

Root River Trail Extension – Citizens Exploratory Committee

Fact Sheet – March 28, 2023

- **What is the History of the RRT?** The creation of the Root River Trail began in the early 1980s and in November of 1983 the Root River Trail Master Plan was finalized by the Minnesota DNR. A copy of the three plans for the Root River Trail be found on the MnDNR website at the following links: [Root River State Trail Master Plan](#). The Houston extension master plan was approved in September of 1998 [Houston Extension of the Root River Trail Master Plan \(state.mn.us\)](#). The Root River Trail Extension Houston to La Crescent master plan was completed in December of 2011 [Root River State Trail Extension Master Plan, Houston to La Crescent](#).
- **Why is Houston County and the cities of Hokah, Houston, and La Crescent exploring the extension of the Root River Trail?** Various discussions have occurred over the last 50 years and it has been 40 years since the first master plan was created. The Houston County EDA followed by the City of Houston hosted trail meetings for nearly 10 years and the meetings ceased for a variety of reasons. The City of La Crescent began discussing getting the three cities and county together in 2021 in a more formal way. That led to drafting a Memorandum of Agreement to Jointly Cooperate on the extension of the Root River Trail. As the Wagon Wheel Bicycle Pedestrian Bridge was becoming a reality, the city of La Crescent began exploring a mechanism to get the three cities and Houston County working again on extending the Root River Trail between the communities.
- **What is the Houston-Hokah-La Crescent Root River Trail Extension Memorandum of Agreement to Jointly Cooperate?** The agreement is a semi-formal mechanism between Houston County and the three cities to cooperatively work together on a trail plan for the possible extension of the Root River Trail from Houston to Hokah to La Crescent.
- **What is the Root River Trail - Extension – Citizens Exploratory Committee?** The committee was formed under the “Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to Jointly Cooperate.” The city of La Crescent has agreed to provide staff support to the work of the committee along with staff from the Houston County Economic Development Committee (EDA).
- **Who is represented on the RRT- Extension CEC?** The members are all volunteers and there are two representatives appointed by the Houston County Board of Supervisors and two representatives each from the cities of Hokah, Houston and La Crescent who were appointed by the city councils of each city for a total of eight members. All members live in Houston County.
- **What is the goal of the committees work?** A requirement of the MOA is to create a Trail Plan so the committee will be working on drafting a Trail Plan.
- **How long will it take to create a “Trail Plan”?** It is estimated that it will take 18-24 months to create a draft of the trail plan.
- **Who approves the “Trail Plan”?** Any trail plan must be reviewed and approved by Houston County and each of the three cooperating cities.

- **Who Oversees the work of the committee?** The Houston County Board and the city Councils of Houston, Hokah and La Crescent.
- **When are the Committee Meetings and are they open to the public?** The committee meets 10 times a year, generally on the second Wednesday of the month. The meetings are moved around the county and are held in Houston, Hokah, La Crescent and Caledonia. The meetings are publicly noticed and are open to the public?
- **What is the committee focusing on now?** The committee is currently working on data gathering and creating an outline of the table of contents of the plan. In the future, there will be a project website, public informational meetings and periodic updates at public meetings with each of the cities and Houston County.
- **What is the Minnesota DOT funded Active Transportation planning project for Minnesota State Highway 16 between the Wagon Wheel Bridge and Miller's Corner?** The City of La Crescent applied for and was awarded an Active Transportation Planning Project to create a plan for bicycling and walking from downtown La Crescent to Miller's Corner. Miller's Corner is the intersection of Mn State Highways 16 and 26 approximately two miles south of downtown La Crescent. The planning process was initiated to study the alternatives for creating a safe means of travel for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel south of the city towards Hokah and Brownsville. The final planning document will be posted on the City of La Crescent's website.
- **Did Houston County receive funding for wider shoulders along Houston County Road 21 from State Highway 16 to Houston County Road 9?** Yes, Houston County applied for and received funding to increase the shoulder width when the county highway is reconstructed. The project was funded under MnDOTs Transportation Alternatives (TA) program. Those funds become available in 2027. Wider shoulders will make the roadway safer for bicyclists and pedestrians. Improving Houston County Highway 21 for bicyclists and pedestrians does not constitute a "trail" and does not connect La Crescent to Hokah via a bike path or trail.

Questions? Email the Committee at lkirch@cityoflacrescent-mn.gov