WEST NEWTON

The area north of the Minnesota River between Fort Ridgely and New Ulm includes a beautiful steep bluff line, many farmsteads, and the Harkin Store, a nineteenth century store museum operated by the Nicollet County Historical Society.

GOLDEN GATE

The Golden Gate area is a coulee landscape comprised of numerous wetlands. Its quiet country roads south of the Minnesota River pass numerous natural and historic places. Many nationally registered historic sites and other historic sites involving the area’s Dakota and European settlement history dot the landscape.

TERRACE TOWN

New Ulm is a river terrace town located on the upper, middle, and lower terraces shaped by the glacial River Warren. It is a historic center for farming and river-related industrial development. It is a community proud of its German-American culture and was the site of a major conflict of the Dakota War of 1862. Flandrau State Park has many cultural and natural features that include memorable Works Progress Administration buildings, remnants of a World War II Prisoner-of-War Camp for German prisoners, a sand bottom swimming pool, numerous trails, campsites, and picnic areas.

COTTONWOOD RIVER GORGE

Forested bluffs, wetlands, and floodplain forests are dispersed in the large expanse of agricultural land. The steep, scenic bluffs along the Cottonwood River although beautiful, present challenges to siting a cycling trail along this Minnesota River tributary.
**PRAIRIE POTHOLE LANDSCAPE**

The unique Swan Lake wetland complex is the largest natural feature in this largely agricultural region of the state. The complex includes open water areas as well as numerous conservation lands (RIM, CREP, WMA).

**PRAIRIE BLUFFS**

North of the Minnesota River the segment from New Ulm to Mankato includes quiet gravel roads that pass through patches of unplowed oak savannas with filtered views of the river.

**CAMBRIAN LANDSCAPE**

Numerous archeological points of interest are found south of the Minnesota River from New Ulm to Minneopa State Park. The small historic railroad towns and numerous lush coulees that penetrate the dominant agricultural fields provide variety in this landscape.

**RIVER WARREN VIEWS**

Minneopa State Park is the main natural amenity in this section. The park has two different characters. An intimate, forested area surrounding the very beautiful Minneopa Falls has several WPA structures, a picnic area, and a trail system. The Minneopa Prairie provides views of the River Warren Valley and a historic mill atop a bluff. The Minnemishinona Falls, a smaller falls area not connected to the park, is located along a quiet road that hugs the bluff line north of the Minnesota River. The site includes a small visitors area.
CONNECTIONS TO EXISTING SYSTEMS

The Minnesota River Scenic Byway follows County Road 21 on the north side of the river, enters New Ulm on Highway 14/15, leaves New Ulm along Highway 15, and follows Highway 68 on the south side of the river.

This Cottonwood River Region is part of the Minnesota River Valley Birding Trail. This loop extends from New Ulm and Flandrau State Park to the Jeffers Petroglyphs historic site.

Area snowmobile trails are located in road right-of-ways and cut through farm fields. Because signs and temporary bridges only mark these seasonal trails, private landowners are often more willing to allow them on their property. Many of the trails are found in the floodplain and near wildlife management areas.

The Lower Sioux Community leads the Commemorative March in the first week in November of even numbered years. This march is held in memory of the Dakota women and children who were forced to march from the current site of the Lower Sioux Reservation to an internment camp at Fort Snelling in the fall of 1862. Although the exact route is unknown, the Dakota oral accounts relate that the march went through New Ulm.
REGIONAL TRAIL OPTIONS

A system of trail loops and spurs provides a wide variety of experiences on both the north and south sides of the Minnesota River. The options connect the communities of Cambria, Courtland, Essig, New Ulm, Nicollet, Judson, Searles, Sleepy Eye, and Saint George. All but one of the existing road crossings of the Minnesota River is used.
REGIONAL TRAIL OPTIONS
FORT RIDGELY TO NEW ULM

This north-side trail option, the West Newton Trail, leaves Fort Ridgely State Park to parallel the scenic byway route along County Road 21. A small loop follows 701st Ave to link to the rock outcroppings and the Little Rock Trading Post site. This route is partially within the floodplain; it can be bypassed by staying along the scenic byway route. Across the road from the historic Harkin Store there is a canoe carry-in access on the Minnesota River. County Road 56 and the Old Fort Road connect Saint George to the trail system. The trail crosses into New Ulm parallel to County Road 13. Because of the proximity of housing to the road, this route has issues with land ownership and impacts on private residences. There are many pinch points with little room for a trail along the road.

The Golden Gate Trail option connects Fort Ridgely to New Ulm. From Fort Ridgely the trail crosses the river on Highway 4 and follows along the foot of the bluff line beside County Road 10. In order to avoid potential conflicts with private landowners, it comes up and out of the valley, twisting and turning along quiet gravel roads until it reaches County Road 29. This road takes the trail past the Milford Monument, the monument built in remembrance of the 52 members of the Milford Township who died in the Dakota Conflict of 1862. The trail follows County Road 11 south through Essig to link up with the Sleepy Eye and Cottonwood Loops. Large expanses of agriculture surround the trail in this open landscape.

The other Golden Gate Trail option heads north from the Morton Monument, enters the valley again, follows along 210th Avenue, and connects to the KC Road. This option leads trail users into New Ulm and connects to the New Ulm Loop.

