Louisville Township Community
Parks, Trails and Open Spaces Planning Map and
Parks Plan and Development Report

Prepared for Louisville Township

by Erin Lovell, Community Growth Options (U-CGO),
University of Minnesota

January 13, 2009
This project was supported by a grant from the Community Growth Options (U-CGO) program, a joint project of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) and the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, with funding from the McKnight Foundation. The content of this report is the responsibility of the authors and is not necessarily endorsed by U-CGO, CURA, the Humphrey Institute, the University of Minnesota, or the McKnight Foundation. Visit U-CGO online at www.cura.umn.edu/cgo.php

© 2009 by The Regents of the University of Minnesota. This publication may be reproduced in its entirety (except photographs or other materials reprinted herein with permission from other sources) in print or electronic form, for noncommercial educational and nonprofit use only.

For information regarding commercial reprints or reproduction of portions of this publication, contact the CURA editor at the address below.

This publication is available in alternate formats upon request.

Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)
University of Minnesota
330 HHH Center
301—19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Phone: (612) 625-1551
Fax: (612) 626-0273
E-mail: cura@umn.edu
Web site: www.cura.umn.edu

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.
## Contents

Executive Summary ........................................................................................................................ 4
Background ..................................................................................................................................... 4
  Objectives ................................................................................................................................4
  Lessons Learned from Trails Studies ...................................................................................... 4
Louisville Township Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces Planning Map ............................................. 6
  Intent of the Planning Map ...................................................................................................... 6
  Description of Features Identified on the Planning Map......................................................... 6
Ideas on Future Parks and Trails Projects and Local Connection Search Areas ............................ 8
  Overview.................................................................................................................................. 8
  Concept Plan Descriptions ..................................................................................................... 9
Recommendations to Louisville Township .................................................................................. 11
Appendix A: Report on Landfill Sites and Recreation ................................................................. 14
Executive Summary

This first part of this report presents a comprehensive map for parks, trails, and open spaces planning in Louisville Township, Minnesota. The map identifies natural resources and green spaces to consider for preservation as public amenities, and documents areas where the township would seek right-of-way or land for parks, trails, and open spaces.

The second section of this report consists of a series of concept plans for the layout of a town park in Louisville. These studies explore how trail search areas could intersect parcels selected as potential town park sites by the Louisville Township Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces Committee (PTOS).

References and resources that may be useful for township parks and trails planning are listed in the Annotated Resources List and Bibliography section.

Finally, Appendix A summarizes this project’s investigation of whether two closed landfill sites in the township could become public green spaces. Based on input from the persons responsible for the sites, this report concludes that recreational use of the closed landfills will not be a viable option for many years.

Background

Objectives

In 2007, Louisville Township commissioned a Citizen Advisory Committee on Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces (PTOS) to develop a parks and trails plan for the township. One of the committee’s tasks is to map out a comprehensive plan of future parks and trails projects, along with land acquisition and planning opportunities, to recommend to the Town Board. The objective of this report is to propose a comprehensive parks and trails planning map that incorporates the conclusions of the Louisville Township Community Parks Plan and Development Project, and that builds upon lessons learned from two trail studies performed by PTOS in cooperation with Michael Cronin and Associates and the University of Minnesota Community Growth Options Program.

Lessons Learned from Trails Studies

The first PTOS trail study presented alignment possibilities for a system of roadside trails throughout the township, within the existing road right-of-way. Further exploration of this approach showed that the existing right-of-way does not provide enough space for trails to meet the safety and drainage requirements of Scott County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

In response to the challenges posed by right-of-way restrictions in the first study, the second trail study examined alternate ways to align trails through the township, including destination-based land acquisition, roadside land acquisition, and utilizing utility corridors. The study concluded that constructing cross-township trails would be prohibitively difficult to achieve in the near term, due to the challenge of acquiring enough continuous right-of-way from
property owners; therefore, the township should incorporate trail corridor planning into a longer-term comprehensive plan.

