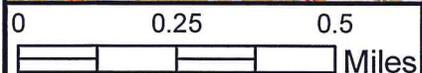
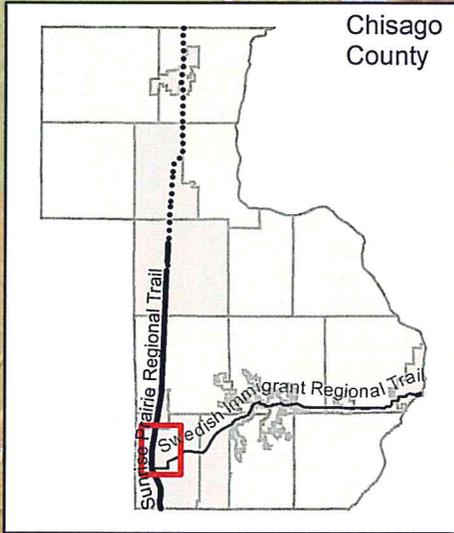
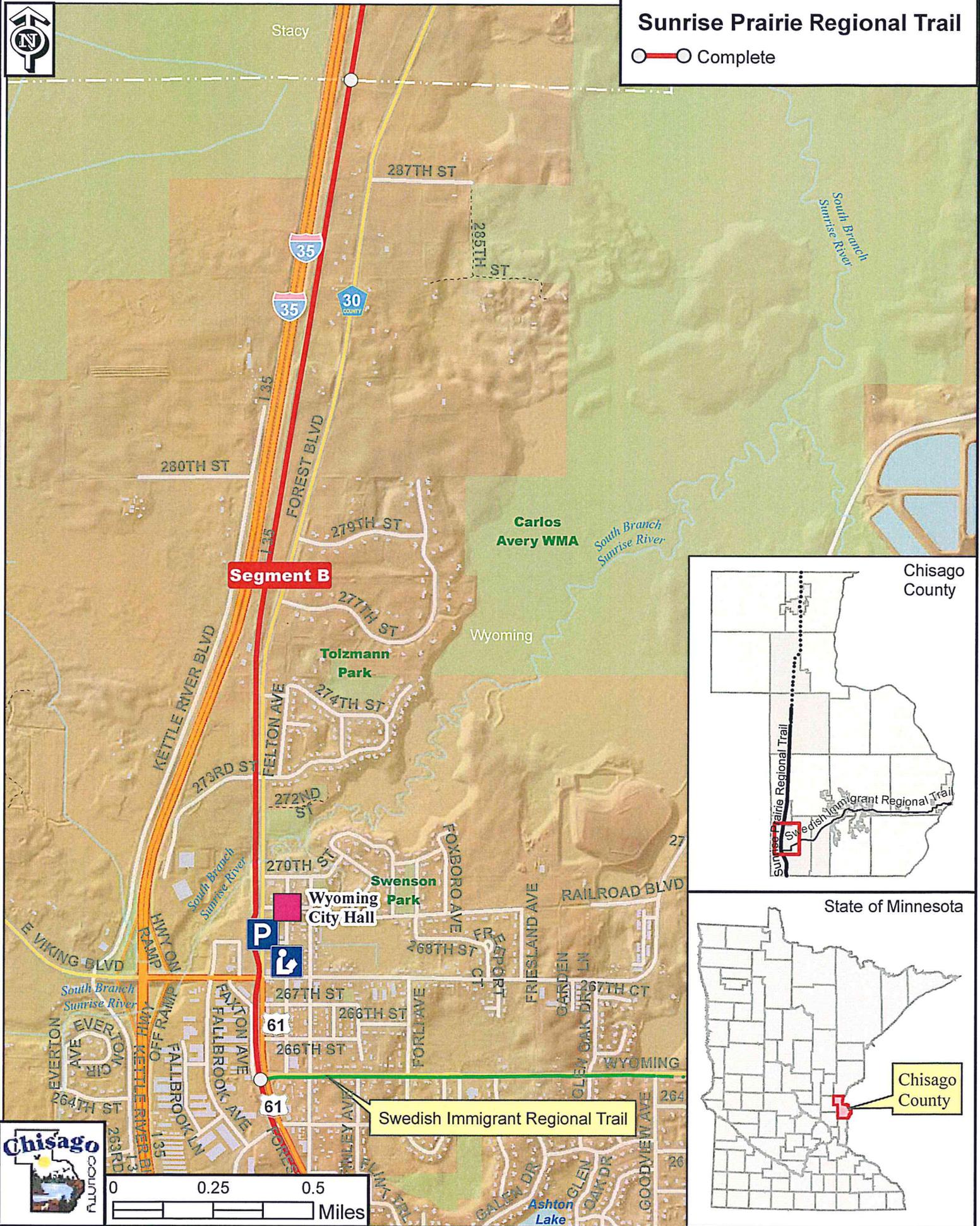


Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment B

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Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

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Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment B

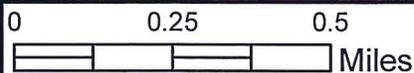
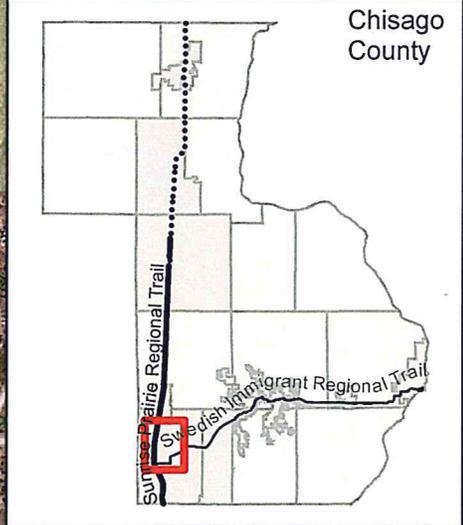
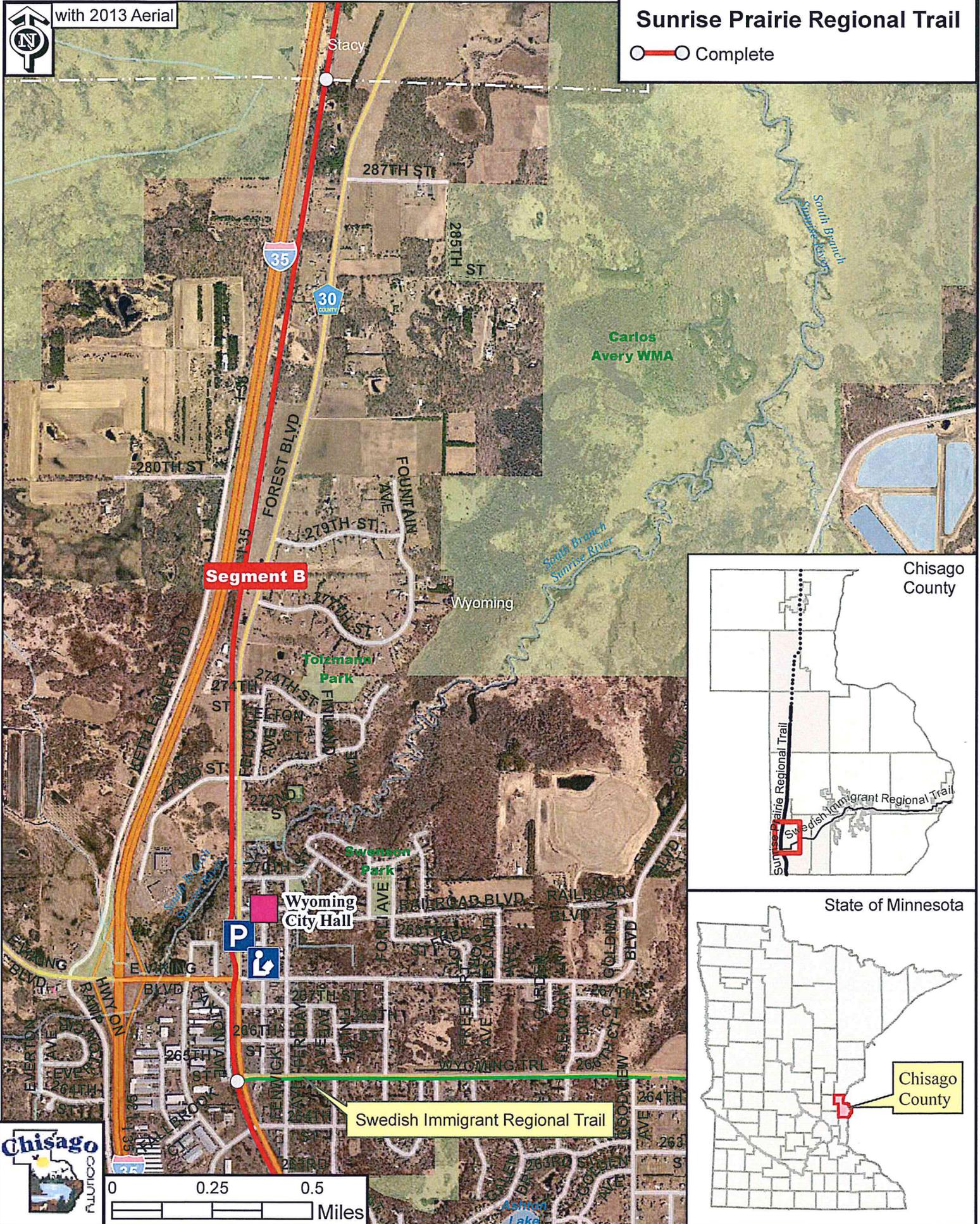
Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

○—○ Complete



with 2013 Aerial



Segment C

This segment of the trail runs through the City of Stacy. It consists of a 10-foot-wide off-road bituminous trail constructed on the bed of the former railroad. This segment of the trail has a length of about 2.4 miles. Stacy Lions Park is adjacent to this segment of the trail and Stacy City Hall is about two blocks east of the trail on County Road 19.

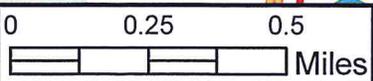
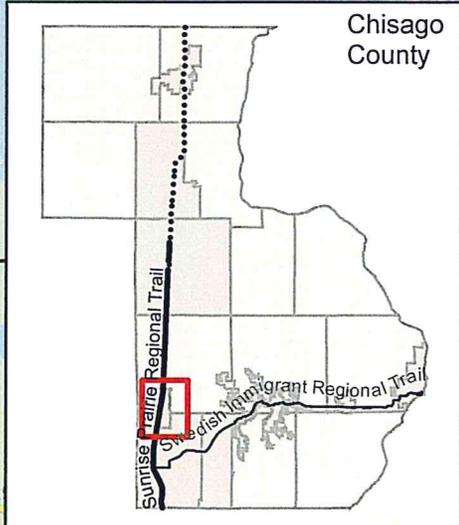
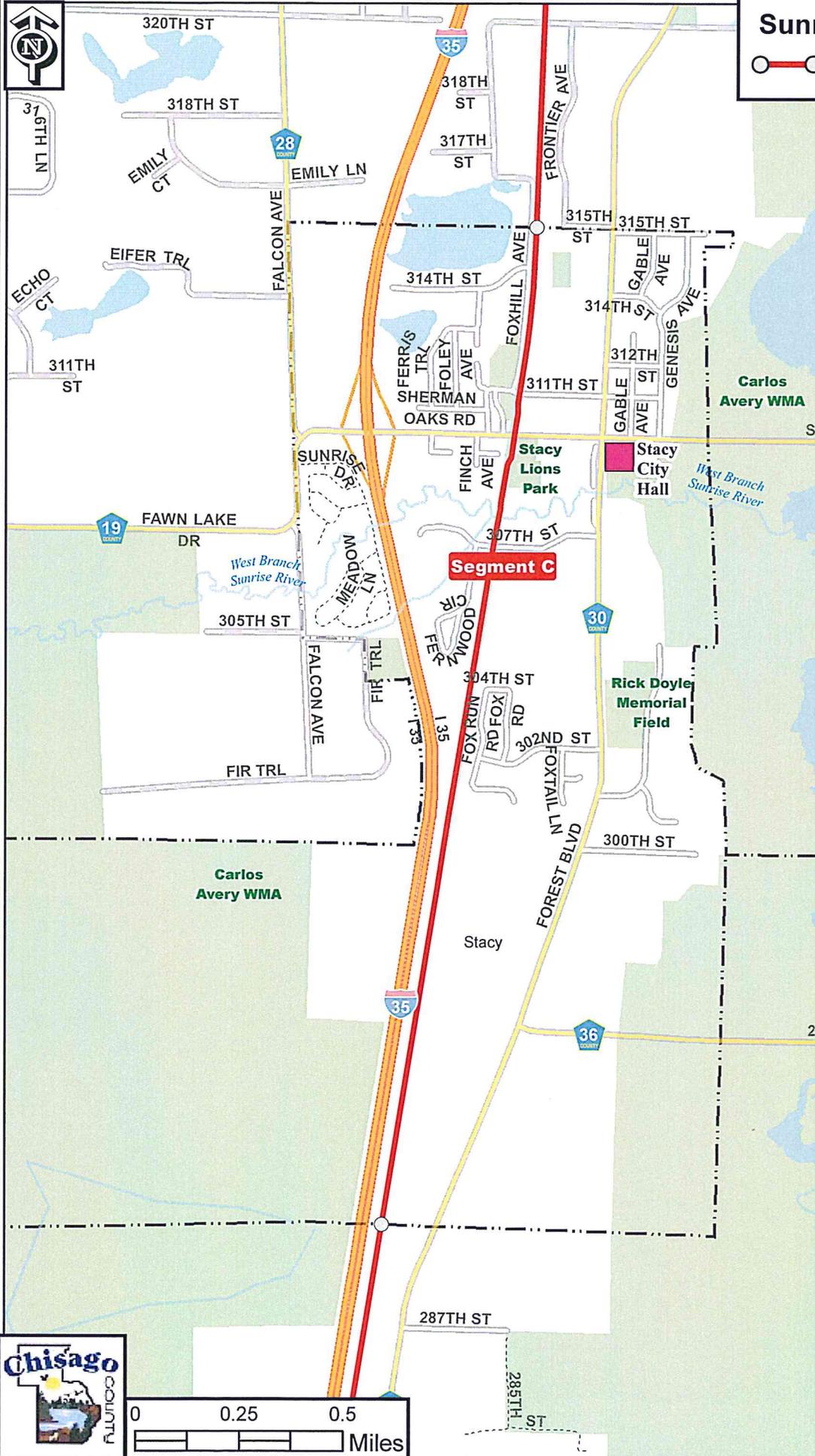
The land uses along this part of the trail include a mix urban and suburban land uses including residential, commercial, industrial and institutional.

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment C

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

○ — ○ Complete

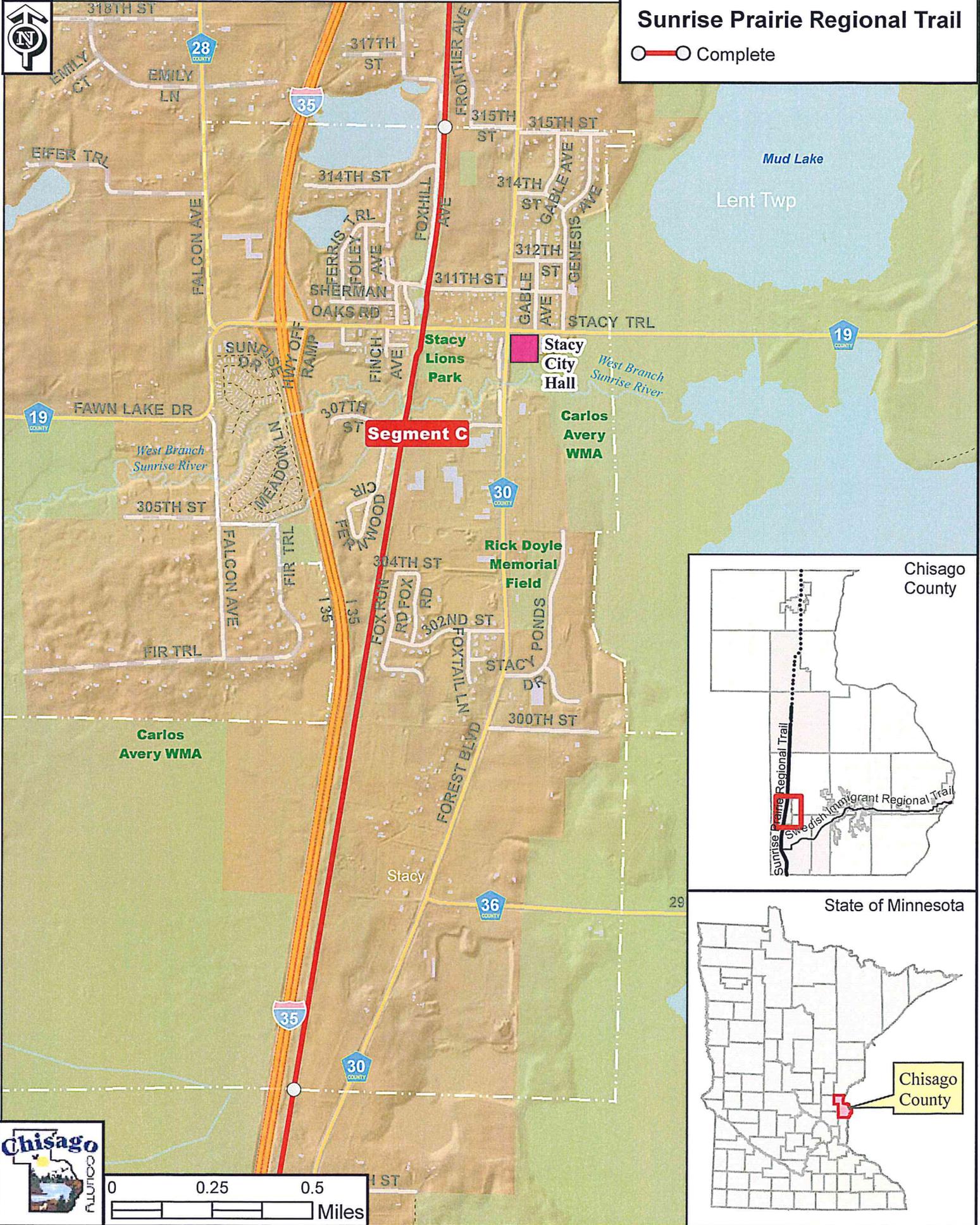


Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment C

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Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

○—○ Complete



Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment C

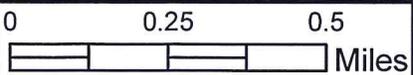
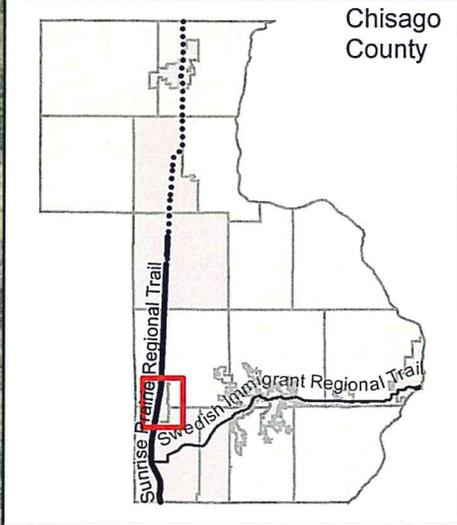
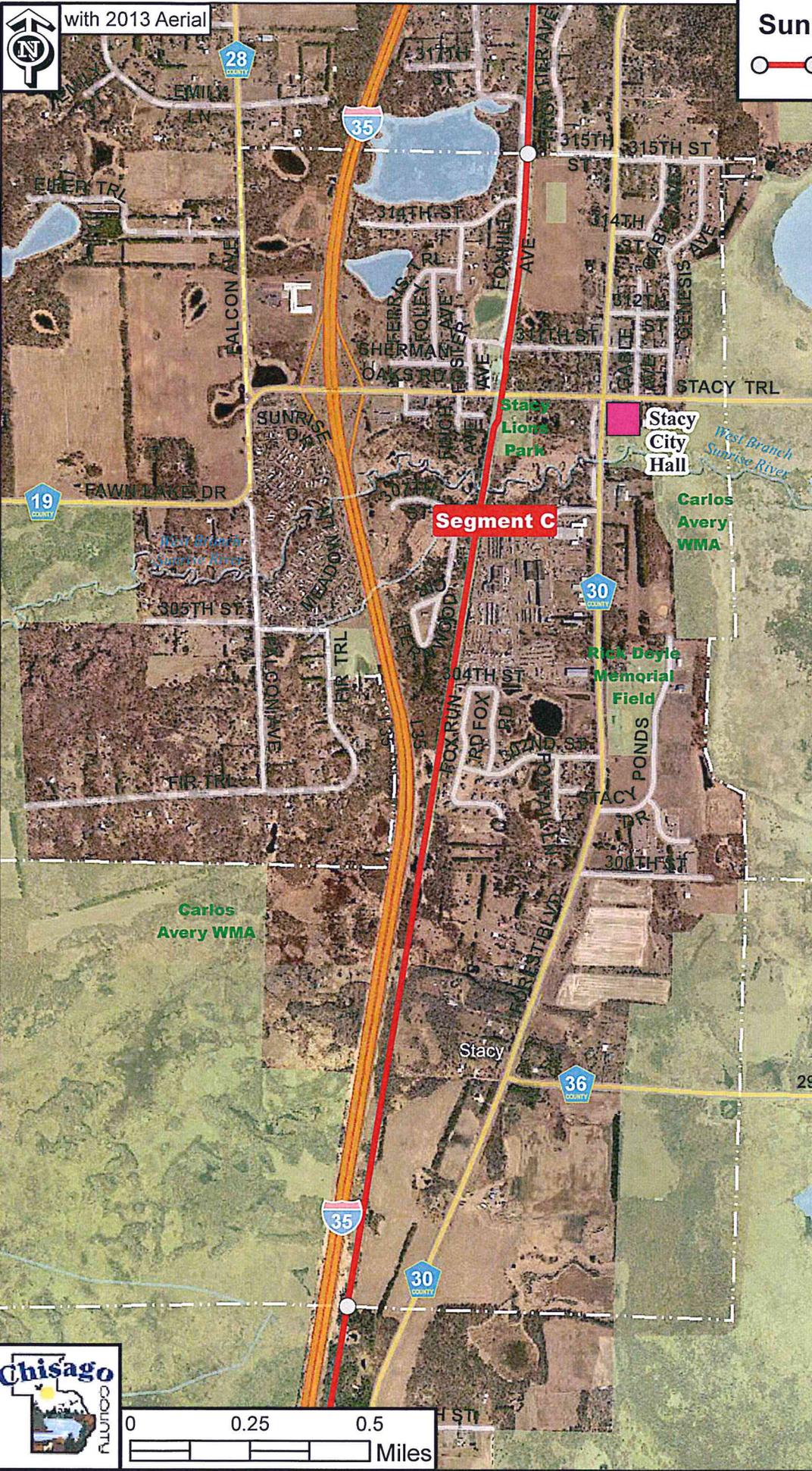
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Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

○ — ○ Complete



with 2013 Aerial



Segment D

Segment D of the trail runs through Lent Township from Stacy to North Branch. The trail in this segment is a 10-foot-wide bituminous off-road trail that follows the former railroad line and is about 4.6 miles in length. There is a parking lot for commuters and trail users at the intersection of County Road 17 and the trail (between Interstate 35 and County Road 30).

