



CR42 and CR5 Trail Gaps Study

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MAY 2024

The City of Burnsville and Dakota County partnered on this study to improve trail connections on County Roads (CR) 42 and 5. The project team conducted the study between May 2023 and April 2024 with input from the public. This document gives a summary of what was found in the study, proposed improvements, and what is coming next.



Overview

Today, there are gaps in the trail system along County Road (CR) 42 and CR 5 in Burnsville (see [Figure 1](#)). Much of CR 42 has sidewalks, but on CR 5 there are only sidewalks on the east side. The City of Burnsville and Dakota County plan to close these gaps in the trail system by widening sidewalks from the typical 5 feet to a 10-foot shared use trail, and adding a new trail where there is currently no sidewalk.

The process that this study followed is shown in [Figure 2](#). The study began with a review of current sidewalks and known issues. After understanding current conditions, trail design proposals were developed and shared with the public in October 2023. A more detailed design based on the ideas shared with the public was developed in late 2023/early 2024.

The proposed improvements are not currently funded. The City and County are in the process of applying for grants to get funding to construct the trails in phases. The first phase of trail construction is planned for the north side of CR 42 between CR 5 and Nicollet Avenue and could happen as early as 2026. Future sections of trail would then follow as funding allows.

Figure 1. Study Area

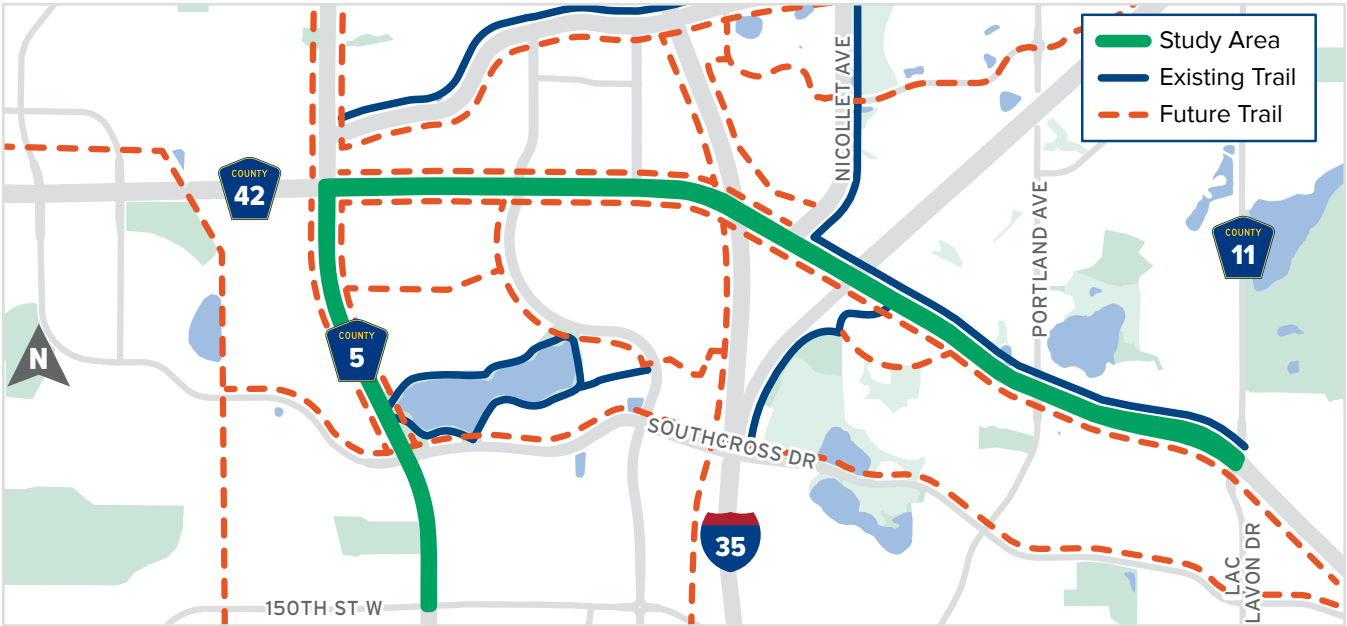
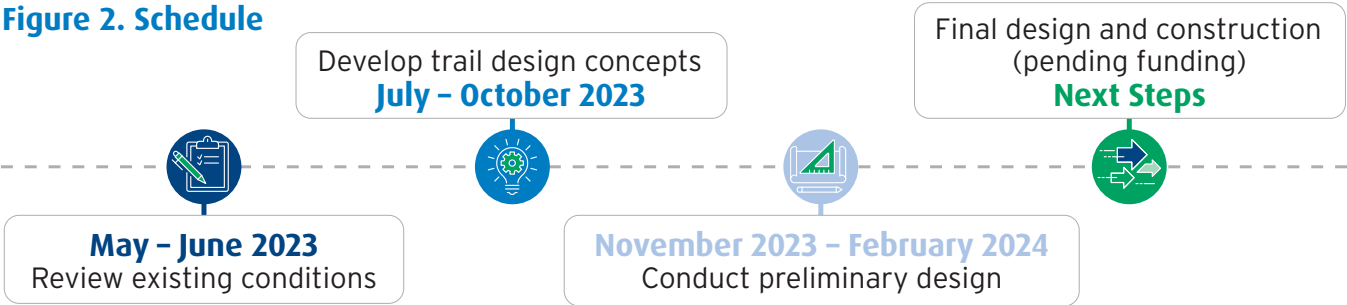


