

**River District Development Foundation of Merrill  
and  
City of Merrill**

**The River Bend Trail of Merrill**

July 18, 2013

**PROPOSAL**

**Alternate Route to Council Grounds State Park for The River Bend Trail**

**Introduction**

This proposal derives from the Resolution of Support agreement to cooperatively undertake tasks that will bring the trail concept into existence so the City can become the owner.

As conversations have occurred in the community, consideration has been give to the development of a temporary alternate route from Main Street to Council Grounds State Park for The River Bend Trail.

The proposal provides maps of the proposed Alternate Route with two options, an inventory of existing resources and rationale for implementing the Alternate Route.

**Starting Point for the Alternate Route**

For reference, the starting point for the Alternate Route is Main Street at the east abutment of the Wisconsin River Bridge (STH 64 West). See Figure 1.

1. The Alternate Route - A and B options - proceeds from the portion of River Bend Trail on CN rail bed where it ends on the south side of Main Street at the Wisconsin River Bridge.
2. The Alternate Route turns east and uses the Main Street south side sidewalk to the ramped curb and marked pedestrian cross walk
3. The Alternate Route then turns north, crosses Main Street and proceeds along Cottage Street. See Figures 2, 3 and 4.

Proposed Alternate Route for River Bend Trail to Council Grounds State Park



Figure 1

## Proposed Alternate Route for River Bend Trail to Council Grounds State Park

### Existing Conditions

The following conditions exist along the proposed Alternate Route:

1. Streets
  - a. Residential streets with parking on both sides
  - b. Exception - no parking on both sides of Grand Avenue from Genesee Street to the MARC entrance
2. Sidewalks with ramped curbs at all intersections - the route is accessible
  - a. Cottage Street - both sides
  - b. Grand Avenue - both sides
  - c. Division Street - both sides
  - d. Wisconsin Street - both sides
  - e. Chippewa Street - north side only

Superior Street between Wisconsin Street and Grand Avenue does not have sidewalks and is not shown as an option.

Proposed Alternate Route for River Bend Trail to Council Grounds State Park

Alternate Route A - Cottage Street to Grand Avenue to MARC entrance

See Figures 2 and 3.