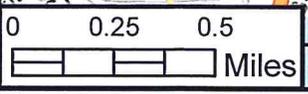
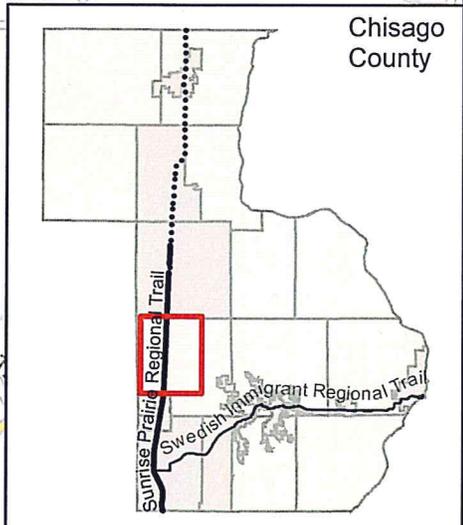
The land uses along this part of the trail include a mix suburban land uses including residential, commercial, industrial and institutional and rural land uses including residential and agricultural.

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment D

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

○—○ Complete



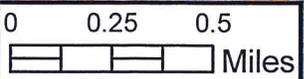
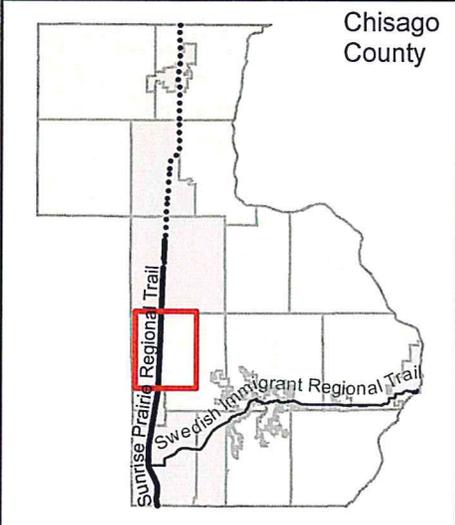
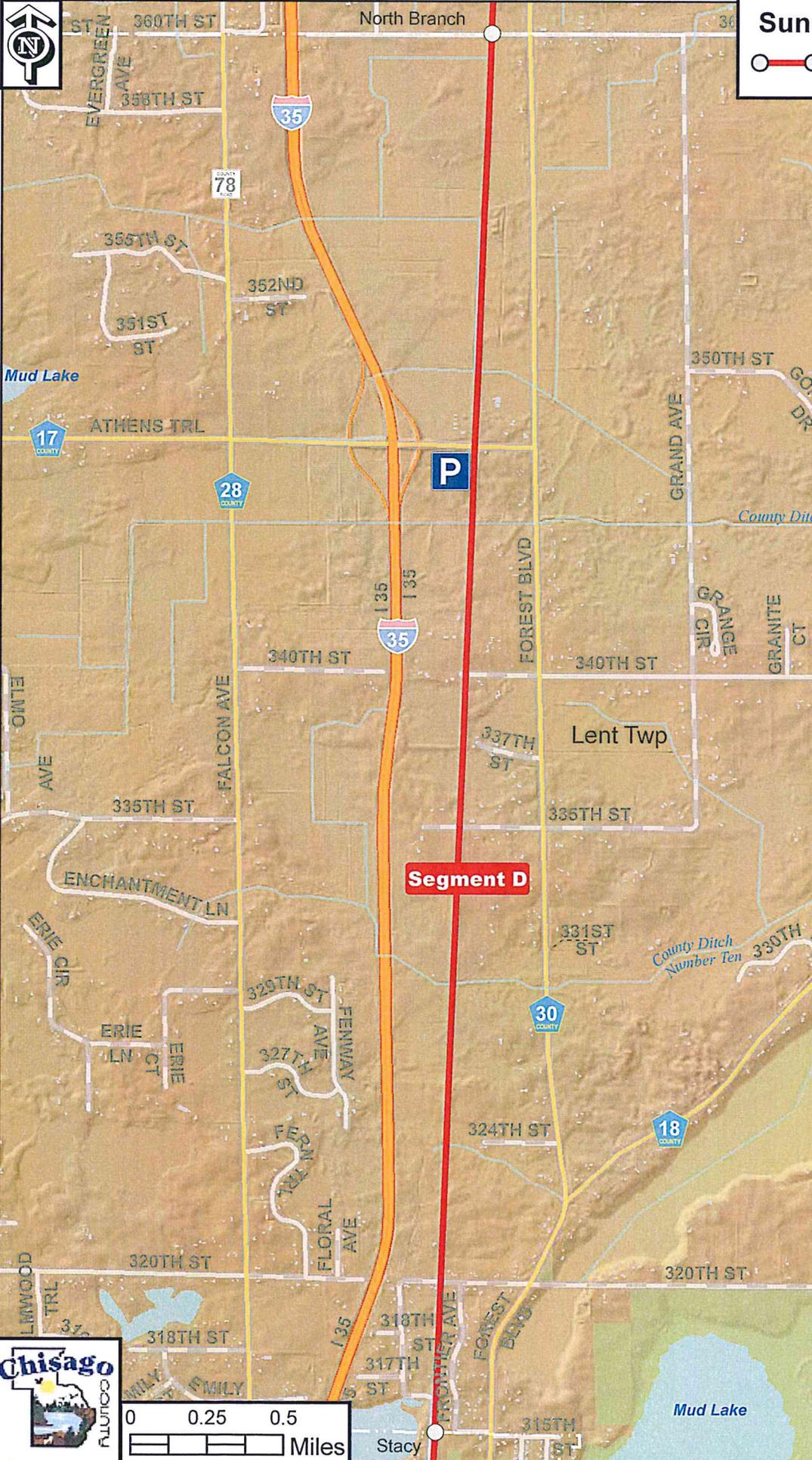
Stacy

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment D

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Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

○—○ Complete



Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment D

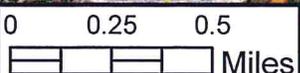
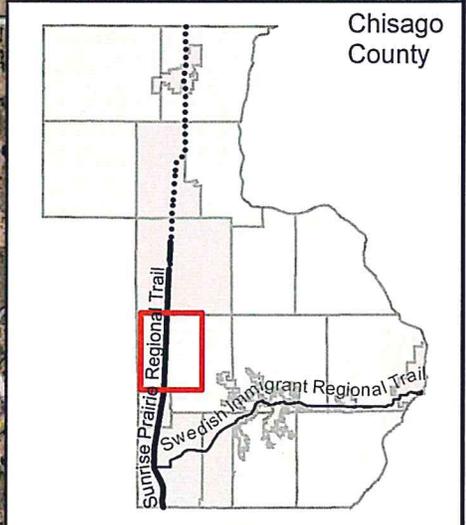
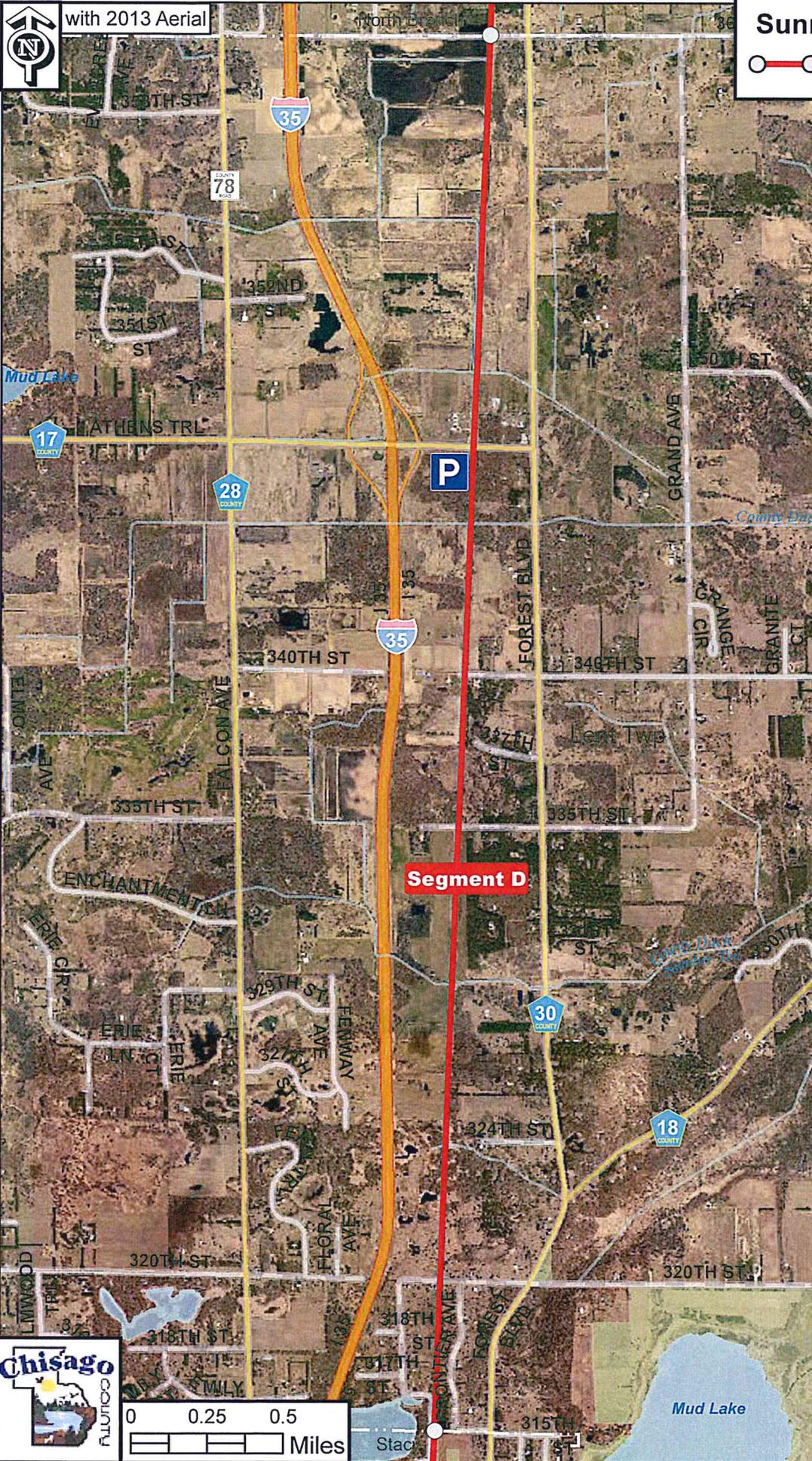
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Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

○ — ○ Complete



with 2013 Aerial



Segment E

This part of the trail is about 2.8 miles long running from Lent Township on the south to State Highway 95 near the center of North Branch. It is a 10-foot-wide bituminous trail that follows the former railroad bed and passes near the North Branch Public Library. There also is a trail head near the north end of the trail with a paved off-street parking lot and information kiosks. The north end of this segment is the north end of the existing 10-foot-wide bituminous trail that is on the bed of the former railroad tracks.

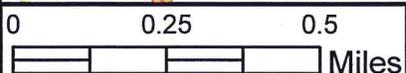
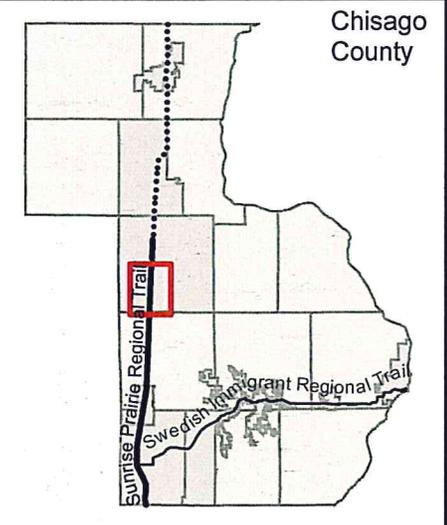
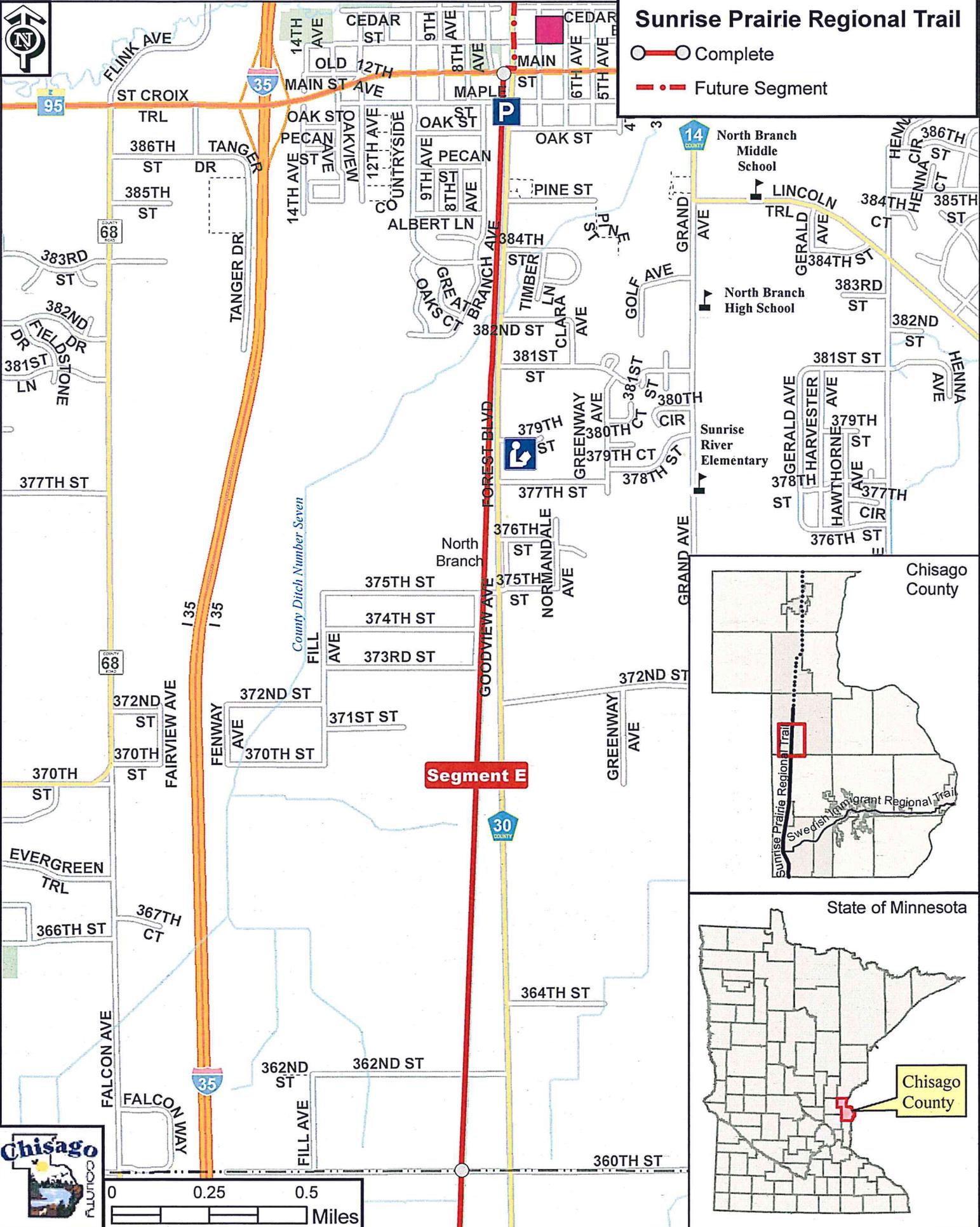
The land uses along this part of the trail include a mix suburban land uses including residential, commercial, industrial and institutional and rural residential and agricultural uses.

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment E

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment

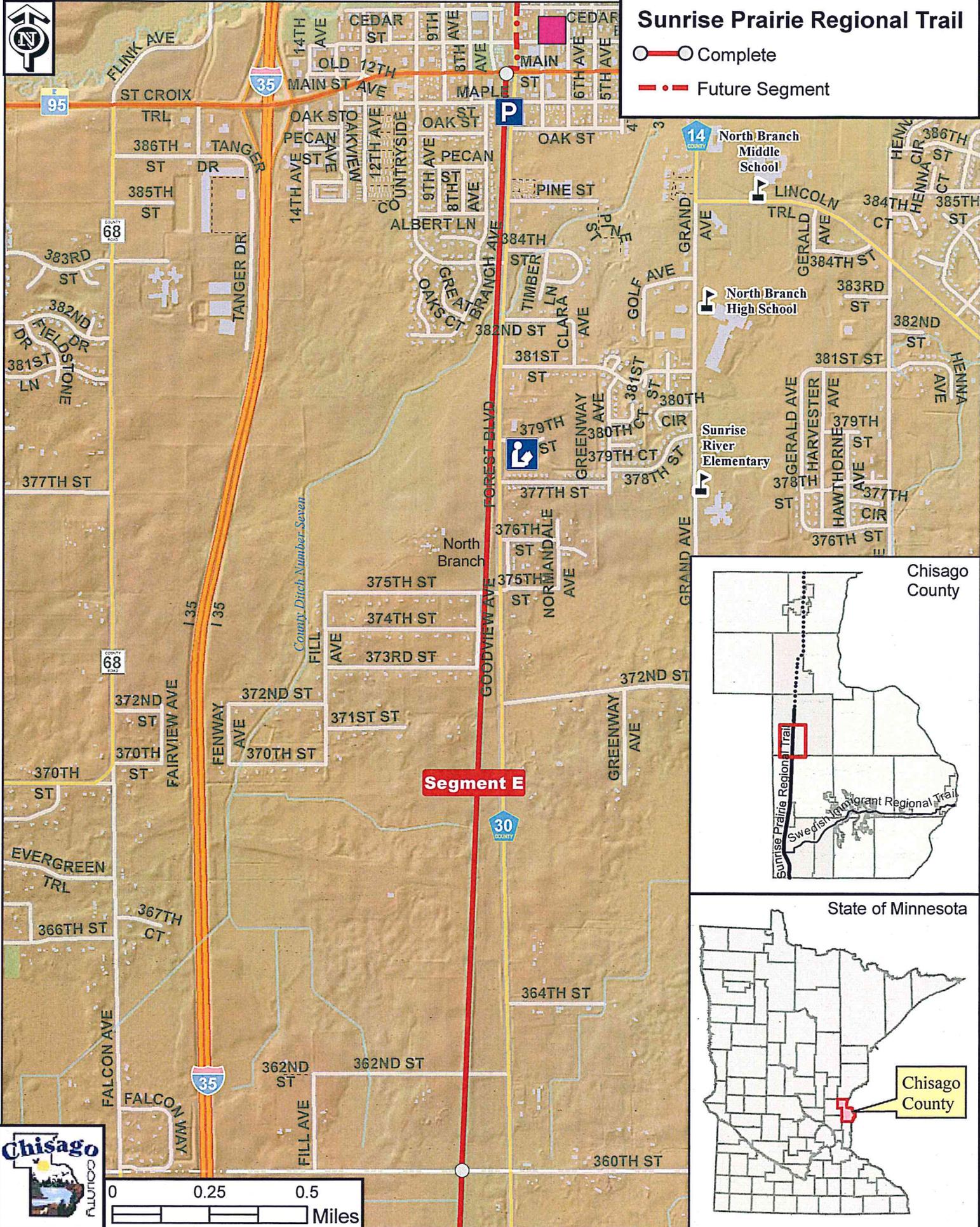


Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment E

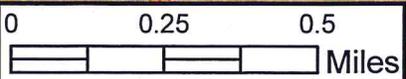
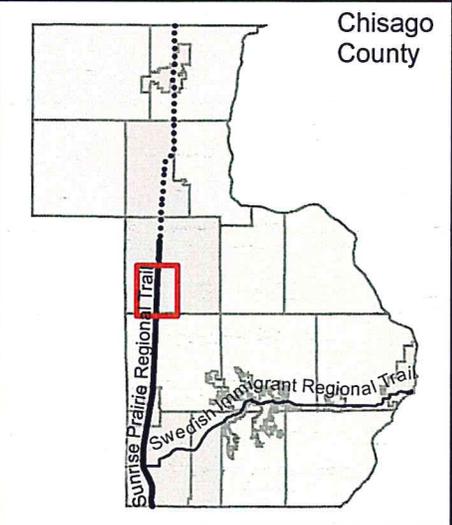
Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment



