



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 16-422, **Version:** 1

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**City Council Meeting Date:** September 20, 2016

**To:** Mayor and City Council  
City Administrator

**From:** David E. Bennett, Public Work Director/City Engineer

Discussion of Mill Towns Trail current alignment and alternate alignment.

**Action Requested:**

The Northfield City Council is requested to discuss the Mill Towns State Trail potential re-alignment.

**Summary Report:**

On July 21, 2016, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced its acquisition of six miles of railroad property for the Mill Towns State Trail between Faribault and Dundas, leaving just a couple miles to secure the entire corridor between Faribault and Dundas (Attachment 1). This move brings this segment one step closer to requesting funding for construction.

Once the segment above is constructed, the development of the trail through Northfield will need to be determined. The DNR has indicated to receive State Trail status, the trail needs to be off-road. This triggered the Mill Towns State Trail Joint Powers Organization (MTSTJPO) to review the alignment of the trail through the City. The existing on-street alignment and the recommended realignment from MTSTJPO is attached (Attachment 2). The recommended realignment from the existing on-street route on Fourth Street, is now proposed to go south to Jefferson Parkway and then east to Spring Creek Road.

The City Council hasn't taken any formal action on the realignment. Before moving forward with discussion on the realignment, staff wanted to hear from Carleton College on the use of the Lower and Upper Arboretum (see Attachment 3). Essentially they're supportive of the trail. However, routing and impacts would need to be further evaluated in terms of trail development adjacent to the Arboretum.

Recently, DNR staff has indicated that they are anticipating a funding request for the 2018 Bonding Session for construction of the segment between Faribault and Dundas. From there, the DNR next possible funding request in 2020 could be for the trail construction through the City of Northfield. Prior to 2020, there are numerous planning items that need to be addressed within the City of Northfield including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Route realignment approval (planning commission and city council); and
2. Route realignment feasibility and cost estimation; and
3. Carleton Arboretum alignment determination and impacts along with cost to develop the trail segment.

The DNR has indicated that within the City, the City should provide leadership on those items to be addressed

while the DNR focus their lead efforts outside the City limits. They will provide a complimentary advisory role but they like the City's to work out the details of the alignment and trail development in the City.

The next step for the City is for staff to see if it can secure any grants to assist the feasibility and costs for the three items listed above. If grants are unsuccessful to secure, staff could request funding in the 2018 City budget cycle.

Also, the trail from Dundas to Northfield that runs in the ditch along Armstrong Road will be in need of repair in the near future, the DNR has expressed interest in trying to relocate this segment of trail from the ditch to follow along the west side of the river to reach Sechler Park.

**Tentative Timelines:**

2016/2017 - Planning Commission to review and recommend the route re-alignment through the City.

2016/2017 - City Council to review and consider route re-alignment through the City.

2018 - Feasibility report and cost estimation.

2016-? - Potential Easements or Property Acquisition for Connecting Trail Segments (DNR and/or City in partnership with DNR)