One planning opportunity identified by the second trail study is the presence of county and regional trail search areas/search proposals nearby and across Louisville Township (illustrated in Appendix A), which indicate that trail alignment opportunities are likely to develop as the county and regional trail systems expand (though it is important to note that the Scott County Future Trail Search Area along County Highway 14/150th Street is not an approved search yet, and is in a very early stage).

Building on the observations of the PTOS trail studies, this report offers the following recommendations:

- If cross-township trails are a priority, coordinate township trails planning with Scott County trail search efforts. Coordination on these projects may help both the county and the township identify future trails connection points.

- Compared to cross-township trail corridors, parks and neighborhood-scale trail branches offer more immediate development opportunities. The best project(s) might identify a park site and search for an adjoining trail segment at the same time; an adjoining trail segment could potentially provide township residents with improved access to the park, while keeping open the possibility of connecting the park to a larger green space network.
Louisville Township Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces Planning Map

Intent of the Planning Map

This map is intended to support a township parks and trails system that can grow flexibly as Louisville develops, and to help the township preserve green spaces for future public access.

Items that should appear on the Planning Map include:

- Parks, Trails and Open Spaces projects approved by Louisville Town Board
- Areas to consider for green space preservation
- Park and Trail Search Areas for land acquisition by easement or purchase

This map may guide planners in seeking conservation easements and right-of-way, recommending incentives for cluster development, and aligning trails to interesting places in Louisville Township. It could also guide the township in selecting lots for park dedication, depending on the township park dedication ordinance.

Description of Features Identified on the Planning Map

1. Regionally Significant Natural Resource Areas - “natural areas for conservation and protection” identified by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.¹

2. Natural Resource Corridors – patches of woods and wetland that provide connected wildlife habitat and visual interest in the landscape.

   This drawing is adapted from the Shakopee Parks and Recreation Department Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan, Figure 3.5,² which closely corresponds to the County Defined Natural Area Corridors in Scott County 2030 Comprehensive Plan.³

3. Local Trail Connection Search Area

   The area within this proposed local trail connection search area (identified hereafter as Antler Park area, after one of the subdivisions it contains) is a node of new residential development in Louisville. An off-road, local trail connection may be feasible and beneficial here for several reasons.


² Bonestroo and Shakopee Parks and Recreation Department, Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan: June 2007 (3-12).

³ Scott County Community Development Division, Scott County 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update (Shakopee: Scott County, 2009).
First, according to the informal understanding of Louisville PTOS Committee members, further development is likely to occur among the agricultural parcels in this search area. In anticipation of development, one developer has already built a road west from Old Brickyard Road to the property line of the next agricultural property. If properties were to develop, preserving an open space corridor for trails could ensure future connectivity among the residential neighborhoods south of 133rd Street, and could connect Antler Park area to future cross-township trail corridors.

Second, providing a designated place for pedestrians to cross 133rd Street, and a safe alternative to walking along the shoulder of 133rd Street, could benefit pedestrians in the neighborhood. High-speed traffic along 133rd Street is a concern that several Louisville residents expressed during Louisville Township Community Trails Plan and Development Study.

Finally, Antler Park area is located near the crossing of two high-voltage transmission line corridors, north-south and east-west, which could provide an opportunity for the township to seek a trail easement if other routes are nonnegotiable.

4. **Scenic Lakeshore** – Preserve a minimum width of 50 feet. Seek additional space where available.

5. **Future Parkway, Zumbro Avenue** – Seek additional right-of-way, minimum 83 feet from road centerline.