Figure 2. Schedule



Public Engagement

Between June and October 2023, public engagement activities have included property owner meetings, an open house, and awareness efforts. A website was launched in June at the start of the project. The project team sent out postcards and wrote in the Burnsville Bulletin (a quarterly City newsletter) to provide updates to the public and direct them to the website, along with direct contact information for the project manager. In September, virtual meetings were offered to owners of properties along CR 42 and CR 5 where there is currently no sidewalk. An open house took place on October 5th, 2023 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Burnhaven Library. This library is located on CH 42 in the project area. At this open house there were informational displays and large maps showing the project design. Project staff were in attendance and available for discussions with attendees. The informational displays and design maps were posted online for those who could not attend the in-person open house. A postcard was mailed to property owners near CR 42 and CR 5, and flyers were distributed at apartment buildings in the project area to advertise the event. Following the open house and throughout the project, people could submit comments via an online form, email the project manager, or call the project manager.



Corridor Issues and Trail Improvements

CR 42 and CR 5 are both major routes in Burnsville. The parts of CR 42 and CR 5 studied are located in a dense section of Burnsville with shopping, entertainment, employment, and services. Vehicle speeds are high and on a typical day over 50,000 vehicles travel along these roads. There are no dedicated bicycle facilities; bicyclists must choose to either ride in the travel lanes with vehicles, ride on the narrow sidewalk with pedestrians, or not bike at all. It is expected that in future years, new business and housing will develop and the area will become more dense, bringing even more motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

There have been many crashes with bicyclists and pedestrians along these roads. In the most recent 10 years none of the crashes have been fatal, but many pedestrians and bicyclists have gotten hurt. This demonstrates urgent safety issues presented by the lack of adequate facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Most of the crashes with bicyclists and pedestrians happened when motorists were making a right turn from a side street onto CR 42. When vehicles are stopped at a red light or stop sign waiting to turn onto CR 42, they are often focused on finding a gap in the traffic to make their turn. While focused on finding a gap, they are less likely to notice a bicycle or pedestrian on the sidewalk, especially if they are coming from the other direction.

In addition to giving bicyclists and pedestrians a comfortable space to travel along CR 42 and CR 5 separate from vehicles, the trail study also explores potential improvements that minimize the risk of crashes at intersections, especially with motorists who are turning right onto CR 42. For example, the Target entrance and Aldrich Avenue intersections currently have a free right turning movement from CR 42. This means as vehicles turn right off of CR 42 they are not required to stop, as shown in image below. Additional study is needed to determine if the free right movement could be removed. If it is removed, this would reduce the crossing distance for trail users, reduce potential conflict points with vehicles, and increase safety.

