



MEMO

To: Princeton City Council
From: Gina Hugo, Parks Coordinator
CC: Michelle McPherson, City Administrator, City of Princeton
Date: April 24, 2023
Re: Great Northern Trail Partnership Committee – MOU Revision

In early 2021, we formalized a partnership committee through a memorandum of understanding (MOU), signed by Sherburne & Mille Lacs Counties and the Cities of Elk River, Zimmerman, and Princeton. The primary objectives of the committee, codified in the MOU, were to develop a master plan and apply for Regional Designation through the MN Regional Parks & Trails Commission (GMRPTC).

Over the past three years staff from each partner agency have worked together to develop a master plan for the 30-mile Great Northern Trail (GNT) corridor. This planning process included a robust public engagement element that involved the entire spectrum of stakeholders from townships, youth, ATV and snowmobile groups, active seniors, and adjacent landowners. The plan was approved and by the respective Boards and Councils of all partner and stakeholder agencies. The plan is available online: <https://www.co.sherburne.mn.us/Facilities/Facility/Details/Great-Northern-Trail-7>

Upon approval, we proceeded to apply for Regional Designation through the GMRPTC. Once Regionally Designated, partner agencies will be eligible to apply for Legacy funding to extend the trail along its full extent to end in Milaca.

Our application has been reviewed by the staff of the GMRPTC and was very well received! The GMRPC has requested an updated MOU that addresses longevity or a renewal provision, defines participants, and clarifies implementation strategy and maintenance. With an updated MOU, our application can move forward to the full Commission for final consideration.

The staff from each partner agencies reviewed the original MOU and drafted a version that meets the Commission's standards. Attorney review has also been conducted by each partner agency. We respectfully request your continued partnership to further develop and manage the GNT and further ask for your approval of signing the MOU.

Kind Regards,

Gina M Hugo