Segment E



Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment E

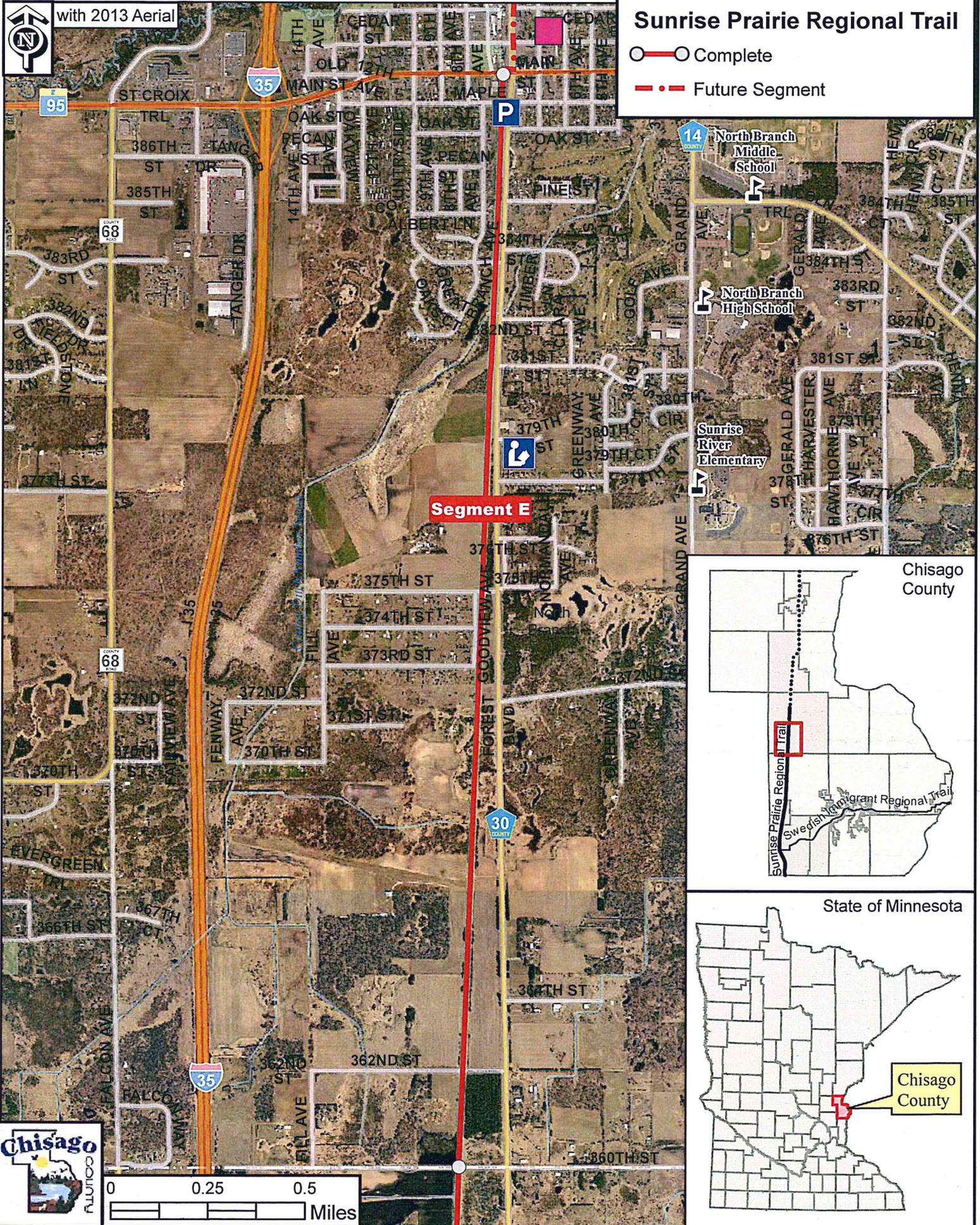
Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment



with 2013 Aerial

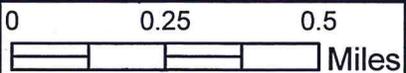
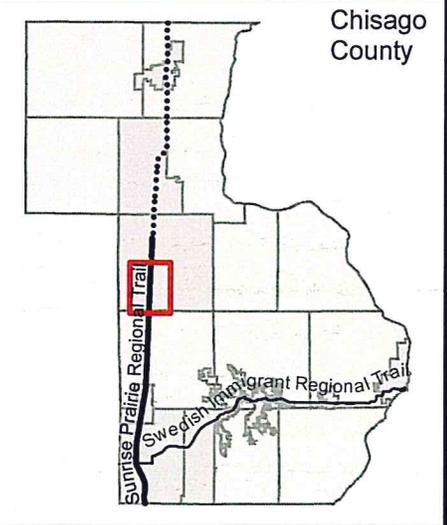


Segment E

14 North Branch Middle School

14 North Branch High School

14 Sunrise River Elementary



Segment F

Segment F of the trail will run from State Highway 95 in downtown North Branch to the north end of the existing trail segment just north of 403rd Street. The trail in this segment will cross Highway 95 and County Road 30 to proceed north along the east side of County Road 30 on an existing sidewalk that is in the existing county highway right-of-way. It includes the existing off-road eight-foot-wide bituminous trail that North Branch constructed on the east side of County Road 30 between Cedar Street and 403rd Street for a length of about 1.2 miles. This segment also has about 0.6 miles of uncompleted trail between Highway 95 and Cedar Street. The County is expecting this segment of the trail to be mix of a 10-foot-wide bituminous path and concrete sidewalks in downtown North Branch. This segment of the trail will have a total length of 1.8 miles.

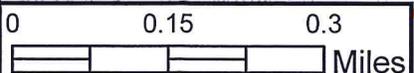
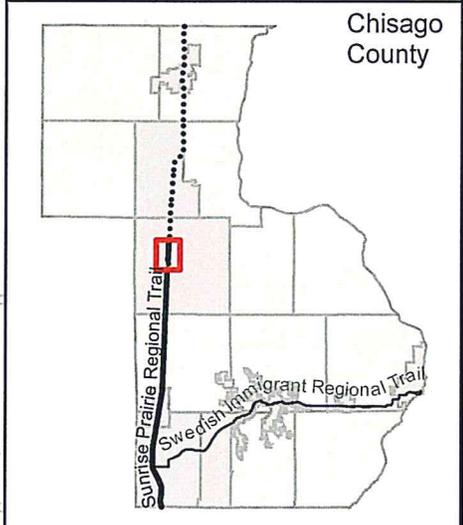
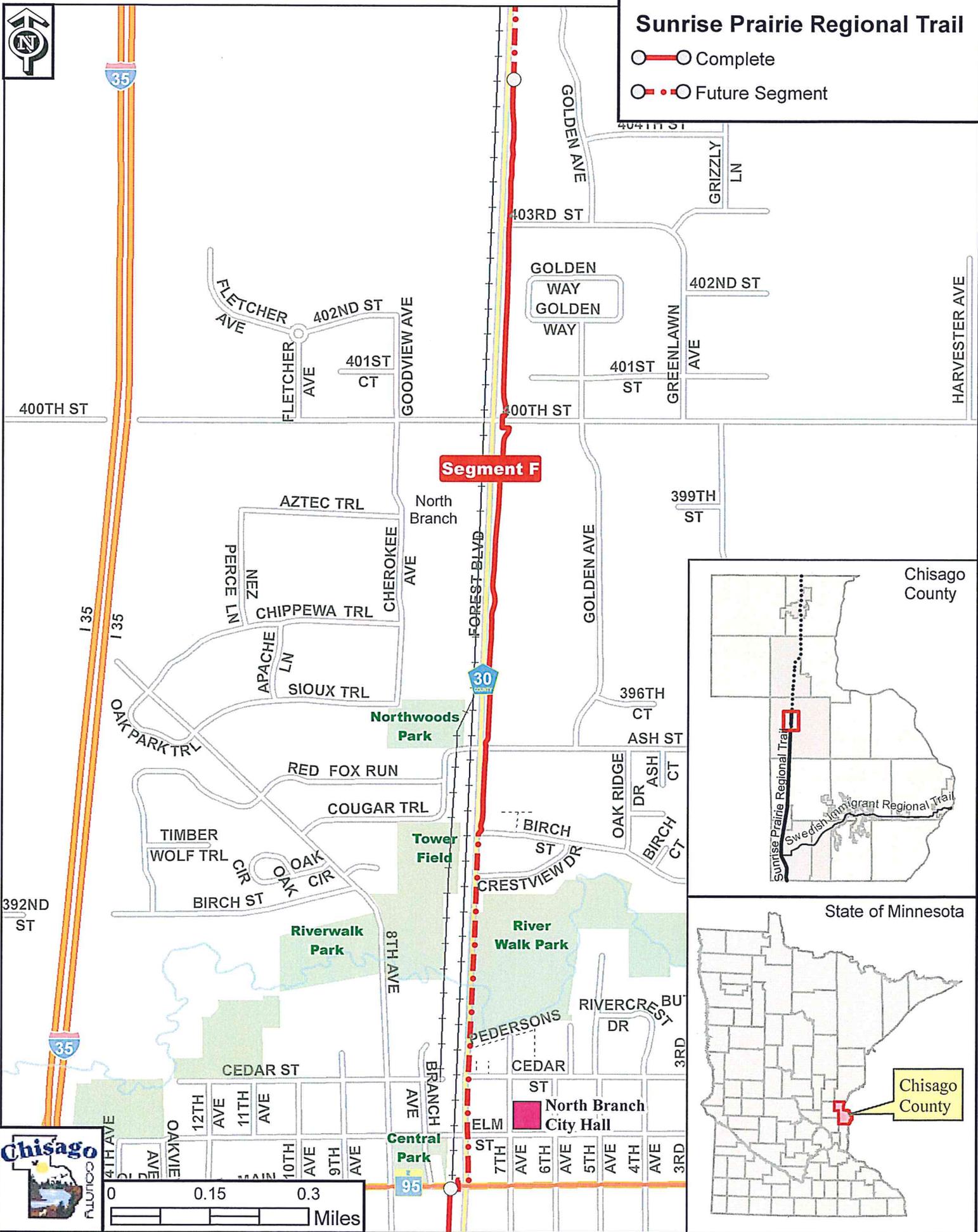
The land uses and types in the area of this segment of the trail include urban and suburban (in North Branch), agricultural lands (hay/pasture and cultivated crops), a city park, wetlands and small pockets of deciduous forest. North Branch City Hall is one block east of the expected location of this segment of the trail. A preliminary analysis of the likely trail corridor by City and County staff for the unfinished part of the trail (between State Highway 95 and Cedar Street) 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 buildings and parking lots, businesses, Riverwalk Park, water bodies, wetlands and trail users.

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment F

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment

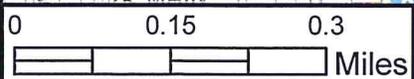
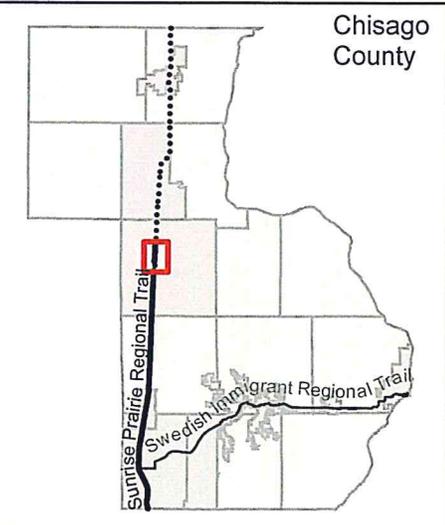
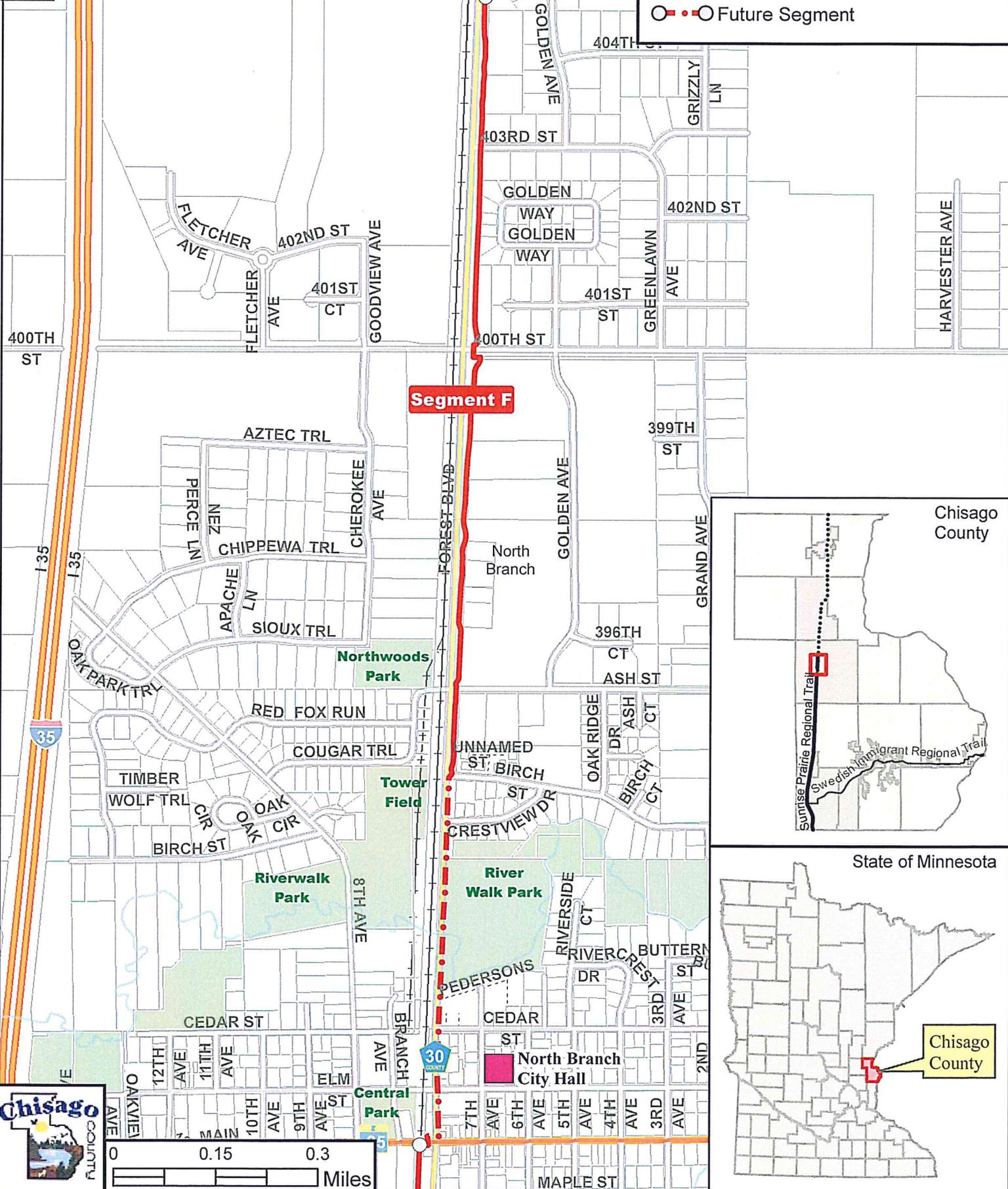


Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment F

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment



Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment F

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

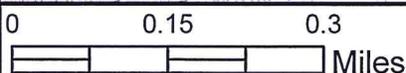
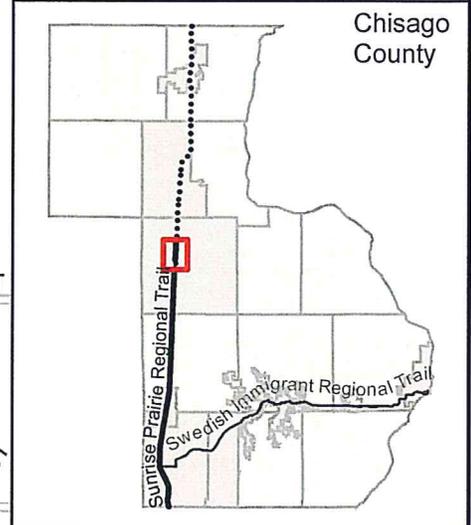
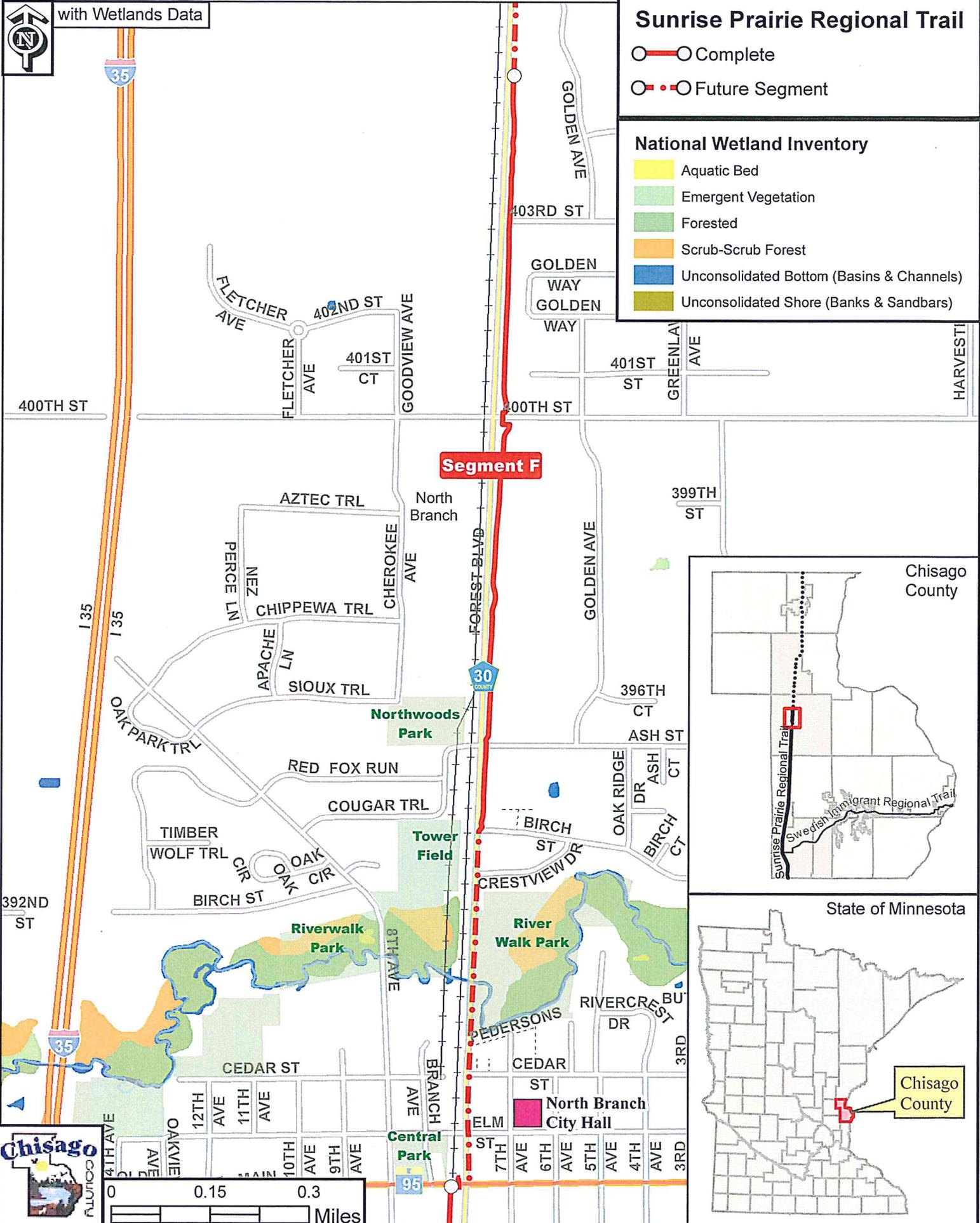
-  Complete
-  Future Segment

National Wetland Inventory

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



with Wetlands Data



Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment F



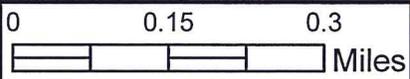
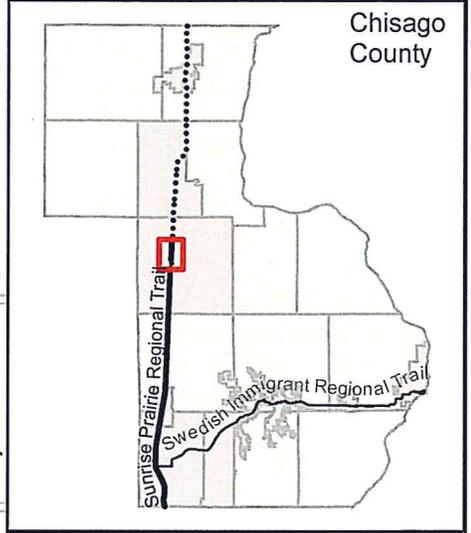
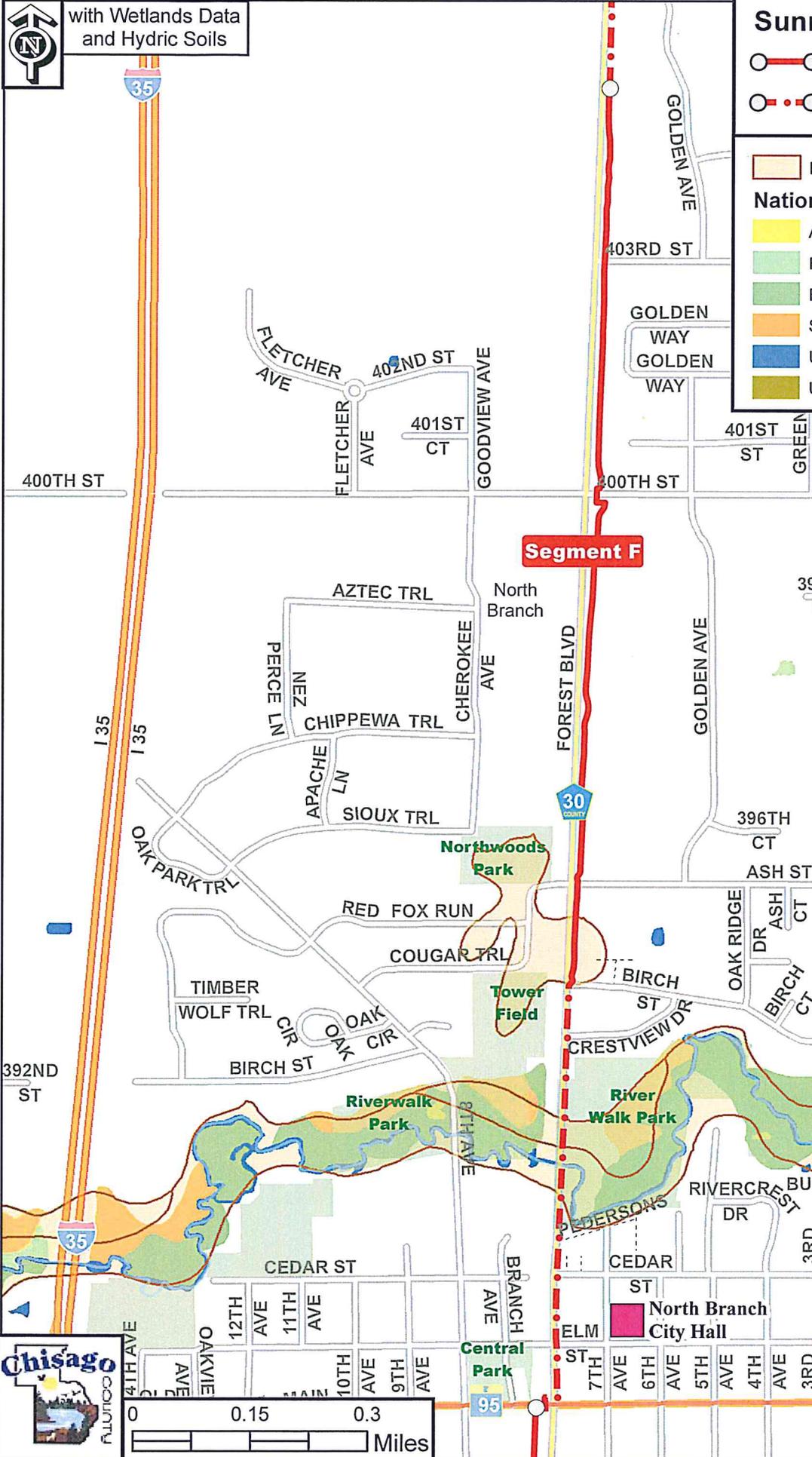
with Wetlands Data and Hydric Soils