*Louisville Township Community Trails Plan and Development Study* identifies Zumbro Avenue as an opportunity to align a cross-township trail corridor. As the study notes, Zumbro Avenue has several advantages over other roads as an open space corridor:

- projected to experience lower traffic volumes than other through roads in Louisville
- provides a north-south axis across the township, centrally located between two township population centers
- Louisville already has at least 83 feet from center of right-of-way along parts of Zumbro Avenue
- would be well-placed to connect to the Future Trail Search Area proposed by Scott County along 150th
- will be under local jurisdiction, which may permit more flexible design standards than if the road were a county highway or designated arterial road

Given sufficient right-of-way along one or both side(s) of Zumbro Avenue, the construction of an open space amenity along this road, such as an off-road trail, parkway, or boulevard, could help to preserve the wide-open character of the rural landscape.

A. **Note: Trails and the Lakes Area**

The Lakes area is the largest population center in Louisville. In a 2009 survey of township residents, it was also the most nominated destination for trails. At the request of PTOS Committee, the CGO trails study analyzed the Lakes area to determine how trails could improve the connectivity between the residential cul-de-sacs around the lakes, and
whether trail connections could link these safe streets into a network for walking and recreation. Based on this inventory, the study concludes that wet conditions and the density of existing development around the lakes are barriers to trail placement, such that the residential cul-de-sacs do not represent a good opportunity for trails connections. For this reason, the Plan Map does not identify a Local Trail Search Connection Area among the subdivisions around the lakes.

Ideas on Future Parks and Trails Projects and Local Connection Search Areas

Overview

The concept plans presented in this report explore how potential town park sites might fit into the Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces Planning Map, county trail search efforts, and city park search efforts, and where search areas could be proposed to connect local trail segments directly to a town park. These ideas are more sketches than recommendations, designed to illustrate parks and trails possibilities in Louisville and promote discussion.

The selection of sites for these concepts, and the layout of park amenities shown on park site drawings, build upon work performed by PTOS in early 2008, when the committee laid the foundation for Louisville to plan and develop a town park Actions by the committee towards town park development at that time included the following:

- Prioritized which recreational activities and amenities the town park should support
- Selected parcels to consider for acquisition by the township, based on size, landscape features, and interest of the landowners in selling land to the township for a town park.
- Met with Jackson Township to discuss the possibility of joint investment in Jackson Town Park and Town Hall, an 80-acre park site located about one mile from Louisville boundaries. In this scenario, Louisville Township would develop a walking trail through the park, in return for sharing the town hall.

Drawing 2 shows the locations of potential town park sites identified by PTOS.

Based on this work, PTOS envisioned the future Louisville Town Park as

“... an interesting and safe place for individuals and families to gather and perhaps walk or bike on a loop within the park, provide an efficient and supportable central, rather than dispersed, location for tot lot or neighborhood park facility type play equipment, and establish a focal point or destination for roadside trail system.”

4 Michael Cronin, Committee Priorities, January 24, 2008 [notes on meeting with PTOS].
Concept Plan Descriptions

1. **Trails Along the Lake**

   Lakes Thole and O’Dowd are among the most popular and attractive outdoor features in Louisville Township, and although Lake O’Dowd Park (City of Shakopee) and Thole Lake Public Access provide residents with access to the water, Louisville does not yet provide a focal point or community space where township residents can recreate, relax, and gather to enjoy the lakeshore. Concept Plan 1 focuses on providing such a space.

   Among five consecutive sites identified by PTOS as potential parkland in this area of the township, Site D contains the longest stretch of lakeshore. In addition, it would be well-located to become a trailhead or access point on the Scott County trail system as it develops in the future. The site is adjacent to a Scott County Future Trail Search Area, which runs from Marshall Avenue westward along the of County Highway 14/150th Street. At the northeast corner of Site D, between Townline Road and Marystown Road, the search corridor runs into lakes on both sides of the road, which make it likely that a future trail would need to curve to the south of Schneider Lake, an alignment that could intersect Site D and four consecutive parcels identified by PTOS as potential park sites. Site D is also adjacent to a City of Shakopee Parkland Search Area, which would be compatible with a regional trail alignment in terms of future land use. For this reason, a town park at site D, connected to a local trail continuing west to Marystown Road, could be a strong regional trail connection point, provided the Scott County trail search continues.

