

Dakota County 2022 Veterans Memorial Greenway



VI-2022

Dakota County is home to 440,000 people — 8% of the state population — and more than 24,000 veterans who have proudly served in the armed forces. With the second-largest veteran population in Minnesota, Dakota County seeks state bonding to commemorate this large and diverse population's military service with the establishment of a Veterans Memorial Greenway. This greenway will also significantly enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

A WELCOMING SPACE

Veterans Memorial Greenway will be a 5-mile paved route through exceptionally scenic Dakota County landscapes, including river views, woodlands, farmlands, parks and natural areas. It will be Minnesota's longest greenway dedicated to veterans, offering a safe and accessible outdoor space for veterans and other visitors to reflect in nature, celebrate the county's strong tradition of military service and unite in honor of all veterans. This will be Dakota County's first countywide veterans memorial and is expected to feature 10 memorials along the greenway, including a large area for community gathering. The memorials will be designed and built in partnership with community and veterans' organizations. The greenway's accessibility features will welcome the county's more than 6,600 disabled veterans and other users with disabilities.

PROVIDING ACCESS

Veterans Memorial Greenway also will connect Dakota County's busiest regional park, Lebanon Hills, and its busiest greenway, the Mississippi River Greenway, through Inver Grove Heights and Eagan. Lebanon Hills draws more than 935,000 visitors annually and the Mississippi River Greenway attracts 220,000 users. The greenway would be part of the planned 200-mile regional trail system in Dakota County, adding to this network's regional attraction while creating important access and safety improvements for local communities near the route. The greenway will offer residents of one of Inver Grove Heights' most economically challenged, diverse and populous neighborhoods a safer, shorter route to Lebanon Hills — a 2,000-acre park with free swimming, hiking, biking and outdoor education opportunities. The greenway also will establish a new, safe connection to the popular Rich Valley Park in Inver Grove Heights.

ENHANCING SAFETY

Development of the Veterans Memorial Greenway is critical to enhancing pedestrian and bicycle safety. A current route used by pedestrians and bicyclists between the county's most popular park and greenway poses at-grade conflicts with nearly 20,000 trucks and other vehicles daily on State Highway 3 and County Roads 71 and 73, and an additional 34,000 vehicles on State Highway 52. There also are conflicts with trains traveling on two active rail lines through Dakota County. Veterans Memorial Greenway also will allow bicyclists to ride from St. Paul to Lebanon Hills on a safer route separate from a growing volume of road traffic.

A well-designed greenway that thoughtfully commemorates our veterans will give people of all abilities opportunity to improve the quality of their lives and will enhance safety for pedestrian and bicyclists along the corridor.

Project funding sources

State request	\$10.7 million
County and other funds	\$6.7 million
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Project cost	\$17.4 million