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

- Complete
- Future Segment

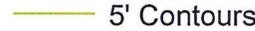
- Hydric Soils
- National Wetland Inventory**
- Aquatic Bed
- Emergent Vegetation
- Forested
- Scrub-Scrub Forest
- Unconsolidated Bottom (Basins & Channels)
- Unconsolidated Shore (Banks & Sandbars)



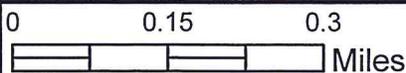
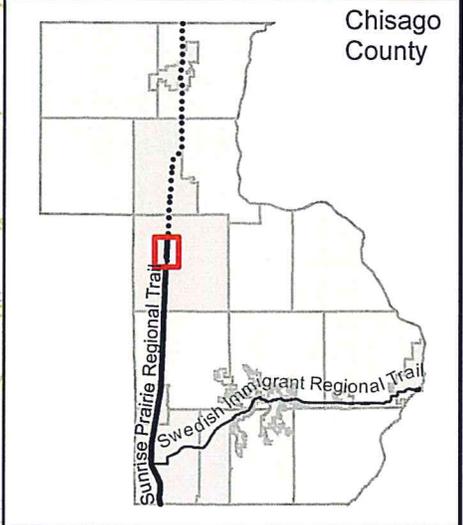
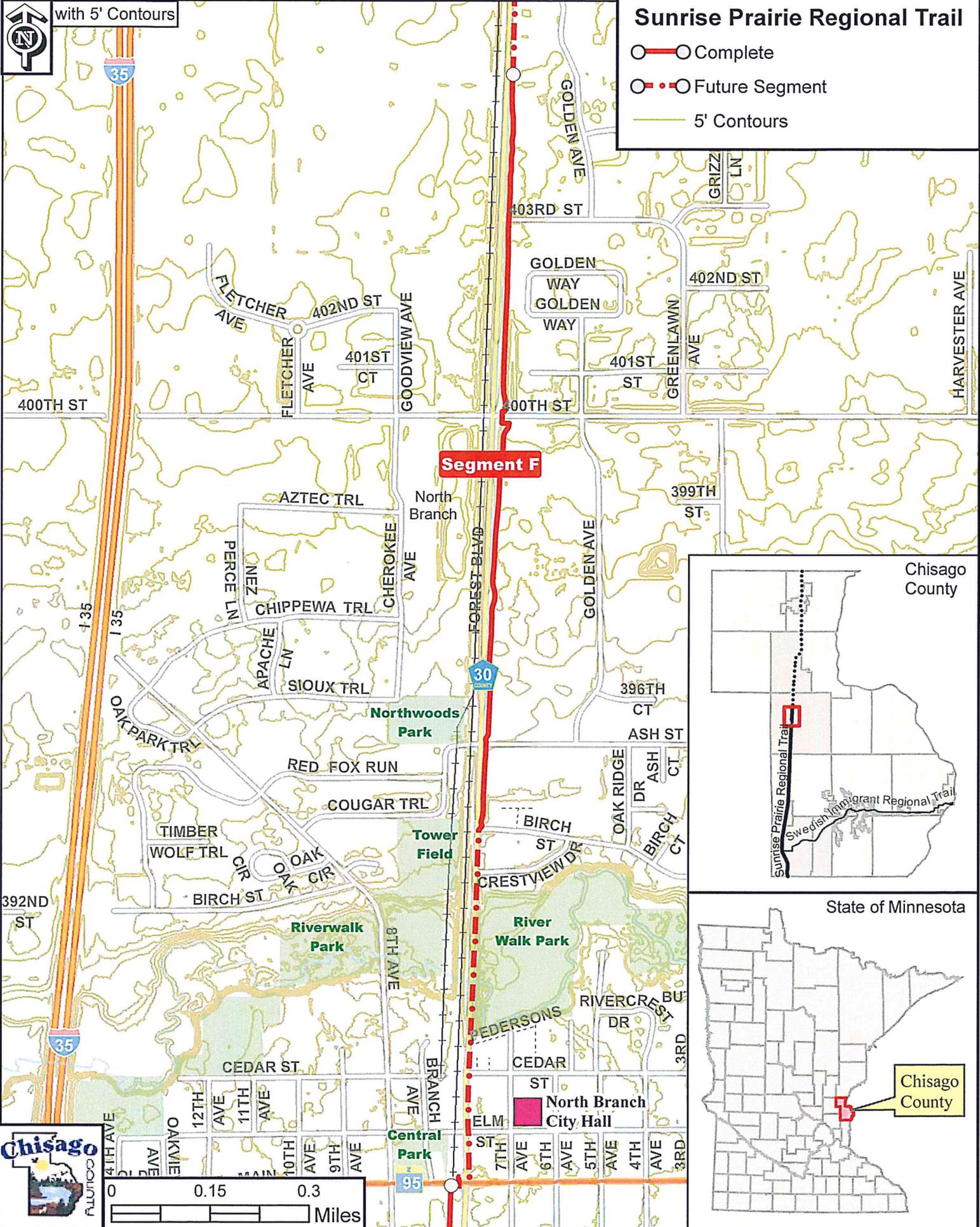
Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment F

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment
-  5' Contours

with 5' Contours

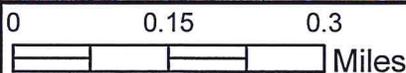
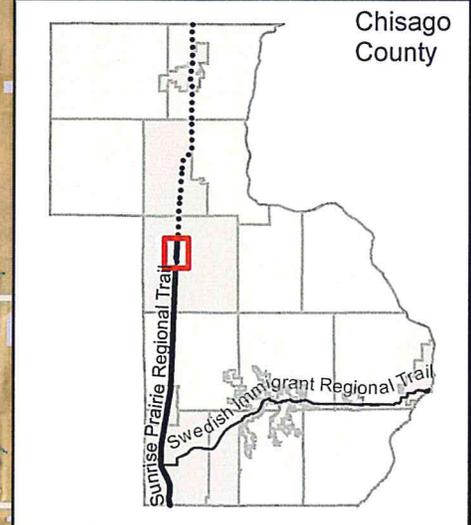


Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment F

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment



Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment F

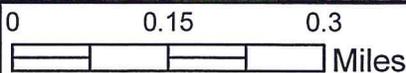
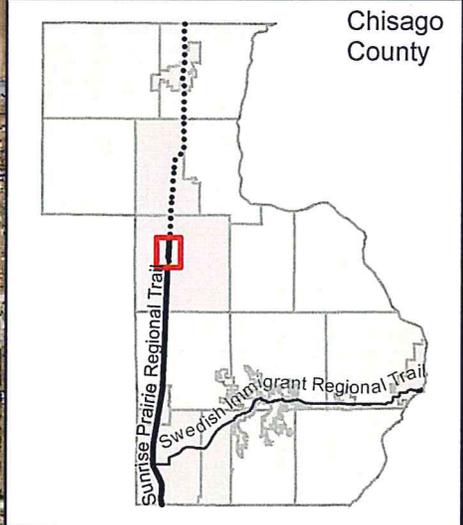
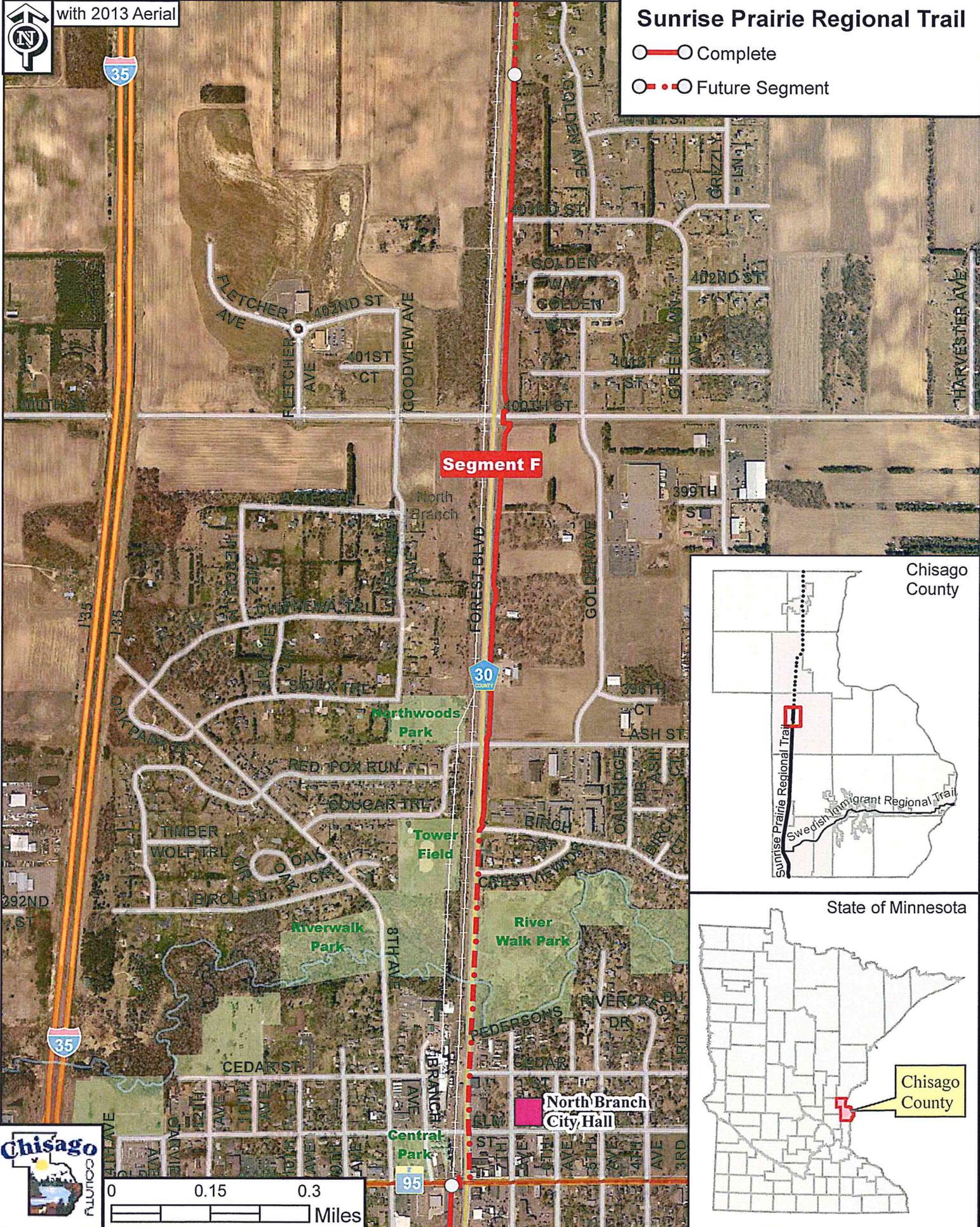
Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment



with 2013 Aerial



Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment F

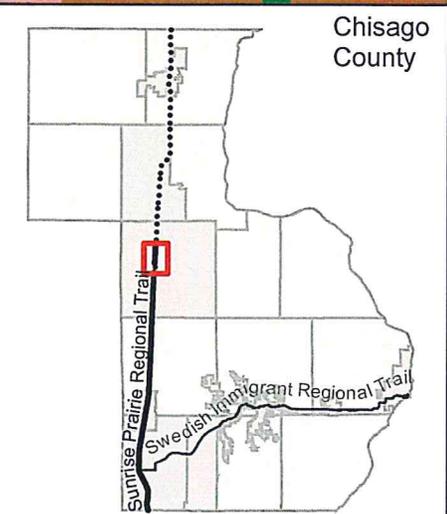
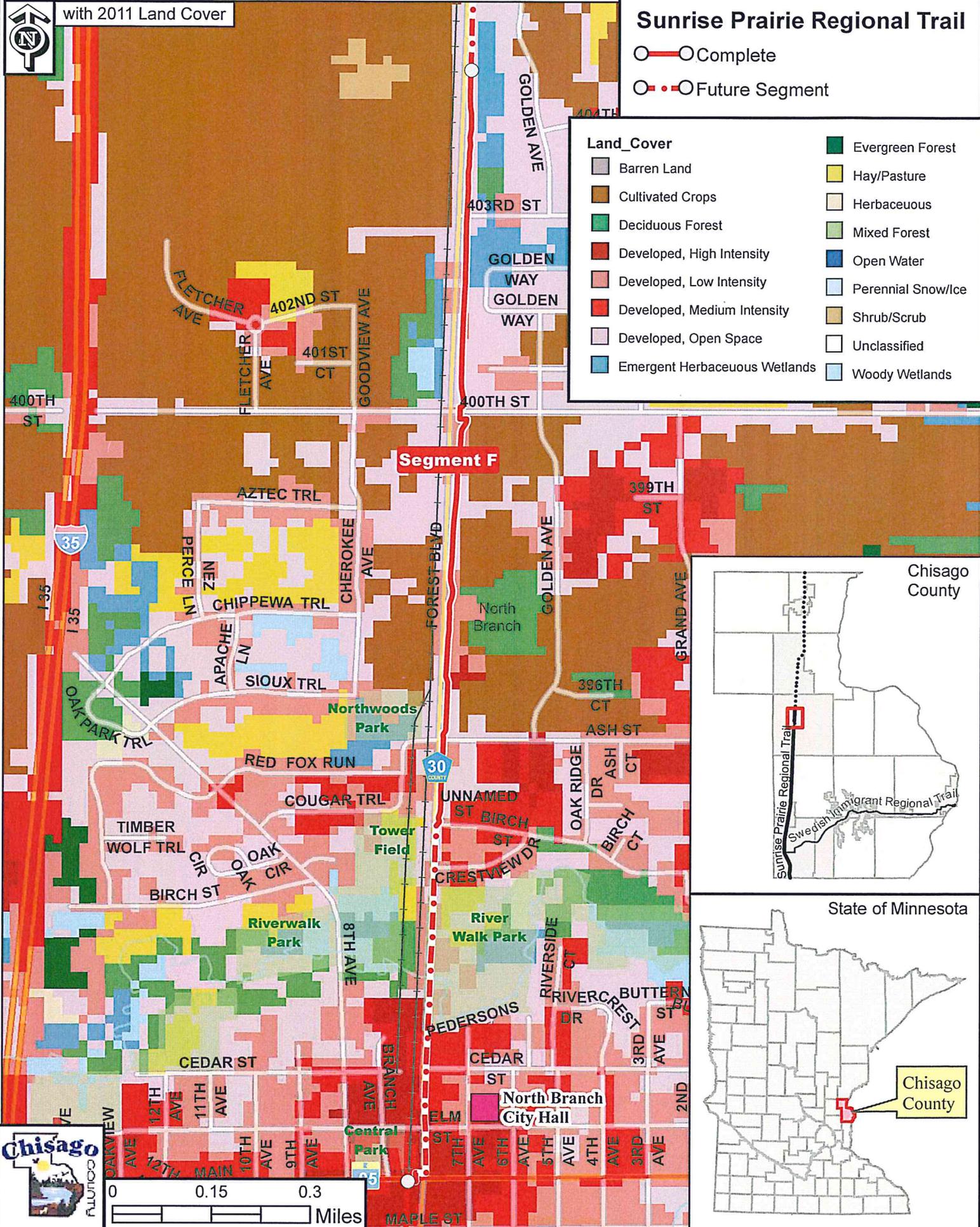
Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment

Land_Cover

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



Segment G

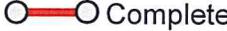
This segment of the trail will run from the north end of the existing off-road trail in North Branch (as described in Segment F) to downtown Harris – a distance of about 3.5 miles. It is expected that the trail in this segment will continue north as a 10-foot-wide off-road bituminous trail located on the east side of County Road 30. There is the potential to install a trailhead with an off-road parking area for motor vehicles near the County’s Sheriff’s satellite office in Harris as part of this trail segment. In Harris, there is a concrete sidewalk on the east side of County Road 30 for several blocks that could serve as part of the trail.

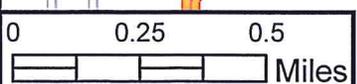
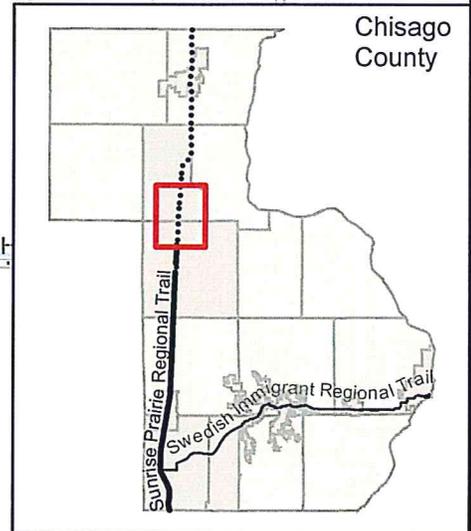
The land uses and types in the area of this segment of the trail include urban and developed properties in North Branch and in Harris, commercial and industrial users, a cemetery, agricultural lands (hay/pasture and cultivated crops) and pockets of small wetlands. In addition, Roger Johnson Memorial Park is one block east of County Road 30 on 410th Street in North Branch. 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 evaluation – including a review of possible environmental effects, wetland delineation and design constraints and considerations. The County will need to take special care in the design of this segment of the trail to ensure adequate protection for the cemetery, existing businesses and parking lots, existing water bodies, wetlands and trail users.

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment G

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment

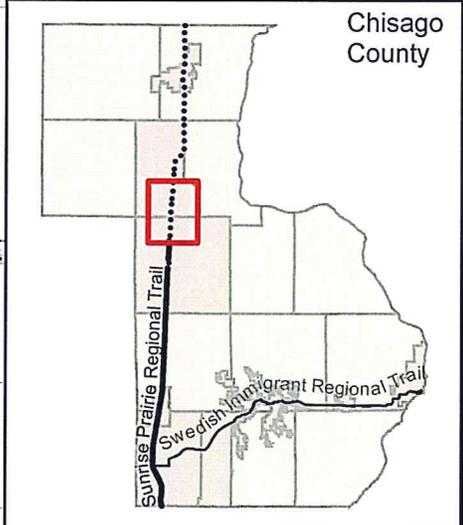
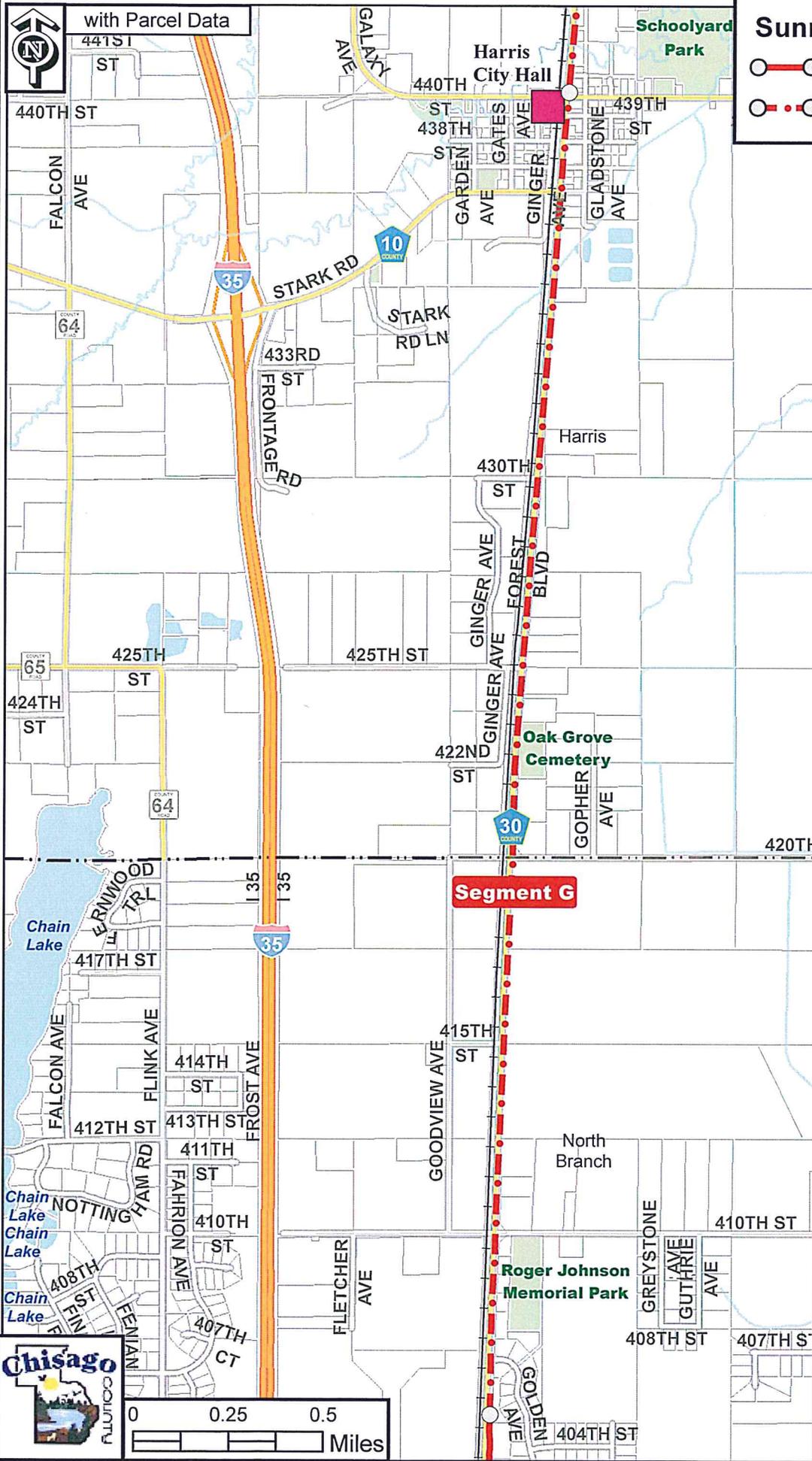


Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment G

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

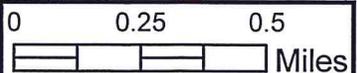
-  Complete
-  Future Segment



with Parcel Data




0 0.25 0.5 Miles



Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment G

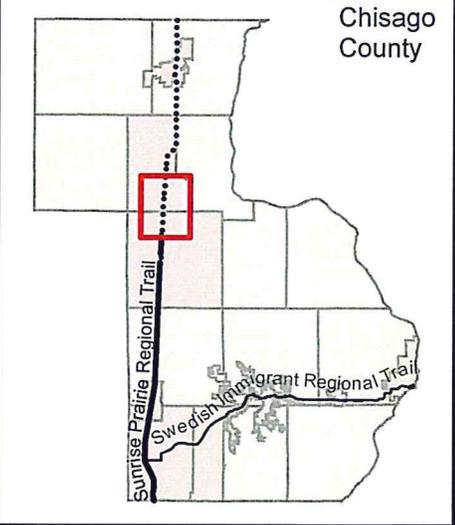
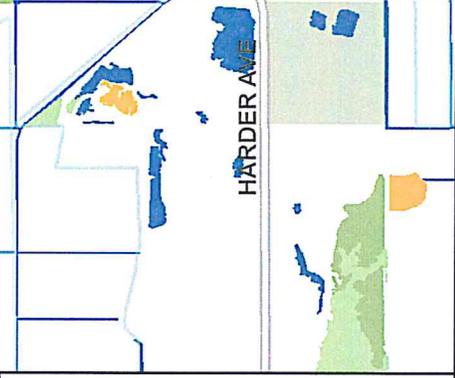
Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

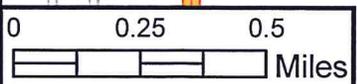
-  Complete
-  Future Segment

National Wetland Inventory

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



with Wetlands Data



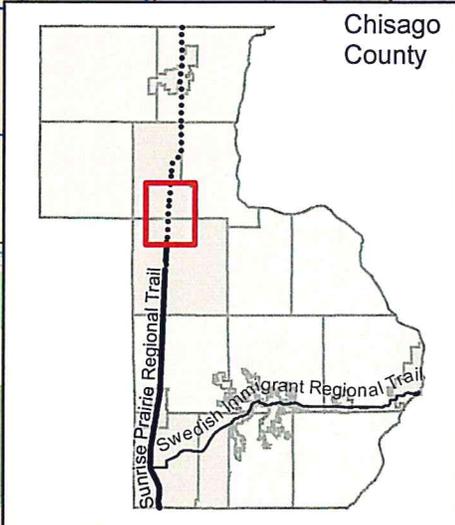
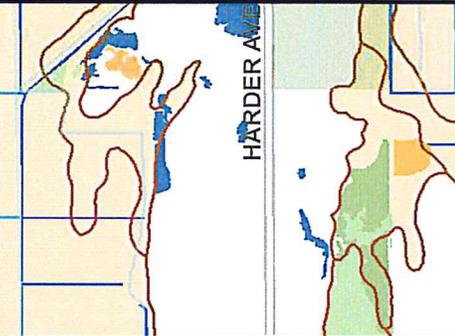
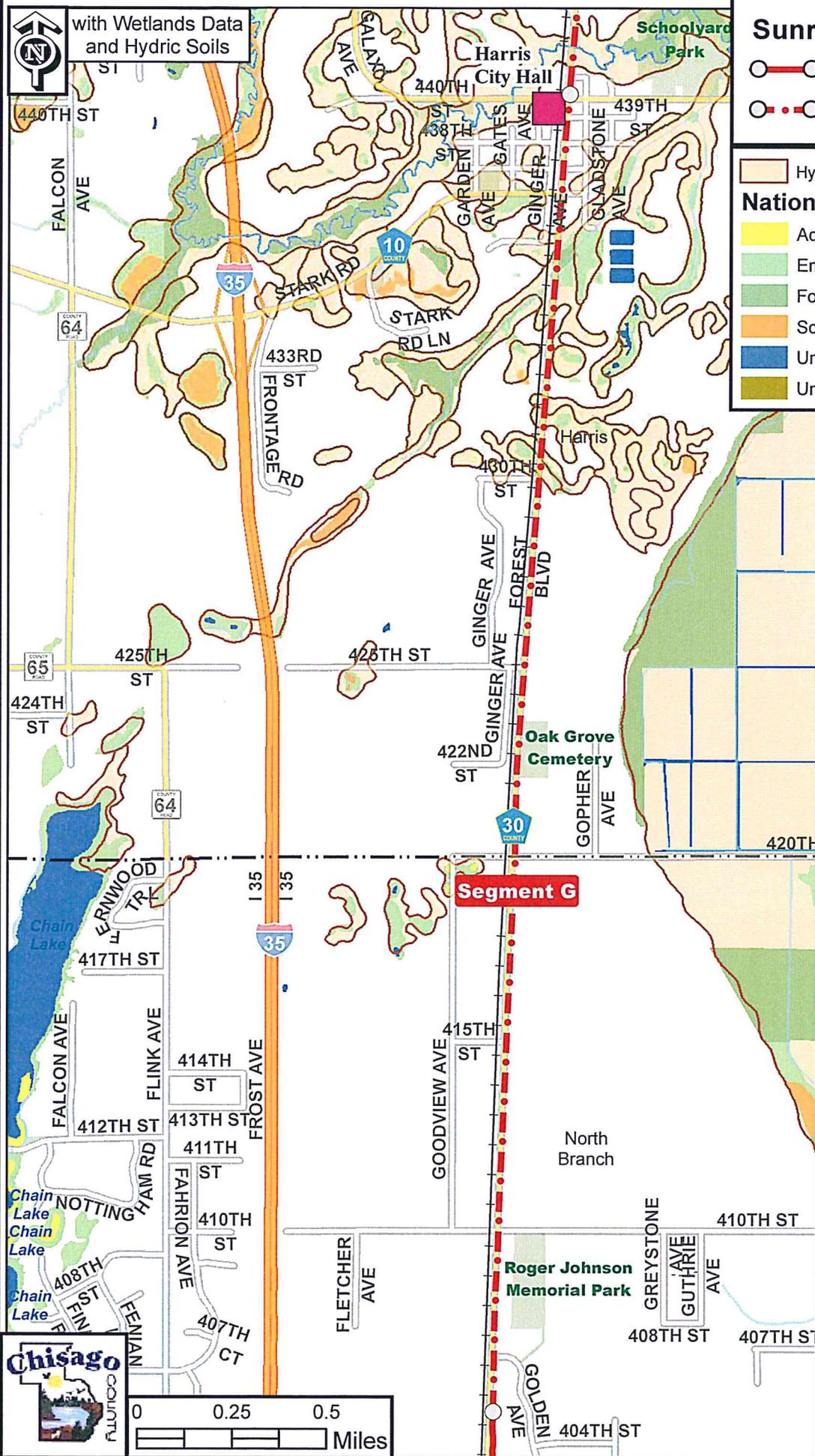
Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment G

Legend

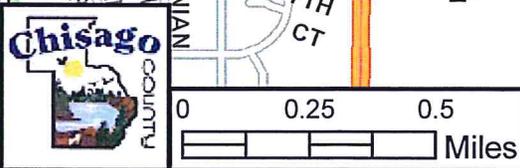
Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

- Complete
- Future Segment

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



with Wetlands Data and Hydric Soils

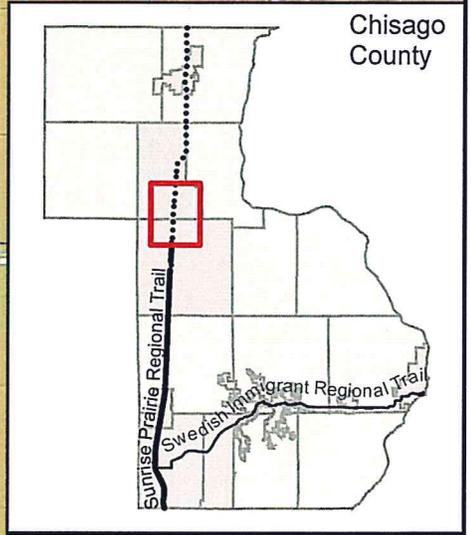
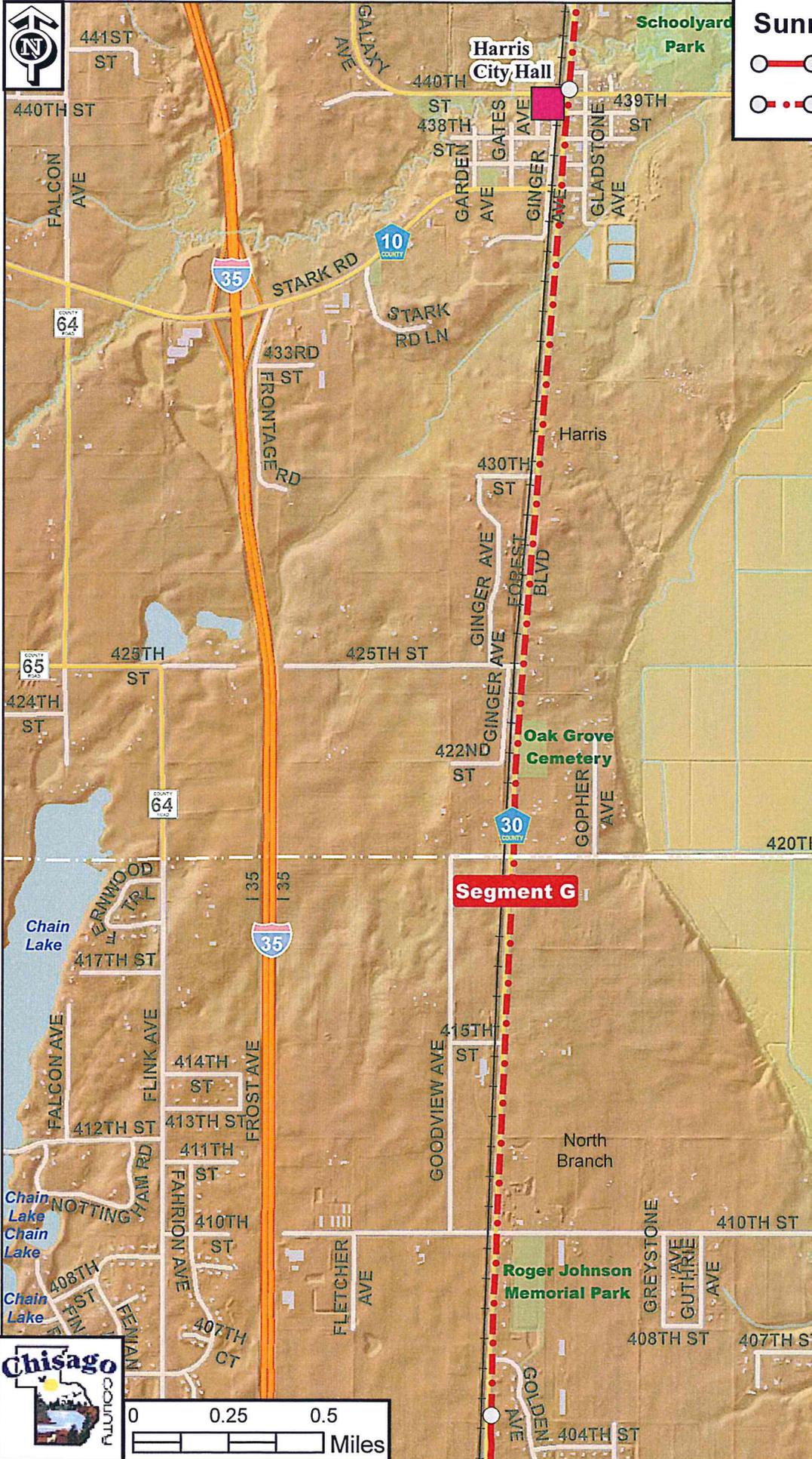


Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment G

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment



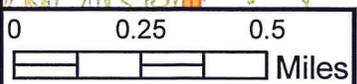
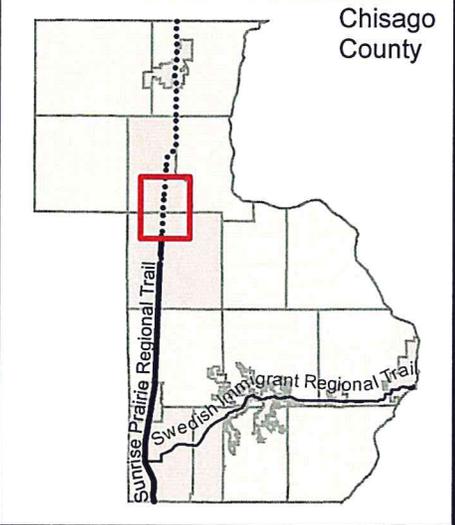

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment G

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment
-  5' Contours

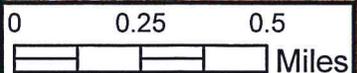
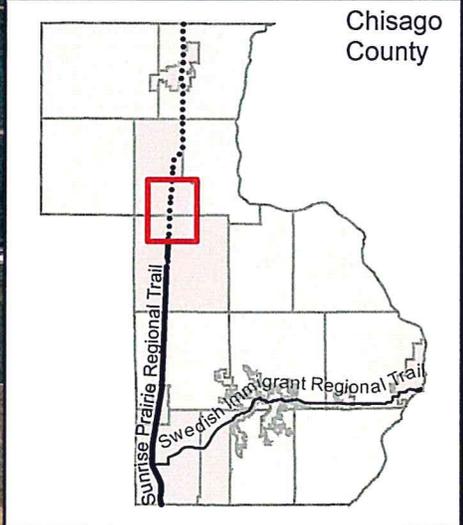
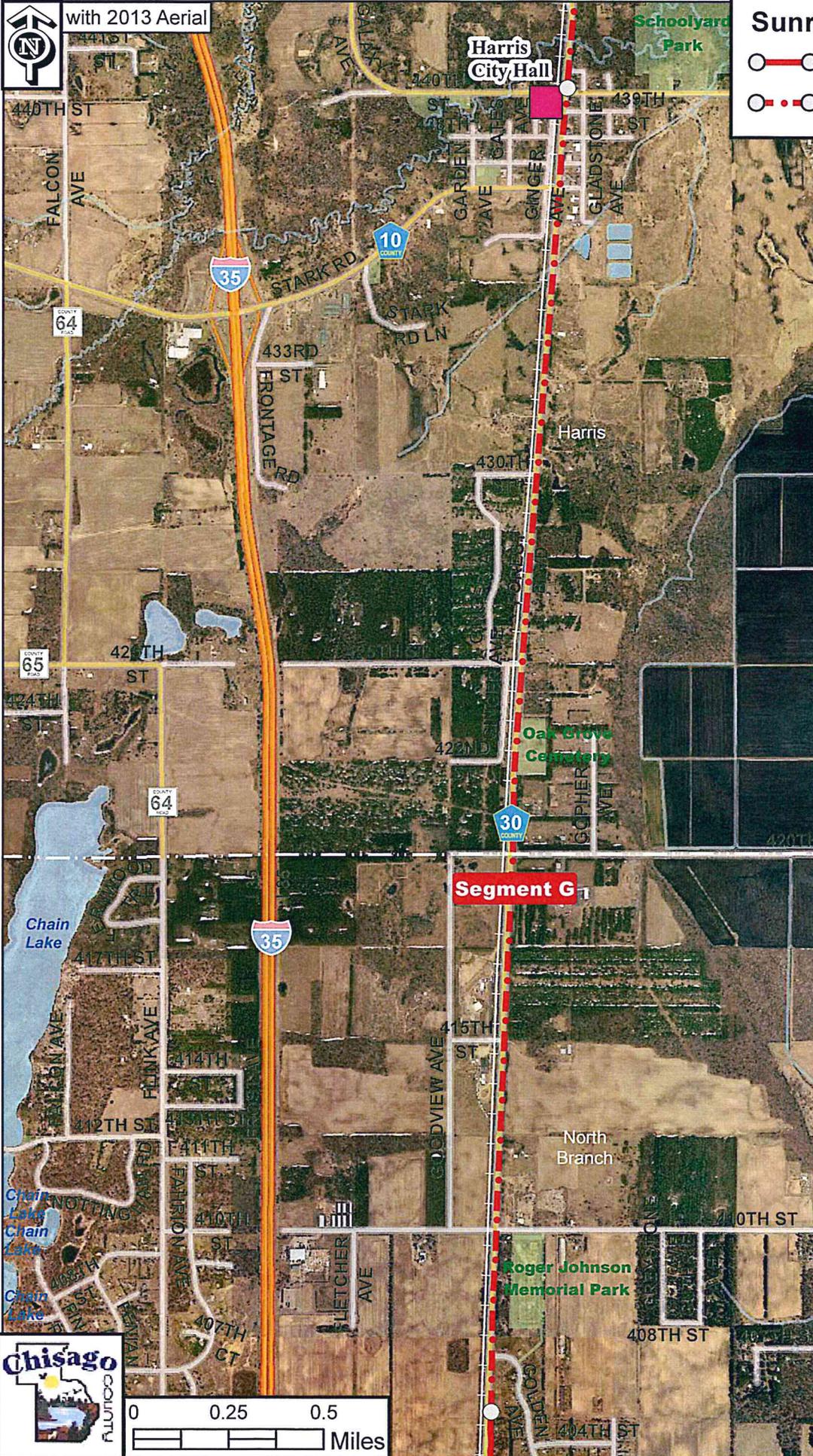


Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment G

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment



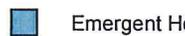
Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment G

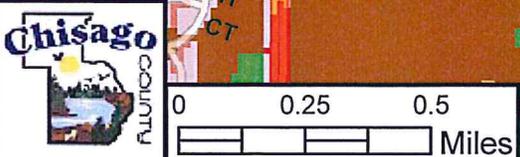
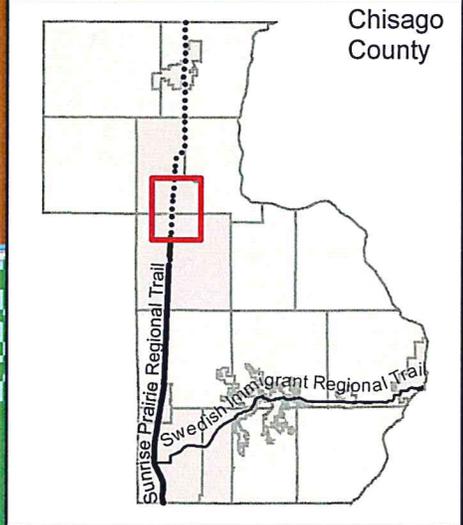
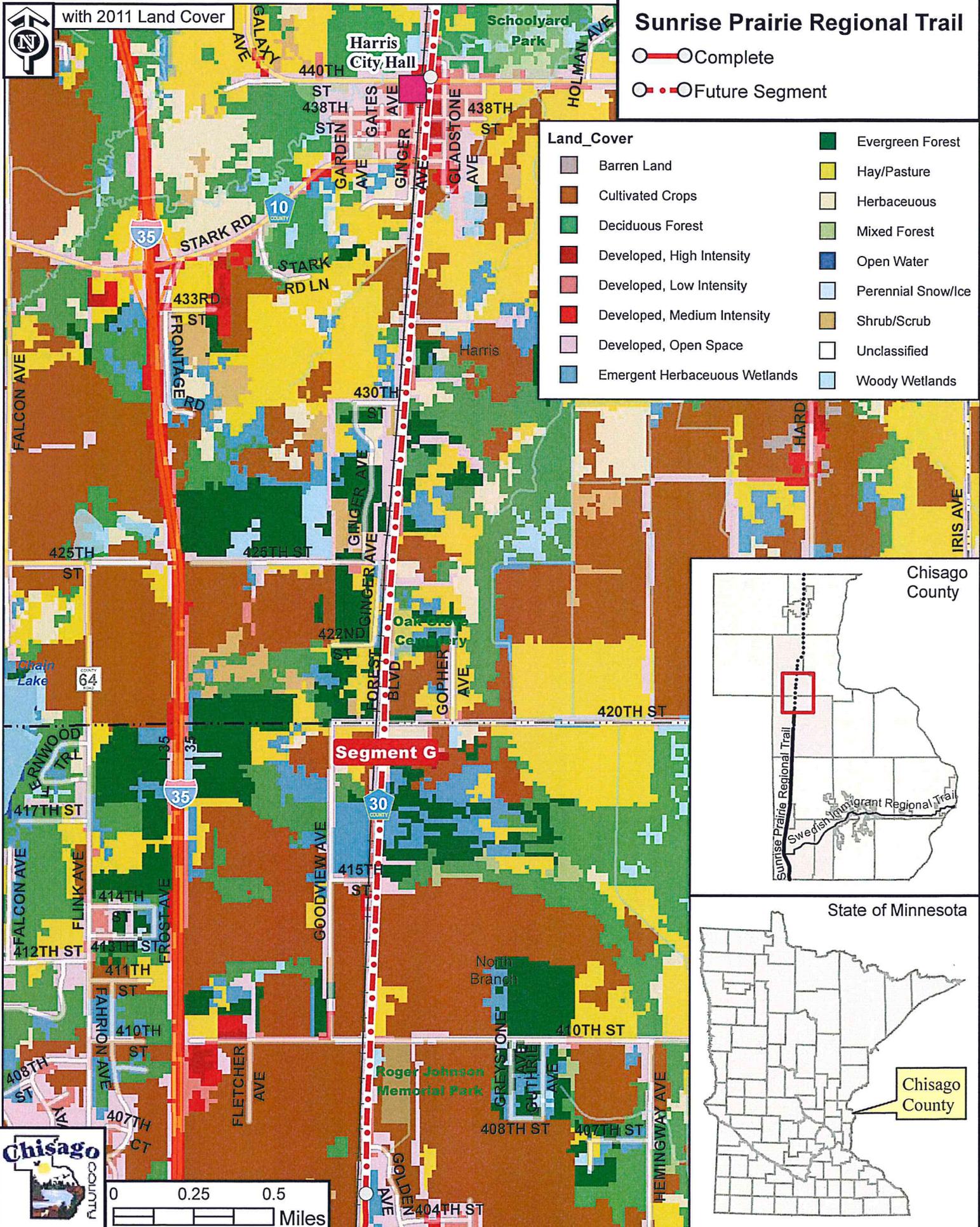
Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment

Land_Cover

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



Segment H

Chisago County has identified two possible corridors that the County could use for the trail in this segment. The first corridor would primarily be off-road along County Road 30. Starting in Harris, the trail would continue north on the east side of County Road 30. Between Harris and Rush City there are ditches and wetlands on both sides of the road that will affect the final alignment of design of this part of the trail. On the west side of County Road 30 between 460th and 470th Streets, there are two DNR wildlife management areas that are attractions for trail users in this part of Chisago County. In downtown Rush City, there is a concrete sidewalk along the east side of County Road 30 for several blocks that could serve as part of the trail. In addition, the bridge for County Road 30 over Rush Creek has a concrete sidewalk on the east side that could serve as the creek crossing point for this segment of the trail.