   One disadvantage of Site D from a maintenance standpoint is that most of its acreage would need to be sodded, seeded, or replanted, since it is currently an agricultural field. If the township desires a naturalistic park setting, Site D may require several years of initial landscape installation, along with diligent maintenance. From an ecological standpoint, in contrast, having to seed and replant Site D could be an opportunity to restore native habitat, such as prairie vegetation, thus an advantage of selecting this site.

2. **River Bluffs Nature Walk**

   This report includes a concept for Site A mostly because it is unique among the potential park sites, distinguished by its steep bluffland topography, thick tree cover, and significant ecological conservation value. The concept plan shows how a walking trail loop on the site, which follows natural topography at ADA-accessible slopes in order to reduce the need for grading, could fit into a more extensive trail along the river gorge.

   Although a nature-focused park might have value to township residents, it is unlikely to fill a recreational need in Louisville, given the availability of larger parks and natural areas along the township’s western border. In addition, the low visibility of Site A from main roads and the difficulty of placing a play field on the site would make this park a departure from the vision for a town park articulated by PTOS. This concept presupposes a situation in which the township were to identify a need for a public park with demonstratable ecological value, or if interest or funding for such a park were to arise.
3. **Zumbro Parkway, Breggeman Park**

Site E is a low-cost option for developing a town park within Louisville Township. As shown in this concept, the site offers enough space to support a quarter-mile walking trail, tot lot, large picnic shelter, parking for 60-70 cars, and recreation field of approximately one acre (proportioned so that it could be converted into a football field or small soccer field in the future). The site is centrally located within the township, and adjacent to the future Zumbro Avenue greenway proposed on the township comprehensive parks and trails plan.

While Site E is much smaller than other potential park sites, its main disadvantage is a lack of interesting scenic features. At present, its location provides a view of the surrounding agricultural landscape, but were neighboring parcels to develop, landscaping and structural elements within the park would have to supply all its visual interest.

4. **Zumbro Parkway, Sands Park**

In early 2009, PTOS worked with Greg Ingraham and Anna Claussen of the Hoisington Koegler Group to prepared two alternative concept plans for Site B (for these drawings, see documentation from Michael Cronin and Associates, maintained by Louisville Township). Based on these drawings, this report places Site B in the context of the Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces Planning Map and proposes an adjoining local trail connection search area if Site B were chosen.

5. **Partnership in Jackson Park and Town Hall**

This drawing shows a possible layout for a walking trail and prairie restoration in Jackson Town Park, a potential site investment Louisville Township discussed with Jackson Township. In this scenario, Louisville could coordinate with the City of Shakopee parkland search effort to make trail connections outside of township boundaries.

It may be important to note that City of Shakopee is scheduled to annex Jackson Township, according to Scott County Planning staff. Going forward, Louisville Township would need to determine whether Shakopee or Jackson would be the appropriate contact to discuss Jackson Town Park.

6. **Marystown, Historic Hamlet**

The potential park sites identified by PTOS represent immediate park development opportunities available to Louisville Township in 2008. Over time, if circumstances or priorities were to change, or if the township were to re-examine opportunities to acquire land for a town park site, Marystown hamlet might be an interesting potential focal point to consider. As a hamlet, and the location of a nationally registered historic landmark (Saint Mary’s Church of the Purification), Marystown is recognized as a candidate for cultural preservation efforts, which may include the agricultural landscape as well as the church. Marystown Bar has also been part of the
Louisville community for many years. In this scenario, Marystown could be the setting of a town park connected to the historic identity of the township.

Recommendations to Louisville Township

1. Consider cross-township trails a long-term opportunity. To develop these trails, coordinate township trails planning with Scott County trail search efforts.