Intersections with traffic lights will be upgraded to meet ADA guidelines with have push buttons and ramp improvements. Power poles, light poles, utility cabinets will be relocated wherever possible to provide better lines of sight between vehicle drivers and trail users.



▲ *Free right turns like the one shown above can create safety issues for pedestrians and bicyclists.*

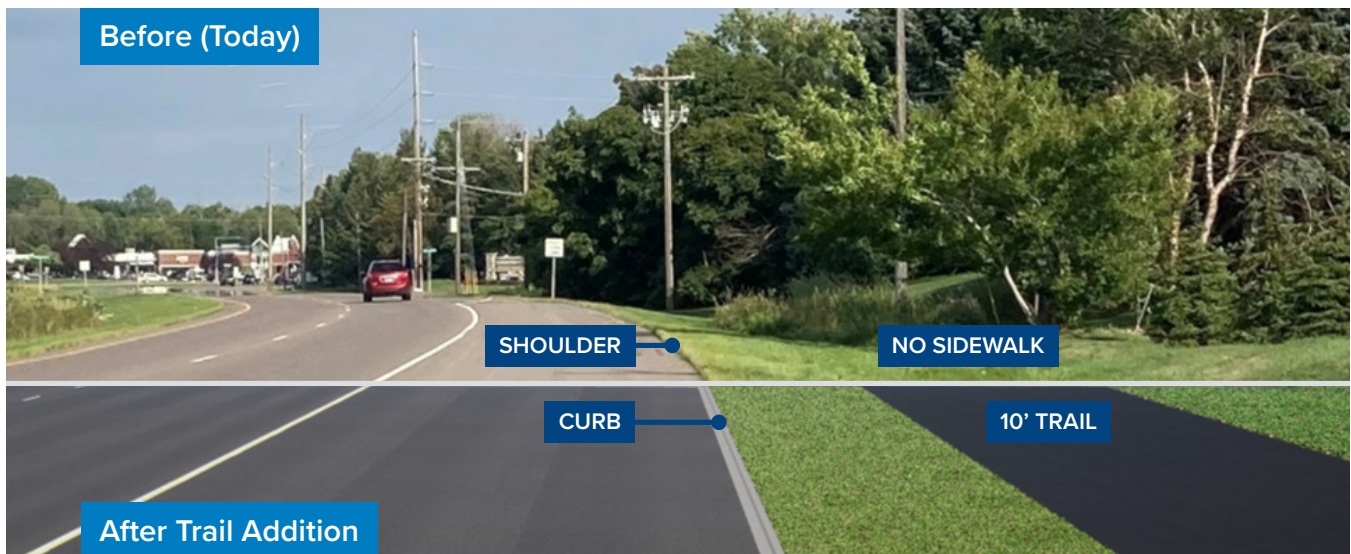
Trail Design Details

The trail was designed with the following criteria in mind:

- Standard trail width of 10 feet
- Minimum boulevard width of 6 feet where possible
- Minimize impacts to properties
- Minimize overall construction costs
- Minimize impacts to utilities, for example:
 - If an existing signal pole conflicts with future trail and ADA needs, relocate the infrastructure (avoid full replacement)
 - Design around fire hydrants (while these can be relocated, the impacts of shutting down water are too major for this to be feasible)



▲ County Road 5

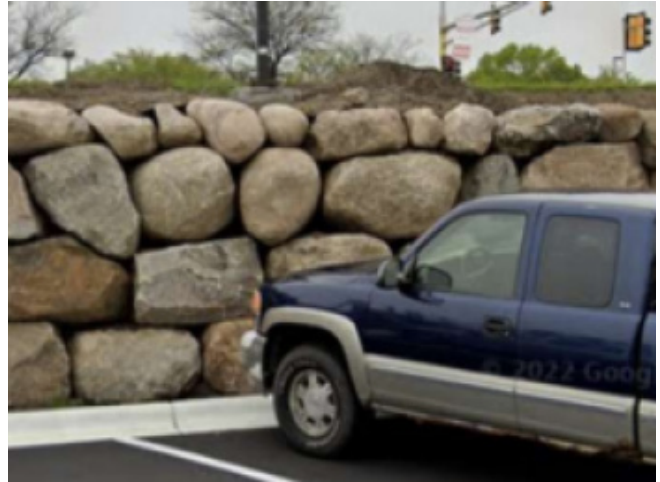


▲ Country Road 42

Below is a summary of specific design challenges and proposed solutions:



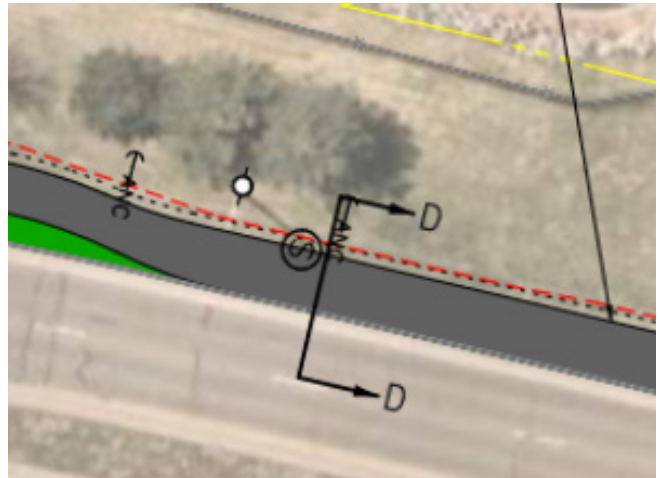
- ▲ Some properties are on a hill next to the roadway. The new trail will cut into this hill. To minimize impacts to adjacent properties a retaining wall with a fence is proposed.



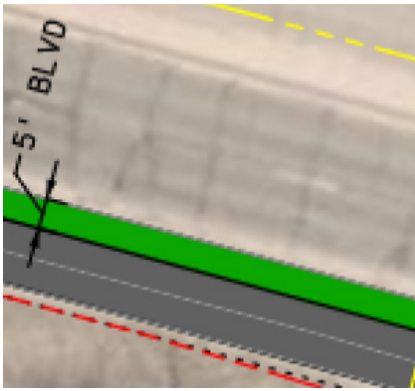
- ▲ Where there is currently a retaining wall or steep slopes down, a fence will be added (or replaced if needed) to prevent falls.



- ▲ Some properties are sloped toward the street, though not sloped quite enough to recommend a retaining wall. In these cases, a curb could be used to minimize property impacts.



- ▲ There are some constrained locations where the trail would be constructed next to the curb. These locations would not have a boulevard separating vehicles from trail users.



- ▲ Some locations require a slightly narrower 5-foot boulevard instead of 6 feet.



- ▲ The bridge over I-35W will remain unchanged (8' sidewalk) until such time as other bridge improvements are made.



- ▲ Curb and gutter will be added to the roadway east of Chicago Avenue to urbanize the section and provide standard boulevard.

Environmental Review

To understand whether there are any potential impacts that need to be mitigated, an environmental due diligence review was conducted. The following list summarizes the findings:

- The potential for encountering hazardous materials during construction is minimal.
- There is a floodplain around Earley Lake but the trail design does not go through this floodplain.
- There may be a potential effect on the northern long-eared bat (an endangered species) during construction but this is not anticipated to adversely affect the species.
- No other species on the Federal or Minnesota lists of endangered, threatened, and rare species would be affected.

Next Steps

Right now, there are no funds available to construct new trails along CR 42 and CR 5. The City and County are applying for grants to fund the construction of trails in phases. A competitive application for a federal grant was submitted in 2023 and as of the date of this document, the project team is awaiting a notice of whether the project was successful in obtaining funding. This project is a strong candidate and if successful, a segment of the trail along CR 42 (on the north side between CR 5 and Nicollet Ave) could be constructed as early as 2026. The project team will continue to apply for funding to complete the construction of trails along CR 42 and CR 5 in a phased approach.