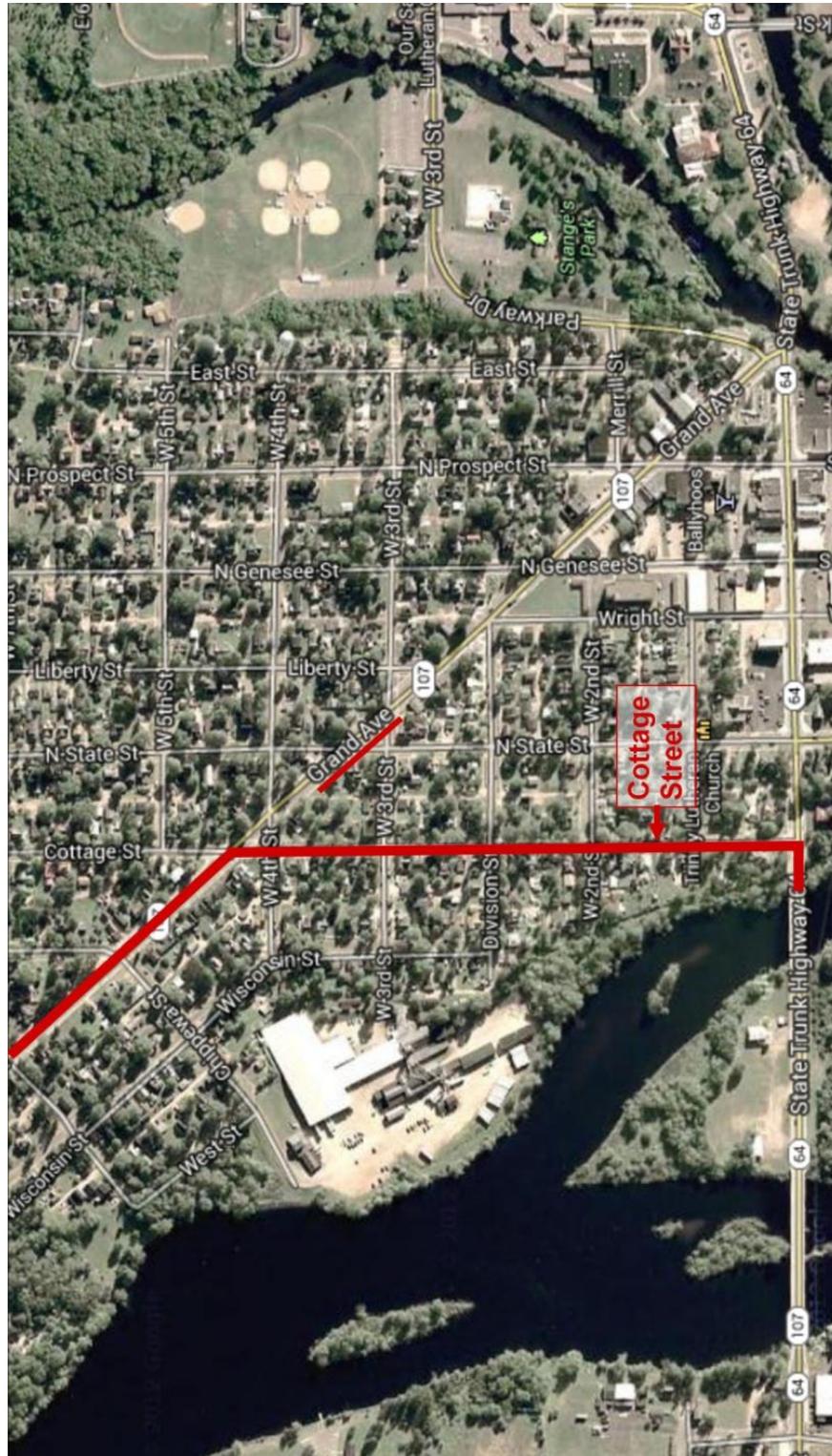


Figure 2

Proposed Alternate Route for River Bend Trail to Council Grounds State Park



Figure 3

Proposed Alternate Route for River Bend Trail to Council Grounds State Park

Alternate Route B - Cottage Street to Division Street to Wisconsin Street to Chippewa Street to Grand Avenue to MARC entrance

See Figure 4.



Figure 4

Authority

1. The City has statutory authority to
  - a. Designate bike routes and sign them
  - b. Paint pedestrian cross walks and bike operating area stripes
2. State law supports local enforcement
  - a. Recognizes pedestrian right of way
  - b. Recognizes bicycles as vehicles operated legally on streets

## Proposed Alternate Route for River Bend Trail to Council Grounds State Park

### Rationale for Implementing the Alternate Route

1. It provides an opportunity to complete the trail from Center Avenue to Council Grounds State Park in a quicker time frame
2. What is needed to implement the proposal already exists and is in place
3. It will provide safe legal public access
  - a. The concepts that would be applied for the Alternate Route would be applicable to the City bicycle route planning study that is currently underway - the two activities are mutually supportive
4. It would make it possible for State Park guests to patronize local businesses in a quicker time frame
5. It strategically supports fund raising to purchase the CN rail bed because the features that are found along the rail segment - the views to the river and the natural aesthetics - greatly enhance the attraction and reasons for people from Council Grounds to use the trail
6. It strategically supports the commitment from the Rotary Club for the development of trailhead facilities downtown as another access point for all trail users
7. The anticipated expense to the City (street signs and pavement marking) to implement the Alternate Route can be accommodated in the current budget
  - a. Development of a River Bend Trail logo and trail wayfinding signs would be funded by the Foundation
8. Using the Alternate Route provides time to explore possibilities for locating the trail along the river bank on private property from Main Street to Council Grounds
9. Implementing the Alternate Route demonstrates to federal and state funders that the community is committed to a partnership with the Wisconsin Trails Network Plan (2003)

### Communications Plan

To inform the residents along the Alternate Route and the adjacent river-edge private property owners, the following consultations and communications would occur before the proposal is presented to the City Council.

1. Discussion by Foundation Real Estate Committee and Board of Directors - Done 6/20 and 6/25
2. Consult with Police Department - public safety, traffic, parking, enforcement - Done by City Administrator Dave Johnson with Police Chief Ken Neff 6/21, Chief Neff's comments are reflected in the proposal
3. Meet with Board of Public Works - last week of July
4. Consult with Street Department - re: street signs, painting
5. Inform the Parks and Recreation Commission
6. Prepare a public information handout
7. Host a meeting at MARC for residents along the Alternate Route
  - a. Provide written notice
    - i. Include the private property owners along the river
  - b. Present the Alternate Route proposal and answer questions
8. Provide information and maps to news media