This segment of the trail will connect downtown Harris with downtown Rush City and will be 7 miles in length. Between the two downtowns, the County is expecting the trail in this segment to be primarily a 10-foot-wide bituminous off-road path. The County has not yet determined if widening the shoulder of the road or if a 10-foot-wide off-road trail (or a combination of the two) would work best for this section of the trail. In addition, it appears that the west side of County Road 30 has fewer wetlands, low areas and other potential limiting conditions to the construction of the trail. As such, part of the trail may be on the east side of County Road 30 and part may fit better on the west side. The difficulty having the trail on both sides of the road would be the need for one or two crossings of County Road 30 by the trail.

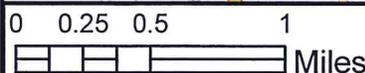
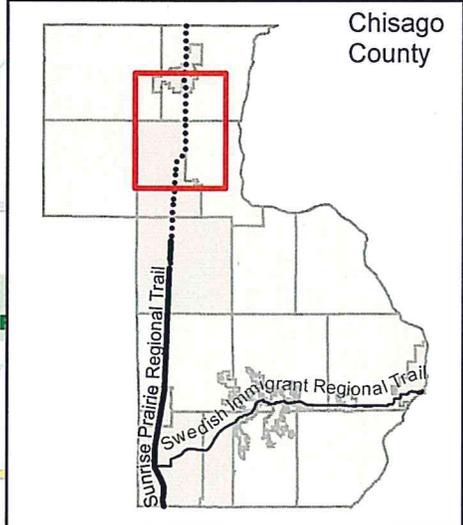
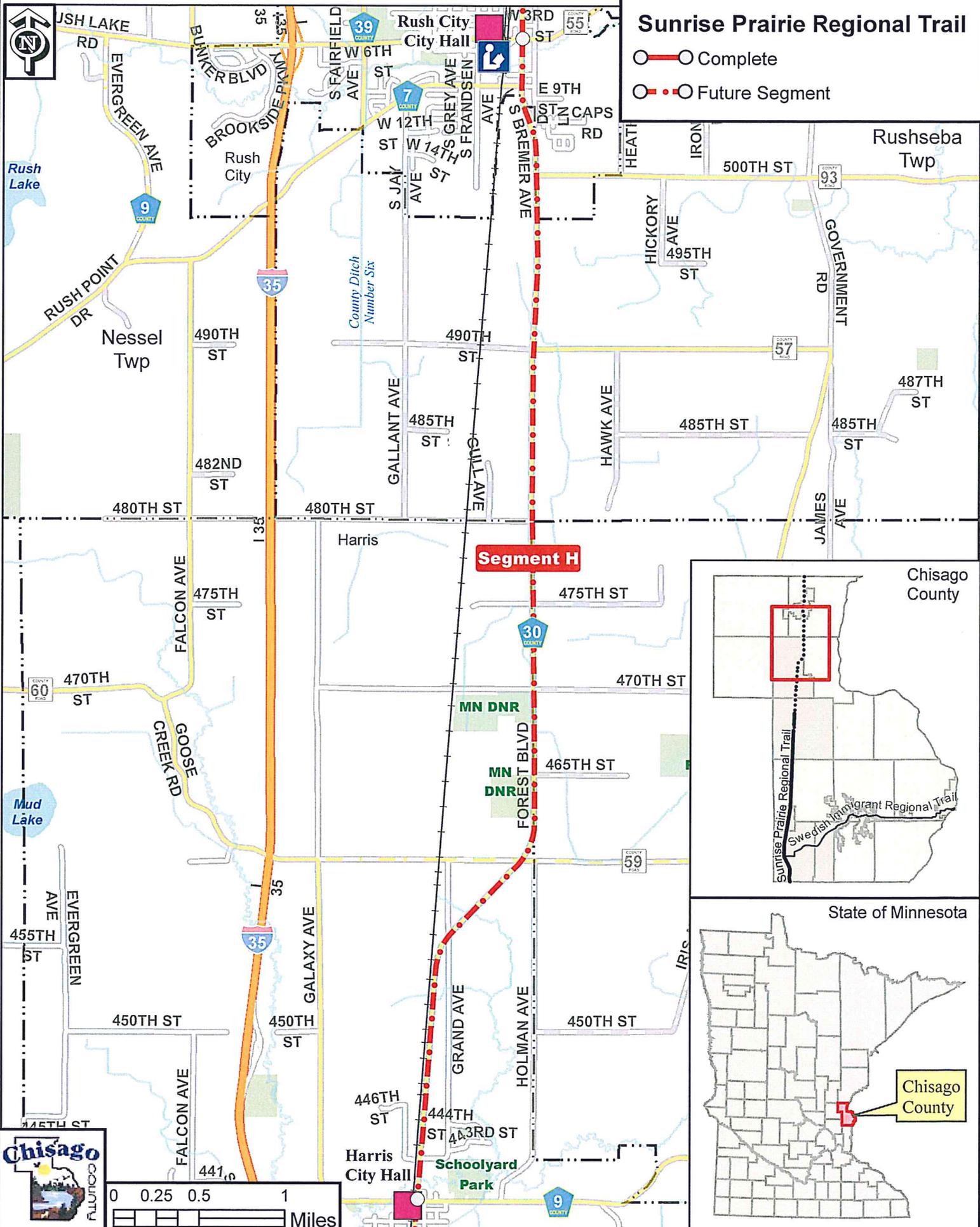
The land uses along this part of the trail include urban and developed properties in Harris and in Rush City, commercial and industrial users, rural residential and agricultural lands (hay/pasture and cultivated crops) and pockets of small wetlands. A preliminary analysis of the likely trail corridor by County staff has not identified any major 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 evaluation – including a review of possible environmental effects, property ownership, acquisition constraints, wetland delineation and design constraints and considerations. The County will need to take special care in the design of this segment of the trail to ensure adequate protection for the existing businesses and parking lots, water bodies, wetlands and trail users.

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment H

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment

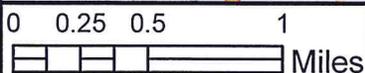
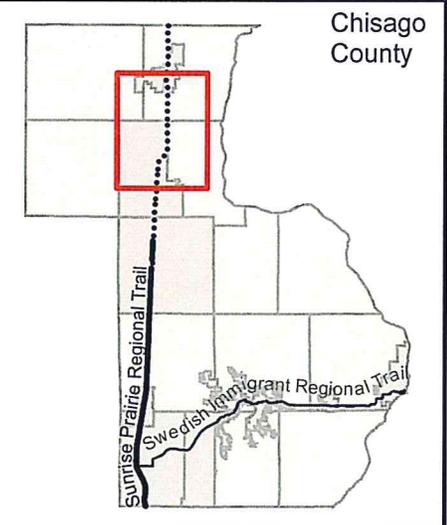
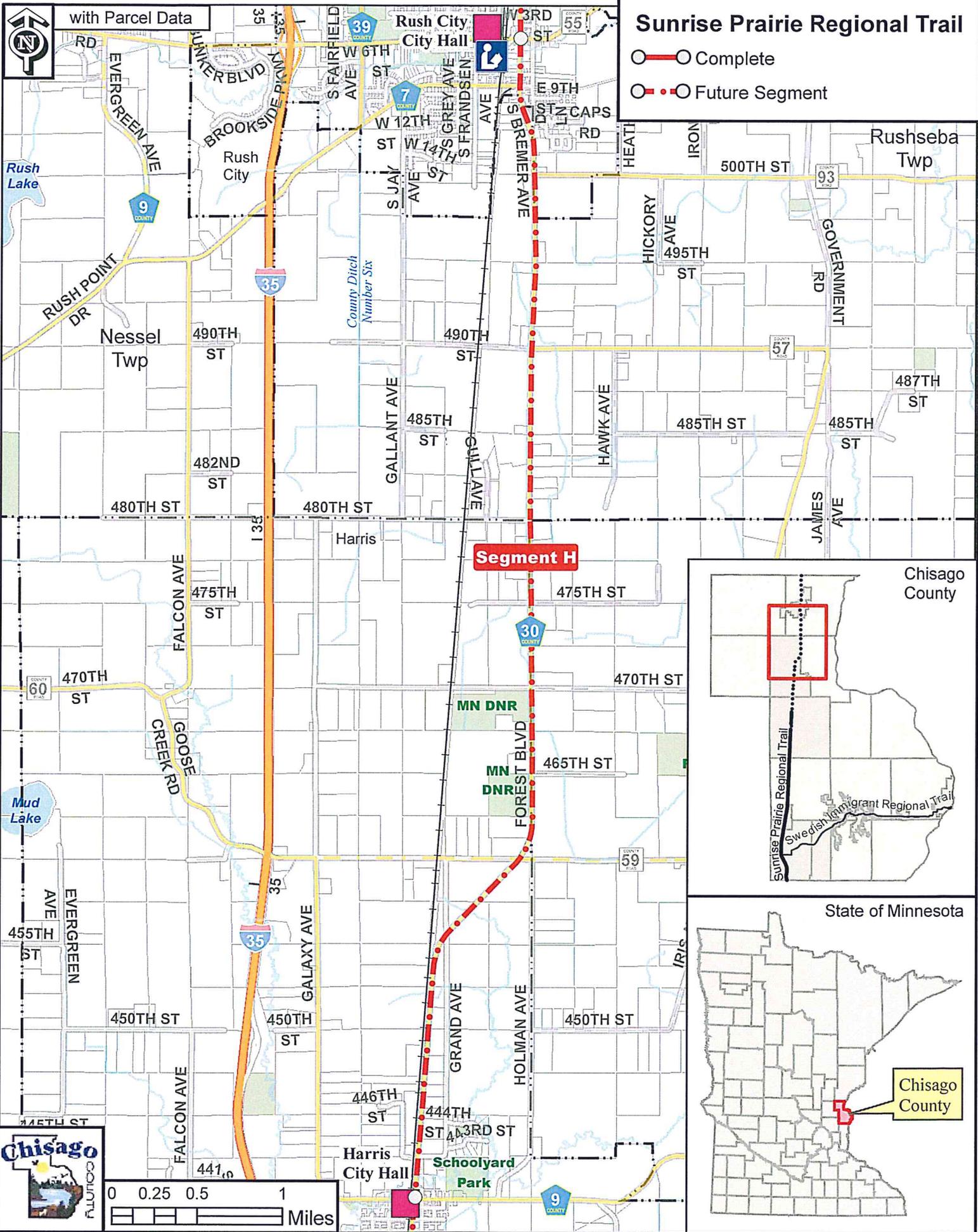


Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment H

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment

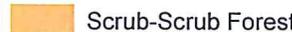


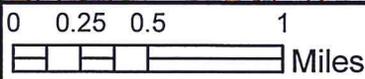
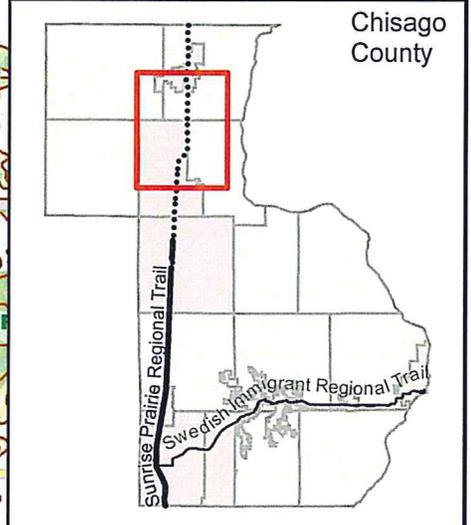
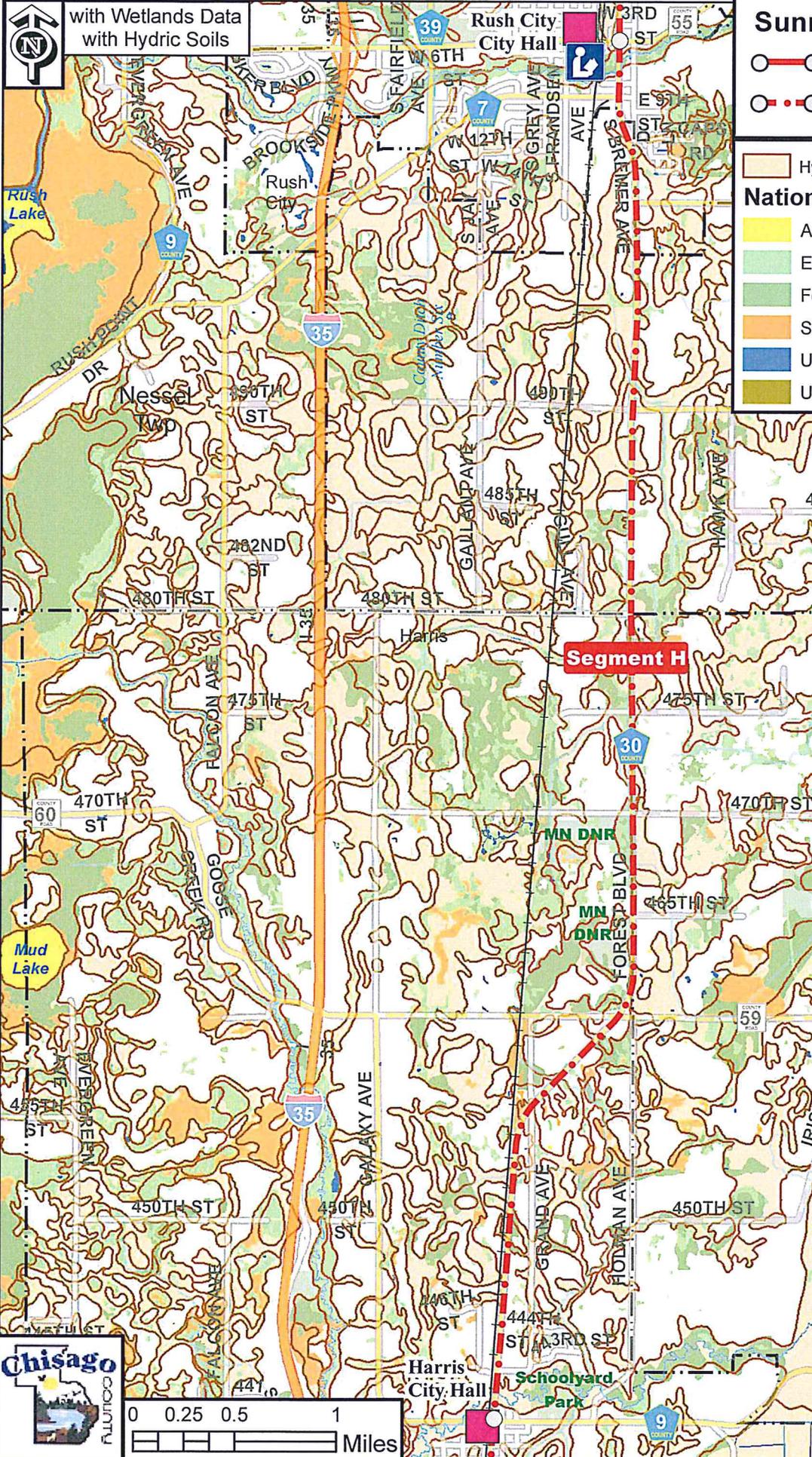
Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment H

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment

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

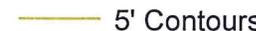


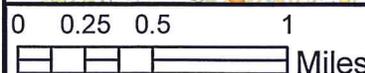
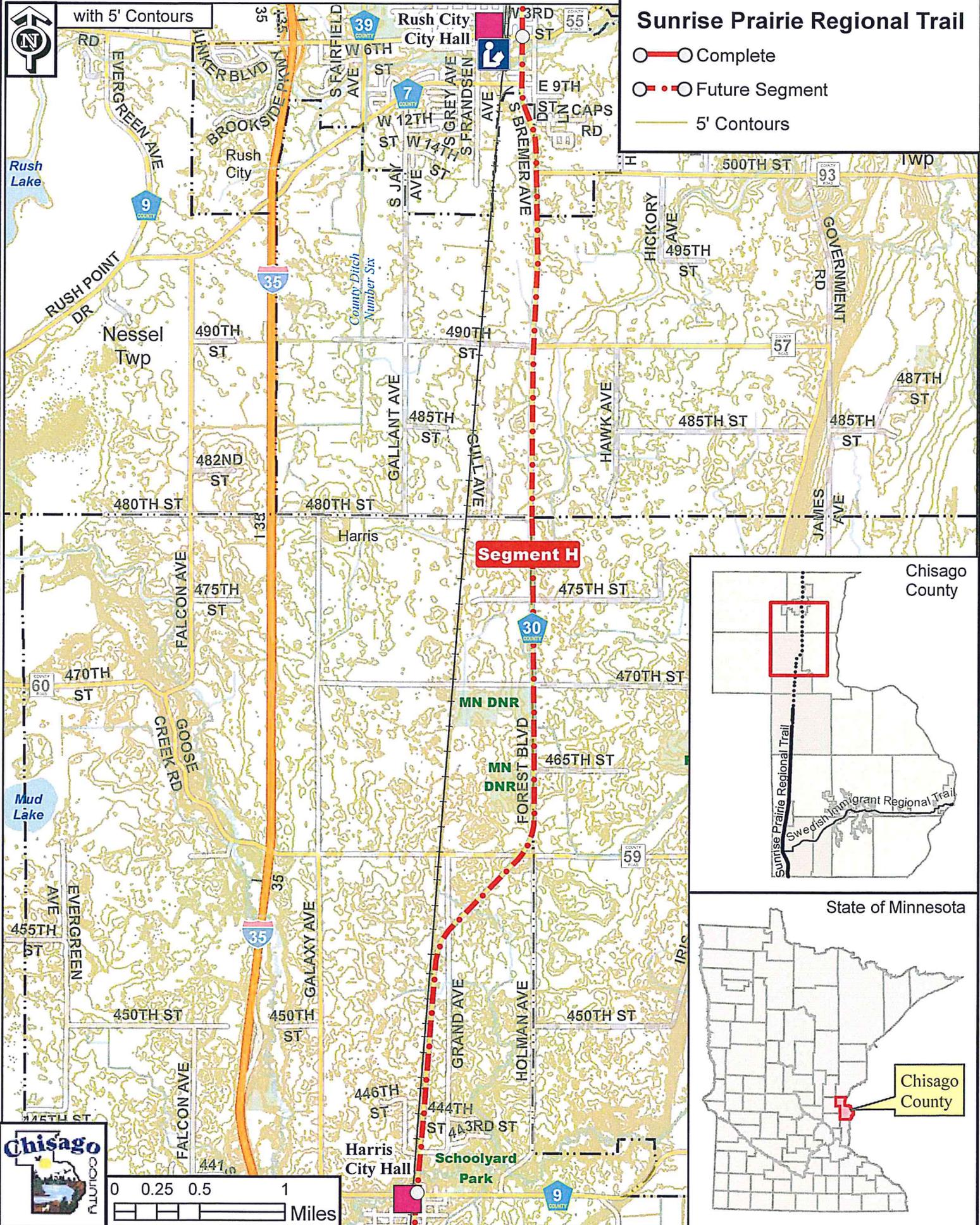
with Wetlands Data
with Hydric Soils

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment H

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment
-  5' Contours

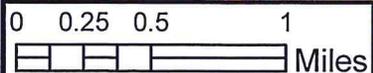
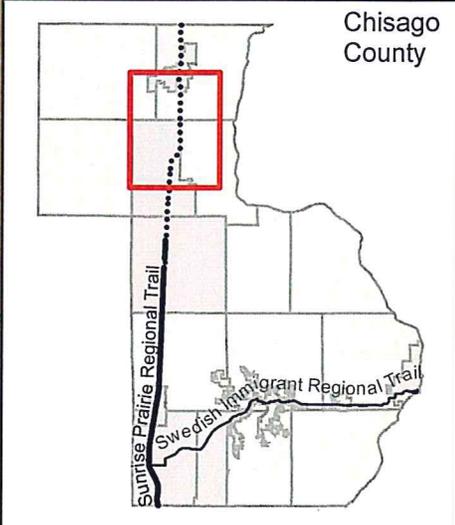
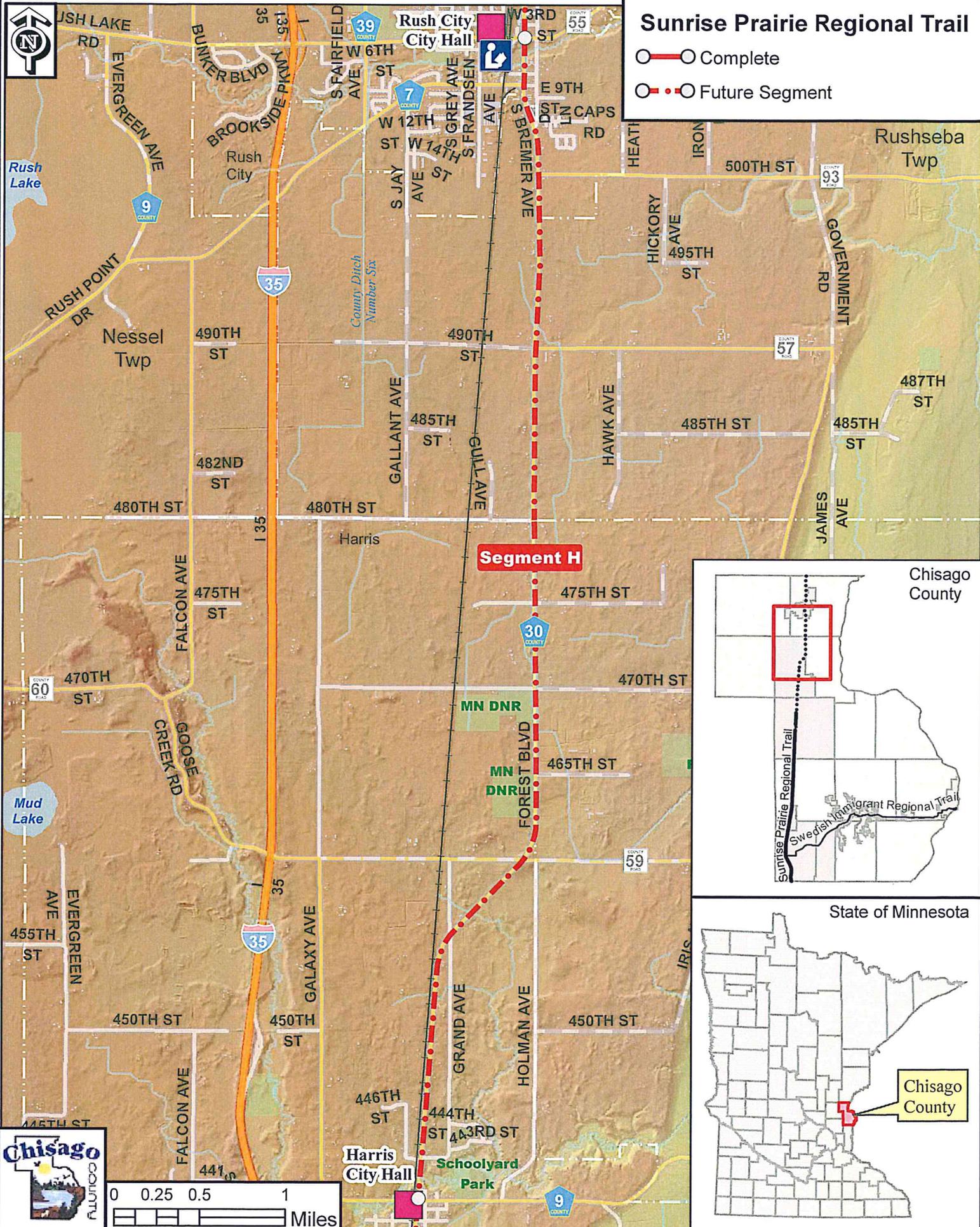


Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment H

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment



Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment H

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

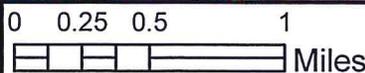
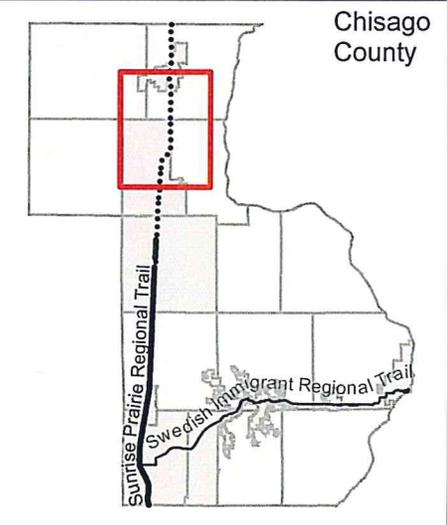
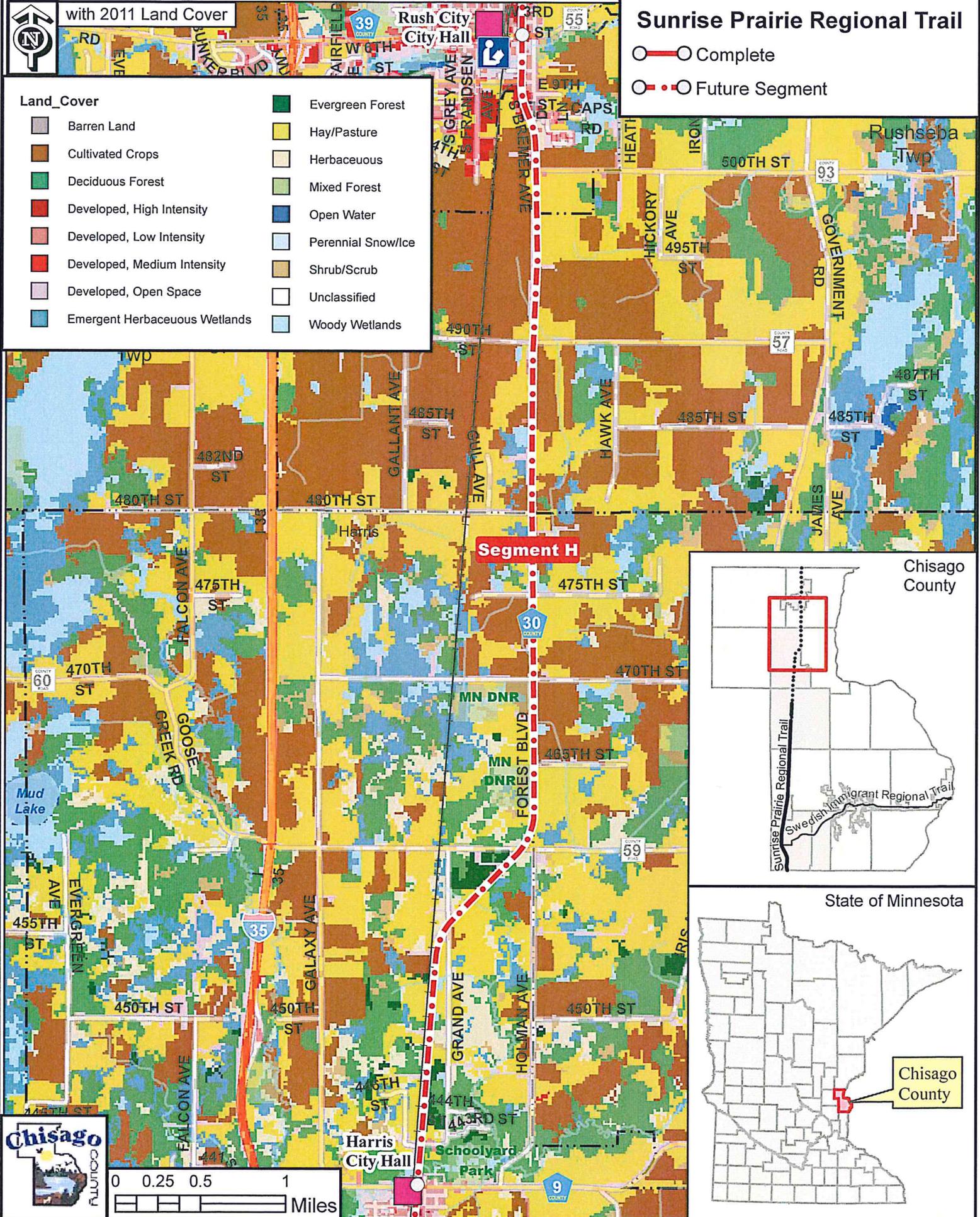
- Complete
- Future Segment



with 2011 Land Cover

Land_Cover

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



Segment I

The northern-most part of the trail, this segment would run from downtown Rush City to Pine County (to an eventual connection with the Willard Munger State Trail) and will be 3.2 miles in length. As now envisioned, the trail would primarily be off-road along County Road 30. Starting in Rush City, the trail would continue north on the east side of County Road 30. Between Rush City and the County border, there are ditches and wetlands on both sides of the road that will affect the final alignment of design of this part of the trail. As noted in Segment H, in downtown Rush City there is a concrete sidewalk along the east side of County Road 30 for several blocks that could serve as part of the trail. In Rush City, the County is expecting the trail to be within a few blocks of Rush City City Hall, the public library and the airport. The trail also should pass near the Rushseba Town Hall and the northern edge of Rush City.

For this segment of the trail, the County is expecting the trail to be primarily a 10-foot-wide bituminous off-road path. The County has not yet determined if widening the shoulder of the road or if a 10-foot-wide off-road trail (or a combination of the two) would work best for this section of the trail. As the trail corridor progresses north from Rush City, the railroad tracks that are west of County Road 30 get closer to County Road 30 making the installation of a trail on the west side of the road in this area unlikely.

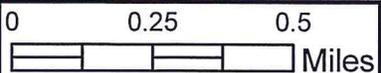
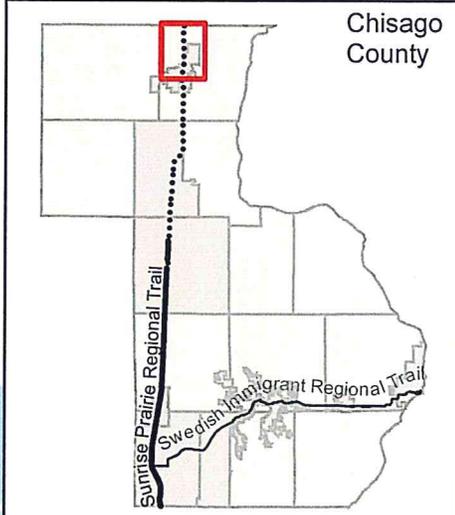
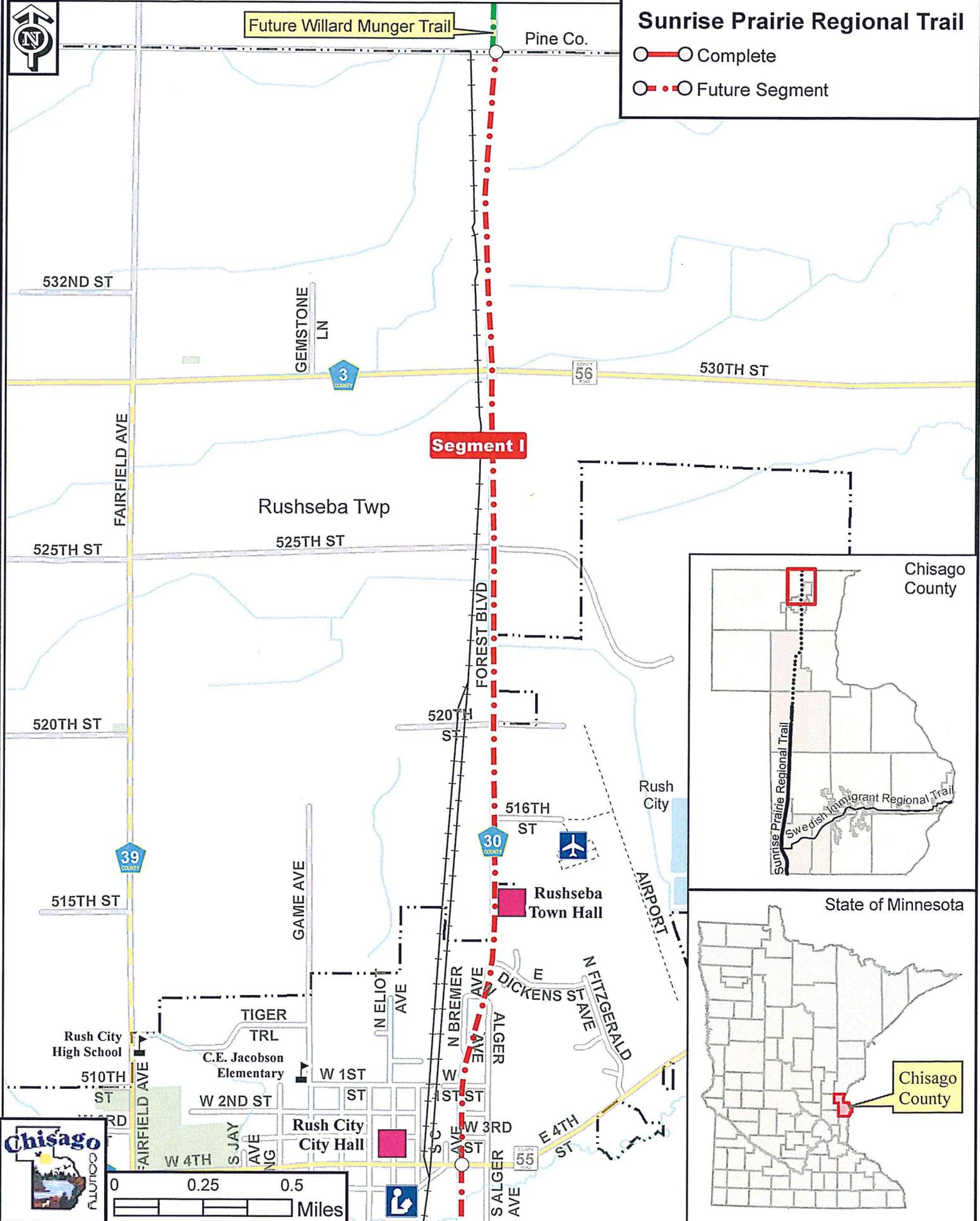
The land uses along this part of the trail include urban and developed properties in Rush City, commercial and industrial users, rural residential and agricultural lands (hay/pasture and cultivated crops) and pockets of small wetlands. A preliminary analysis of the likely trail corridor by County staff has not identified any major 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 evaluation – including a review of possible environmental effects, wetland delineation and design constraints and considerations. The County will need to take special care in the design of this segment of the trail to ensure adequate protection for the existing businesses and parking lots, existing water bodies, wetlands and trail users.

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment I

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment



Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment I

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

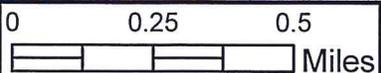
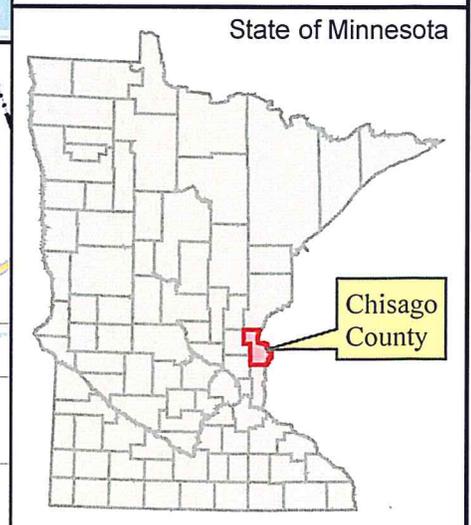
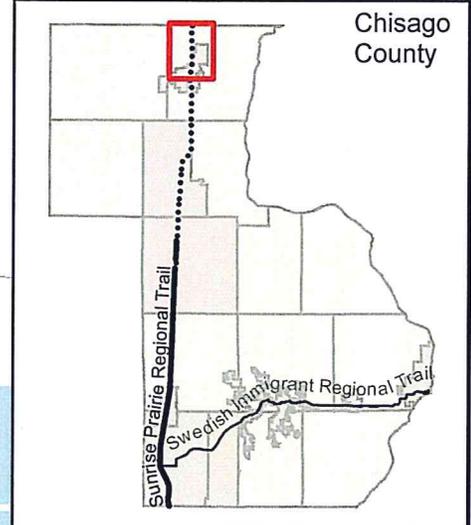
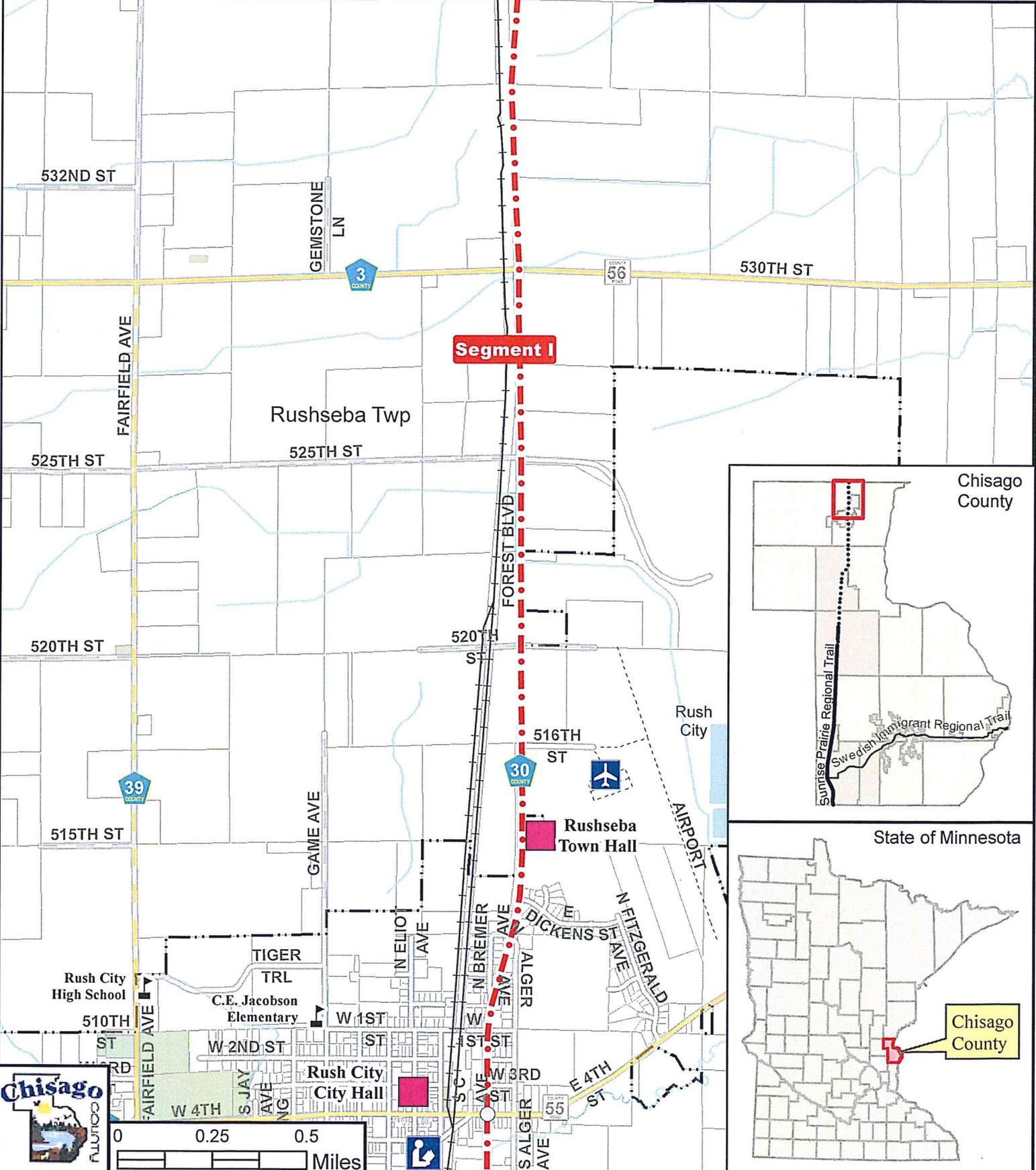
- Complete
- Future Segment



with Parcel Data

Future Willard Munger Trail

Pine Co.



Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment I

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

- Complete
- Future Segment

National Wetland Inventory

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



with Wetlands Data

Future Willard Munger Trail

Pine Co.

532ND ST

GEMSTONE LN

56

530TH ST

Segment I

Rushseba Twp

525TH ST

525TH ST

520TH ST

520TH ST

Rush City

515TH ST

516TH ST

516TH ST

Rushseba Town Hall

AIRPORT

GAME AVE

N BREMER AVE

W 1ST ST

TIGER TRL

C.E. Jacobson Elementary

W 2ND ST

W 3RD ST

W 4TH ST

Rush City City Hall

S ALGER AVE

W 3RD ST

W 4TH ST

S ALGER AVE

N ELIOT AVE

W 1ST ST

W 2ND ST

W 3RD ST

W 4TH ST

S ALGER AVE

N BREMER AVE

W 1ST ST

W 2ND ST

W 3RD ST

W 4TH ST

S ALGER AVE

ALGER

DICKENS ST

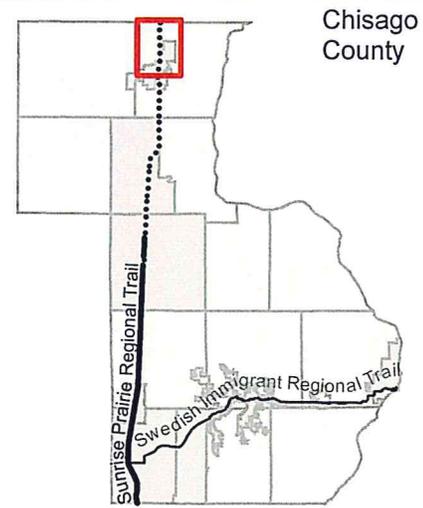
E 4TH ST

N FITZGERALD

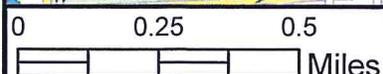
E 4TH ST

S ALGER AVE

Chisago County



State of Minnesota



Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment I

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

- Complete
- Future Segment

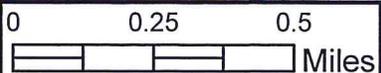
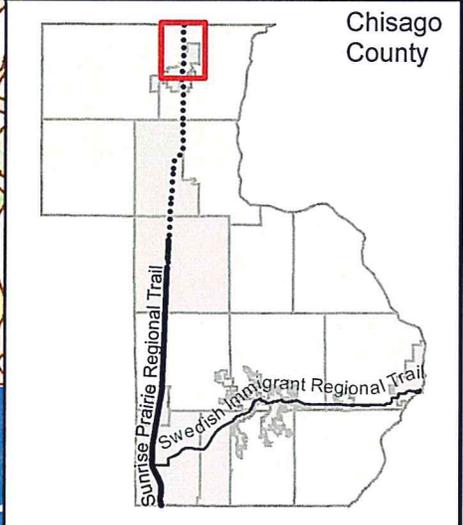
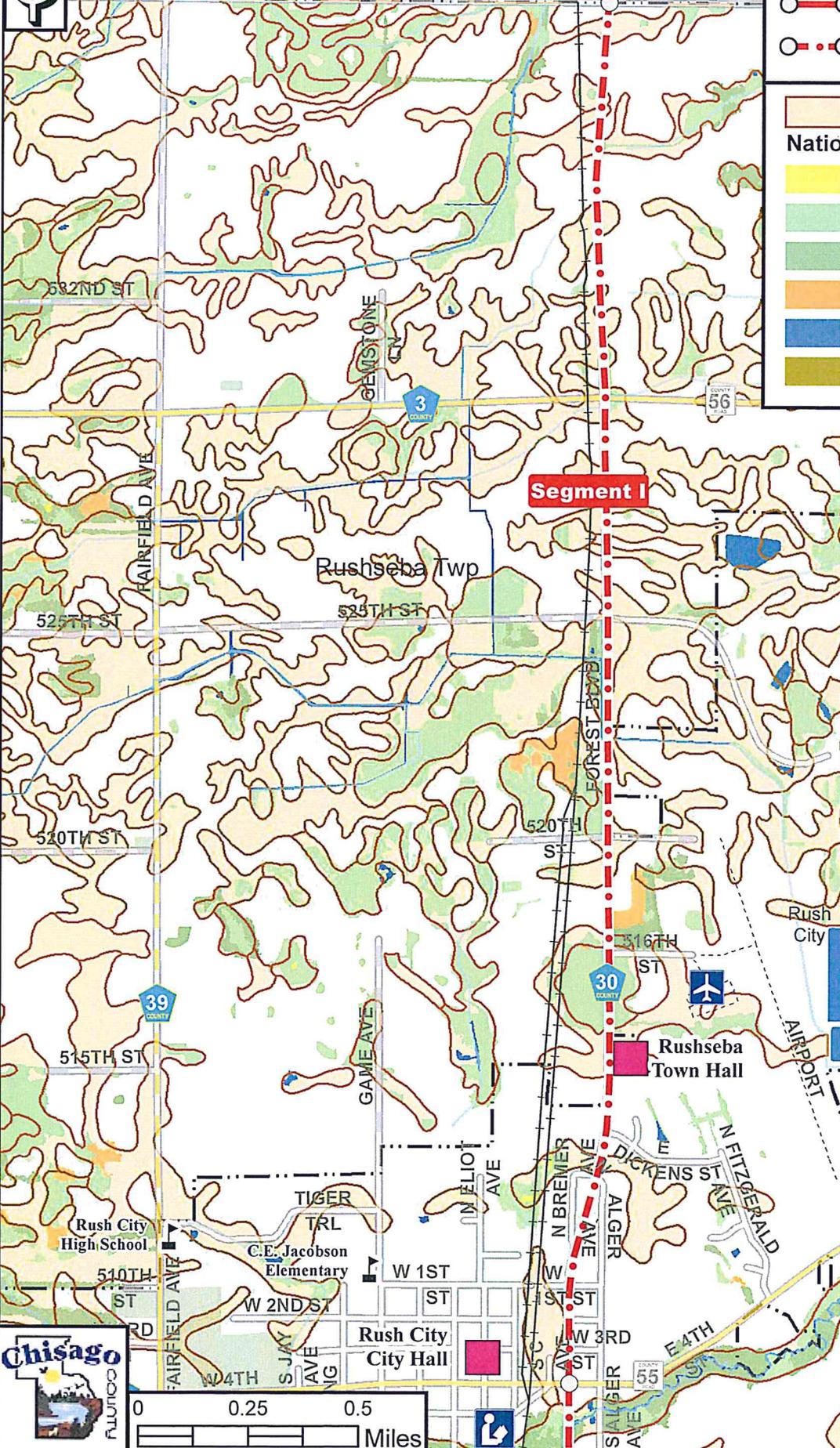
- Hydric Soils
- National Wetland Inventory**
 - Aquatic Bed
 - Emergent Vegetation
 - Forested
 - Scrub-Scrub Forest
 - Unconsolidated Bottom (Basins & Channels)
 - Unconsolidated Shore (Banks & Sandbars)



with Wetlands Data
with Hydric Soils

Future Willard Munger Trail

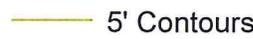
Pine Co.



Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment I

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

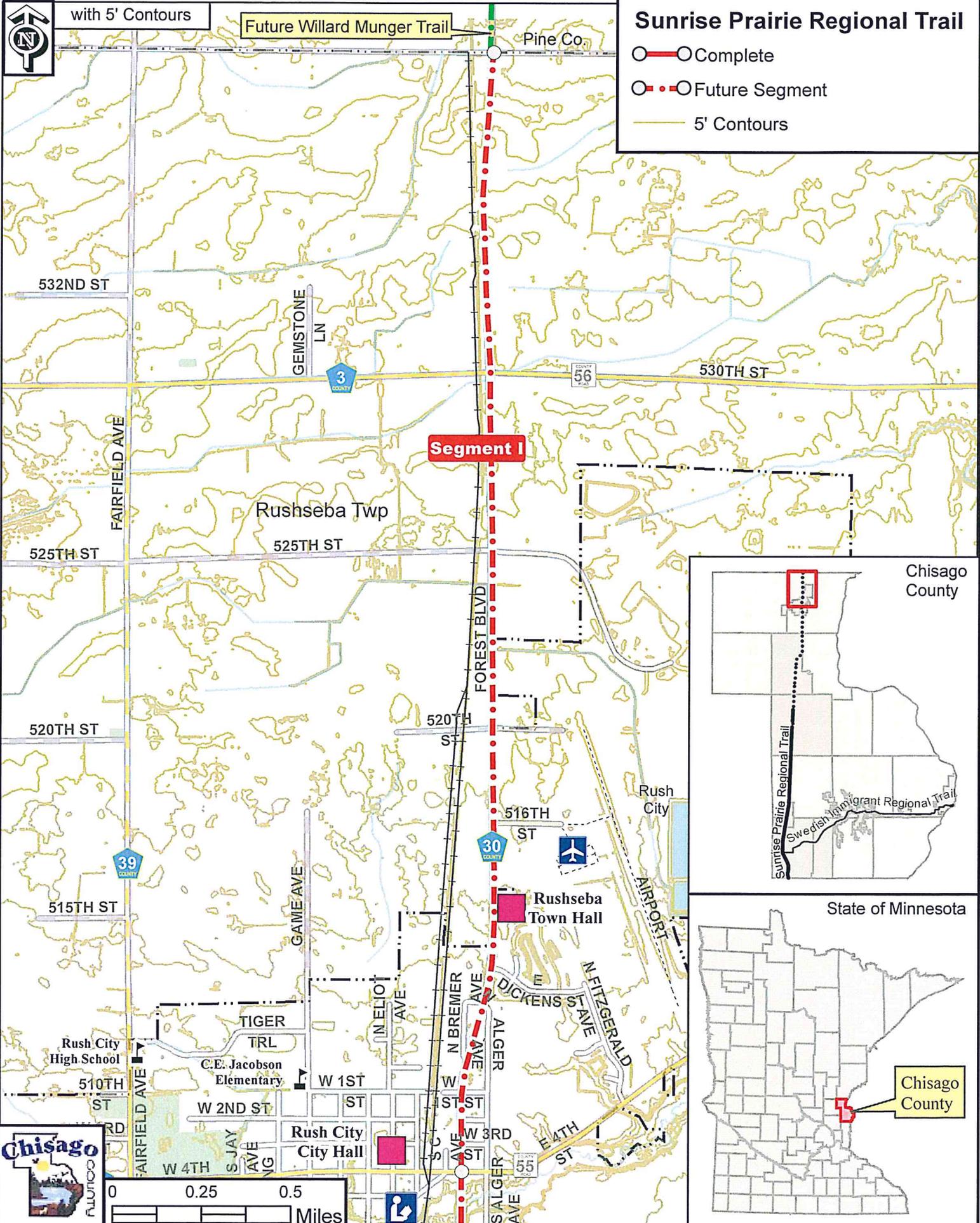
-  Complete
-  Future Segment
-  5' Contours



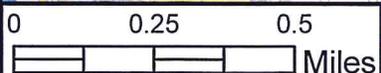
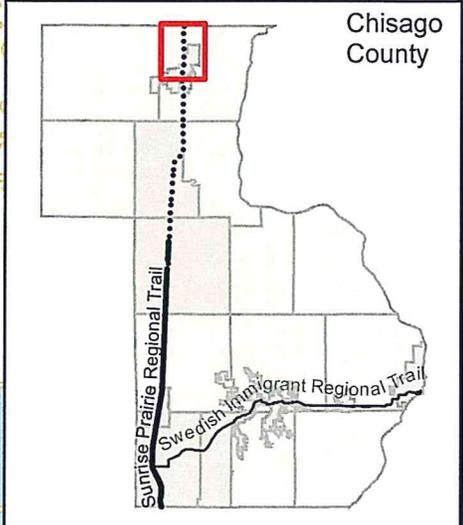
with 5' Contours

Future Willard Munger Trail

Pine Co.



Segment I

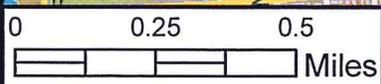
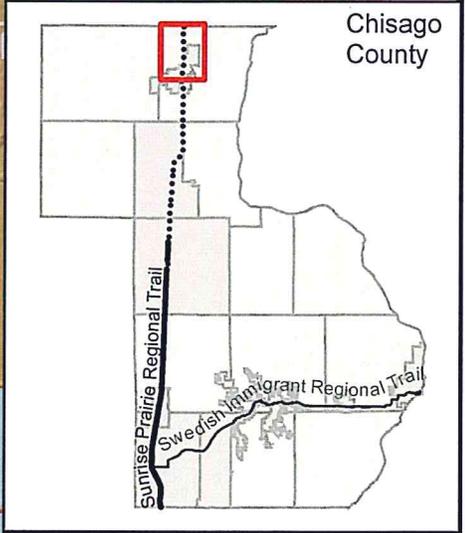
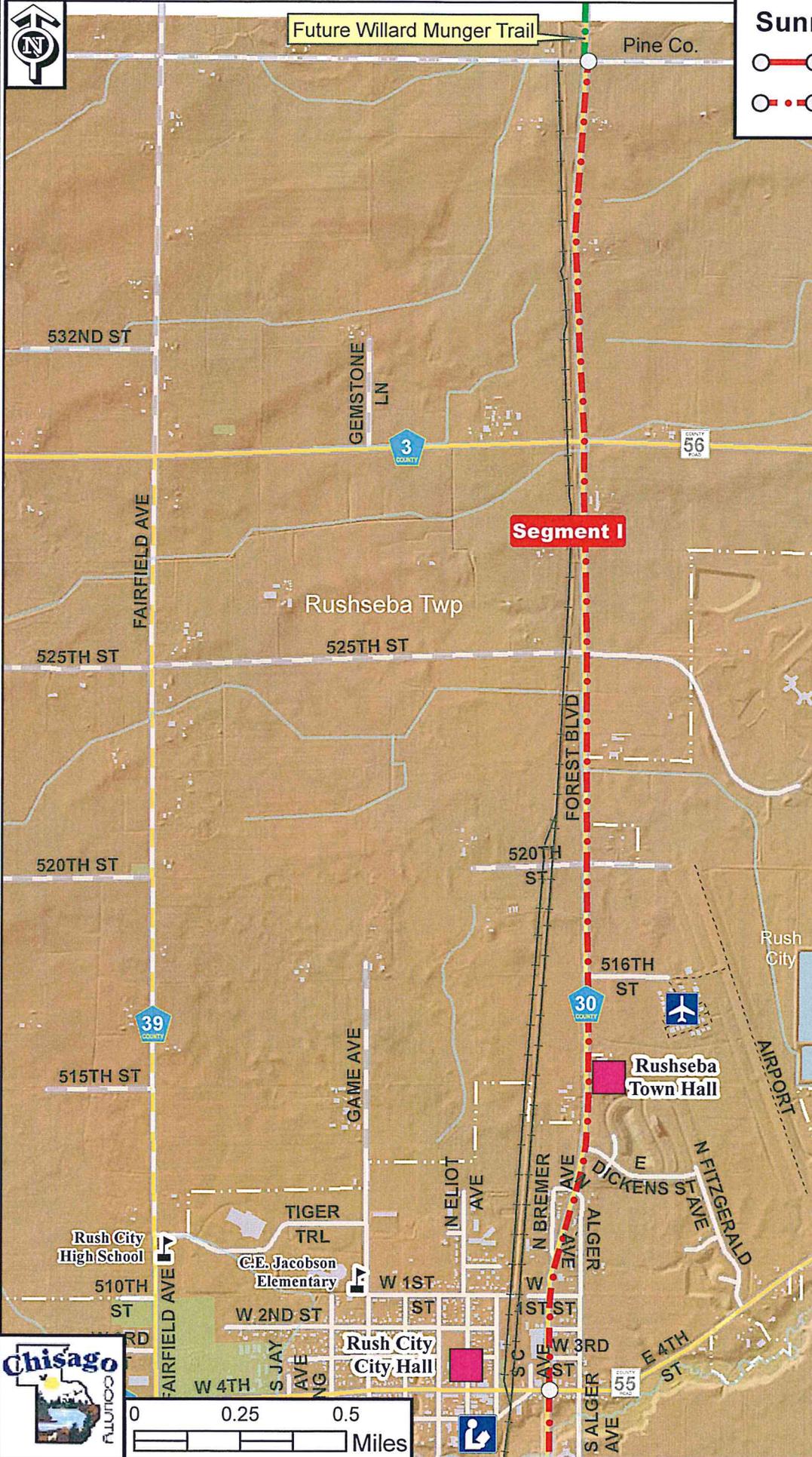


Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment I

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

- Complete
- Future Segment



Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment I

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment



with 2013 Aerial

Future Willard Munger Trail

Pine Co

552ND ST

GAINSTONE



530TH ST

Segment I

Rushseba Twp

525TH ST

525TH ST

520TH ST

520TH ST

Rush City



515TH ST

516TH ST

516TH ST

Rushseba Town Hall

Rush City

Rush City High School

C.E. Jacobson Elementary

AIRPORT

510TH ST

W 1ST ST

Rush City City Hall

W 2ND ST

W 4TH

S JAY AVE

W 3RD ST

W 4TH

S JAY AVE

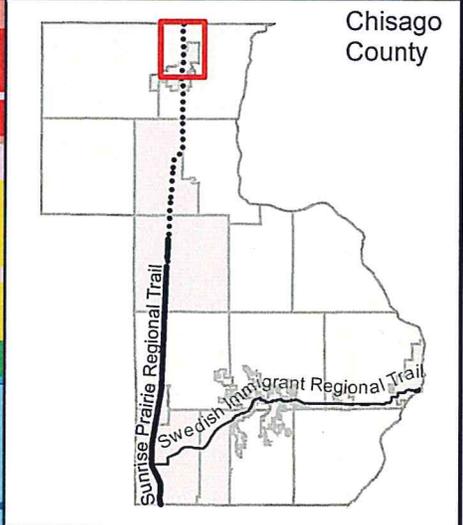
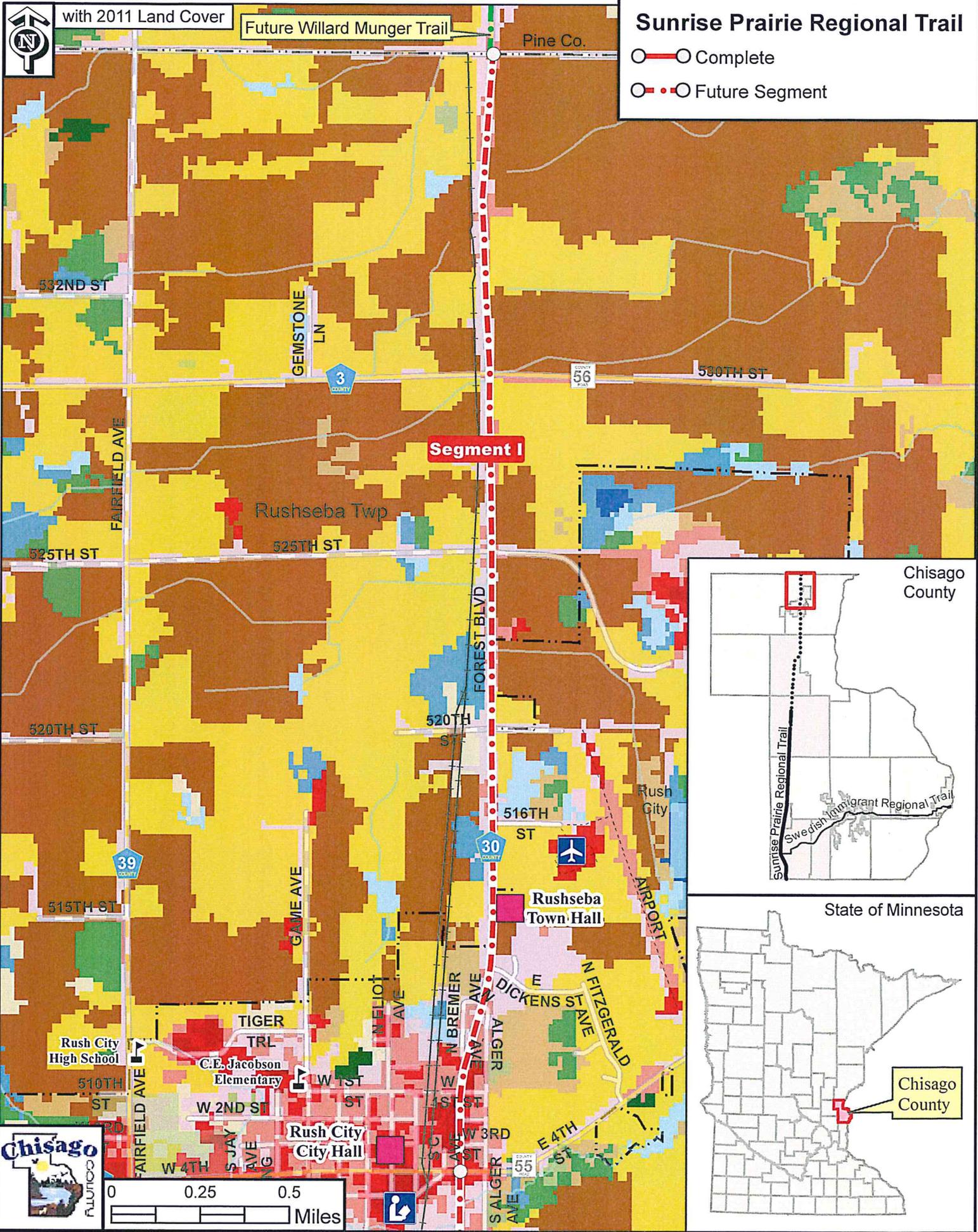
W 3

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail - Segment I

Legend

Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail

-  Complete
-  Future Segment



Implementation

Given the overall length of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail, Chisago County is anticipating that the development 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 Sunrise Prairie 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 design and 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 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 many of the remaining 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 recent cost estimate of \$500,000 per mile for both acquisition and construction costs, the County expects that it will cost \$7 to \$8 million to complete the remaining parts of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail. However, construction costs can vary depending on the complexity of the construction (including bridges).

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 (Wyoming and North Branch 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 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 Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail. Local parks, existing and future parking lots and libraries 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 five 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 strives to meet this obligation through appropriate facility design.

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 at this time. This eliminates any economic barriers for trail users.

The Sunrise Prairie 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 future segments of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail and all associated facilities with a commitment to 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 be accommodating for 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 Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail.

It is necessary for the trail to cross local, township, county and state roads because the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail will eventually extend 30 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 Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail route as agricultural land. On the north end of the trail corridor (Segments F, G, H and I in North Branch, Harris and Rush City), the trail route extends through a mix of agricultural land cover, wetlands and pockets of forest. North of Harris, the MLCCS identifies the land cover in the corridor as primarily agricultural with intermittent wetlands and forest areas.

The County has started to evaluate and will continue to recognize and use 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 # 776). 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 and landforms are within one-mile of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail corridor:

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>State Protection Status</u>
<i>Actinonaias ligamentina</i>	Mucket	THR (Threatened)
Black Ash - (Red Maple) Seepage Swamp Type	Black Ash - (Red Maple) Seepage Swamp	
<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	American Bittern	Watchlist
<i>Cicindela patruela patruela</i>	Northern Barrens Tiger Beetle	SPC (Special Concern)
Colonial Waterbird Nesting Area		same
Dry Barrens Prairie (Southern) Type	Dry Barrens Prairie (Southern)	
Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern) Type	Dry Sand - Gravel Prairie (Southern)	
<i>Emydoidea blandingii</i>	Blanding's Turtle	THR
<i>Gallinula galeata</i>	Common Gallinule	SPC
<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	Wood Turtle	THR
<i>Grus Canadensis</i>	Sandhill Crane	Watchlist
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	Watchlist
<i>Hesperia leonardus leonardus</i>	Leonard's Skipper	SHL-SPC
<i>Heterodon platirhinos</i>	Eastern Hognose Snake	Watchlist
<i>Hudsonia tomentosa</i>	Beach-Heather	THR
<i>Oenothera rhombipetala</i>	Rhombic-petaled Evening Primrose	SPC
<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>	Wilson's Phalarope	THR

Pituophis catenifer	Gopher snake	SPC
Platanthera flava var. herbiola	Tuberclad Rein-orchid	THR
Poa paludigena	Bog Bluegrass	THR
Polygala cruciata	Cross-leaved Milkwort	END (Endangered)
Rotala ramosior	Tooth-cup	THR
Tamarack Swamp (Southern) Type	Tamarack Swamp (Southern)	
Utricularia geminiscapa	Hidden-fruited Bladderwort	THR

Wetlands

Chisago County has mapped the wetlands in the likely corridor for Segments F, G, H and I 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 likely trail location 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. Chisago County will use the wetland 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 or the type of trail that should be built to minimize the impact 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 use 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 responsible agency for the implementation and operation of the Sunrise Prairie 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 the need for reconstruction or demolition of existing County facilities).

8. Research Plan

Going forward, Chisago County will use the protocol established by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trail Commission for collecting visitation information for the trail. To date, Chisago County collected data on trail use in 2005. The County will need to do another data and trail use survey in the next two or three years.

9. Implementation, management and sustainability plan

Physical Sustainability – Describes commitment to design standards that are consistent with quality outcomes (longevity) and accepted standards and practices. This information is on pages 18, 19 and 32.

Special Needs and Accessibility – This is included on pages 31 and 32.

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 which use the trail include:

- MS 150
- Freeze Your Buns 5K
- Walk the Dog
- March for Schools
- Lakes Region Triathlon
- Fairview Clinics Annual Bike Ride
- North Branch Public Safety Day

O and M Sustainability – Describes operations and maintenance practices to be conducted by the responsible agencies. Please see the information on pages 37 and 38.

Ecological Sustainability – Describes the commitment to long-term ecological stewardship along with the responsible agencies. This information is on pages 33 and 34.

10. Other needed information

Estimated Costs and Funding

Regional trail implementation has both initial costs (acquisition and development) and on-going costs (operations and maintenance). Trail development of the remaining segments of this trail 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

The existing Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail primarily follows the route of a former railroad line that connected North Branch and Wyoming in western Chisago County. The route of the trail from North Branch to the northern County border primarily follows the County Road 30 (Old Highway 61) corridor. The County also may explore the use of parts of the existing railroad corridor north of Harris as possible route for the trail.

An objective of the County with the development of the remaining parts of this trail is to follow and use County Road 30 right-of-way and the railroad right-of-way where ever possible 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. In total, the estimated development cost of the remaining segments of the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail (about 14 miles) is \$5 – 8 million in 2015 dollars.

Operations and Maintenance

Chisago County will manage, operate and maintain the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail. County Ordinances will govern the trail for segments outside of Wyoming and North Branch with supplemental guidance from local jurisdictions.

County Ordinances and State Law

All existing State of Minnesota traffic laws and Chisago County Ordinances 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 existing and proposed 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 and North Branch where the Wyoming Police department and the North Branch 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 with either 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 Sunrise Prairie 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 major 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.

The County will negotiate with local snowmobile clubs for winter maintenance of the trail segments that will be made available for snowmobile use.

Operating Costs

After the trail is fully developed, Chisago County will cover the maintenance and operating costs. Chisago County estimates that annual routine maintenance costs for the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail will be about \$1,100 per mile, for a total of \$33,000 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 the remaining sections of the Sunrise Prairie 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 anticipates financial assistance with some trail maintenance from the various cities along the trail. It also is anticipated that 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

July 16, 2015

Chisago County Board of Commissioners
313 N. Main St.
Center City, MN 55012

Dear Chisago County 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 extend the Sunrise Prairie 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.

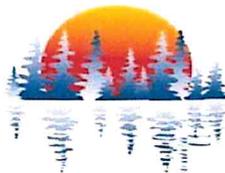
There are also many benefits for the residents. The residents have safe alternative options for transportation, they have additional local recreation opportunities, and it encourages health benefits. According to the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota, trails positively affect land values. Real estate 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 Sunrise Prairie 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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