2. In the near term, continue PTOS’s work toward developing a town park. Once a park site is chosen, establish a local trail connection search area adjacent to the park site, and begin planning to develop a neighborhood-scale trail in this area.
   - A grant that may apply to neighborhood-scale trails is the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Local Trail Connections Program.

3. Seek additional right-of-way or easements along Zumbro Avenue and along the east shore of Schneider Lake, to reserve land for possible open-space amenities.

4. If further development in the Antler Park area is anticipated, establish a local trail connection search area there.

5. Assemble a comprehensive planning document for Louisville Township to submit to Scott County. This document might consist of a planning map, such as the map in this report, along with the strategic planning documentation and studies already produced by PTOS, Michael Cronin and Associates, and U-CGO. These should be combined in a format that is clear and attractive; use Spring Lake Township as an example (available at http://www.springlaketownship.com/parks/default.html, as of this report).
Annotated Resources List and Bibliography


- Describes and maps parks and trails planning efforts that are underway within City of Shakopee’s jurisdiction.
- City of Shakopee may be an important contact for Louisville Township in developing parks and trails.


- Example of a successful planning document for Scott County, recommended by Scott County planning staff


- Includes bicycle and pedestrian trails information


- Describes the requirements for a comprehensive plan to be recognized by Metropolitan Council, and the process for submitting and revising a plan.
- Comprehensive plans are required to have specific sections. Page I-7 of the Local Planning Handbook introduces the two sections most relevant to this report, the transportation section and the parks and open space section.

*Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Local Trail Connections Program web site: [http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/trails_local.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/trails_local.html)*.

- Possible source of grant funding for local trails in Minnesota

(continued next page)

- Louisville Township parks and trails planning should align with this document, which is already aligned with Metropolitan Council requirements and expectations. To ensure this alignment, the township should include Scott County planning staff among contacts.

- Outlines Scott County’s vision in planning for future growth and change, and “establishes goals, policies and strategies” that will guide planning in the county until 2030 (per executive summary).

- Beyond the Parks and Trails section, review other sections for relevance to township parks, trails, and open space planning. Most sections contain information that is relevant to some degree or may inspire other ways for the township to synchronize with work that is being done at the county level.
Appendix A: Report on Landfill Sites and Recreation

There are two closed landfill sites within Louisville Township. One of the objectives of this project was to find out whether the landfill sites could be converted into public recreation spaces. This project concludes that recreational use of the sites is not a viable option at this time, based on input from the people who are responsible for the properties.

Site 1: Louisville Landfill has been closed since 1990. It is maintained by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Closed Landfill Program (CLP). One of the concerns on the site is preventing air pollution, since the landfill produces methane, which is no longer sealed in by the landfill cover as a result of settling over time. In order to trap and treat methane, MPCA operates a gas collection system on the property. Due to safety, security, and liability issues associated with gas collection, MPCA cannot allow public access to the site, according to CLP supervisor Doug Day. Day also noted two other conditions that make the site incompatible with recreation. First, the site is not currently accessible by public roads. Second, the site is surrounded by industrial land uses, such as gravel mining, which generate heavy truck travel. Until circumstances change, regarding gas collection on the site, access to the site, and land use surrounding the site, Louisville Landfill does not present an opportunity for public parks and trails planning.

Site 2: Dem-Con Landfill incorporates both a closed landfill and an active landfill. According to Mark Pahl, owner and operator of Dem-Con Landfill, public access to the site will not be possible until the active landfill closes. The active landfill is scheduled to remain open for many years. At present, this site does not present a good opportunity for parks and trails planning.

Although the landfill sites do not offer good opportunities for recreational space in the near term, Louisville may wish to revisit this question in future revisions of the township comprehensive plan.
Potential Town Park Sites Identified by the Louisville Township Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces Committee
Louisville Township Community Parks Plan and Development Project

Erin Lovell  1/13/2009
Jackson Park Partnership Concept Master Plan