

# Dakota County 2023 Veterans Memorial Greenway Highway and Railroad Crossings



VI-2023

Dakota County is home to 440,000 people, including 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 funding to commemorate this large and diverse population's military service with the Veterans Memorial Greenway. The greenway will also significantly enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety by providing an alternative to at-grade railroad and highway crossings.

## HONORING VETERANS

The greenway will be a 5-mile paved and ADA-accessible route through scenic Dakota County landscapes, including woodlands, farmlands, parks and natural areas. It will be Minnesota's longest greenway dedicated to veterans and Dakota County's first countywide veterans memorial. It will offer a safe and accessible outdoor space for veterans and other visitors to reflect in nature and celebrate the county's strong tradition of military service. It will feature multiple memorials, including a large community gathering area. 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.

## IMPROVING SAFETY

The Veterans Memorial Greenway will connect Lebanon Hills Regional Park and the Mississippi River Greenway through Eagan and Inver Grove Heights. Lebanon Hills draws more than 935,000 visitors annually. The Mississippi River Greenway attracts 250,000 users. A current pedestrian route between the park and greenway poses at-grade conflicts with nearly 20,000 vehicles daily on Highway 3 and County Roads 71 and 73, and an additional 34,000 vehicles on Highway 52. Additionally, there are conflicts with trains traveling on two active rail lines through the county. The 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.

## PROVIDING ACCESS

The new greenway would be part of the planned 200-mile regional trail system in Dakota County, adding to this network's regional attraction while providing important access and safety improvements. The greenway will offer residents of one of Inver Grove Heights' most economically challenged and diverse neighborhoods a safer, shorter route to Lebanon Hills for its outdoor recreation amenities. The greenway also will establish a new, safe connection to Rich Valley Park in Inver Grove Heights.

The Veterans Memorial Greenway will thoughtfully honor our veterans and provide people of all abilities the opportunity to safely enjoy the outdoors.

**State request \$13 million**



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