The Sleepy Eye Loop option connects Fort Ridgely to New Ulm by going through Sleepy Eye. From Fort Ridgely it follows Highway 4 straight south to Sleepy Eye where it meets the Sleepy Eye Spur to Redwood Falls. In Sleepy Eye, the trail connects to the Chief Sleepy Eye Monument, the historical society in the old railroad depot, and Lake Sleepy Eye. The Sleepy Eye Loop trail option heads towards New Ulm along County Road 27. The Sleepy Eye Loop is a very flat route that is almost entirely within the road right-of-way. It passes the historic Golden Gate Town site and crosses the Cottonwood River.
FORT RIDGELY TO NEW ULM
NEW ULM AREA

The New Ulm Loop encircles the city by utilizing the existing bike trail and the separate bike path in the right-of-way of the Highland Avenue Extension. Bringing the trail through Flandrau State Park is a challenge because the banks of the Cottonwood River and the topography make siting a trail very difficult. Some areas require extensive bank stabilization because of erosion and the cutting action of the Cottonwood River. If this preferred route through the park is not possible, to complete a loop of the town, an alternate trail that crosses back and forth through southeastern New Ulm may be necessary.

Big Cottonwood Tributary Loop option crosses the Cottonwood River twice. It exits New Ulm along the Flandrau Park boundary at County Road 13 and heads west along 220th to 215th and then to County Road 25 before heading north along County Road 11 across the Cottonwood River. It joins with the Sleepy Eye Loop along County Road 27 and returns to New Ulm.

The Little Cottonwood Loop option leaves New Ulm along Broadway/County Road 15 and crosses the Cottonwood River and the Little Cottonwood River on its way to Searles. Leaving Searles it heads east on County Road 41 past the Morgan Creek Vineyards just off of County Road 101 South. The vineyard provides year round activities that include wine tasting, cooking classes, and a monthly jazz night. By the vineyard, there are two options: doubling back and taking a shortcut back to New Ulm, or continuing on to Cambria, a small historic community located between the railroad tracks and the Minnesota River. Cambria is a potential trailhead site. From Cambria, the trail continues to the northwest along Highway 68 to Township Road 234, a beautiful route along the Little Cottonwood River, until it turns onto County Road 101 North and meets the shortcut from the vineyard. After crossing Highway 68 it continues along Township 97/110th Avenue until it reaches Shag Road that parallels the railroad tracks towards New Ulm. Just before entering the town, the road switches back before again joining Highway 68/15. Before reaching Cambria, this loop forks to scenic Highway 68 to the southeast.

The Swan Lake Loop option leaves New Ulm along 37 and winds its way to the western edge of the Swan Lake Complex following Township Road 92 to Township Road 150 and finally to County Road 21. The public water access point is a potential trailhead site. The trail turns south to Courtland along County Road 11 and Township Road 91 where it links up to the Prairie Bluffs Trail. After passing through Courtland and crossing the Minnesota River, it links to the Little Cottonwood Loop option where trail users could head back to New Ulm or continue southeast to Minneopa State Park.

Prairie Bluffs Trail option begins in Courtland, and after briefly following Highway 14 it follows County Road 21 to Township 109. This road runs along the base of the bluff line and is separated from the Minnesota River by farm fields along most of the length of the trail on this map.
NEW ULM TO MINNEOPA

This Prairie Bluffs Trail section closely follows the lower edge of the Minnesota River bluff line from Courtland to Judson. Leaving Courtland along Highway 14, it meets and follows Township 109, which eventually becomes County Road 62. Just before Judson, the trail runs through the Swan Lake WMA (North Star Supplement) before crossing the river on County Road 23 into Judson. This trail continues by following County Road 41. The trail begins in a very wide valley, but becomes a very tight path as it comes closer to Mankato. Siting a trail may be very challenging in some areas just outside of Mankato because of the river’s proximity to the bluff edge. The Minnesota River is cutting into the bank and may eventually wash out the existing road. If a trail were to be added, bank stabilization will be necessary. County Road 41 is a quiet, paved road that passes the Minnemishinona Falls. The falls are located just outside of Mankato with the top of the falls visible from the road.

A Spur To Nicollet option is shown from Judson heading north along County Road 23 connecting Nicollet to the Minnesota River Trail system. Rich agricultural lands that have been drained to increase their productivity surround this flat road. There is the potential to add a trail link from Nicollet to Swan Lake and another along the Old Fort Road to Saint Peter.

Two options connect to and through Minneopa State Park; one involves private land, the other public land. From Judson, the Judson Fort Road reaches the boundary of the park. With landowners’ permission, the trail could follow farm field roads and other maintenance roads until it links to the state park’s trails. If this is not possible, the other option is to run the trail along Highway 68 until it connects to the existing park trails. The park is working to build an alternate connection from this northern park area to the Minneopa Falls area. Currently the only connection is on the roadway, but a new pedestrian path with overpasses is planned. The Minneopa State Park has numerous trailhead amenities and this area of the park is linked to the Mankato Trail system by the South Route bike trail.
NEW ULM: THE TERRACE COMMUNITY

HISTORY

The City of New Ulm is located on the Minnesota River at the confluence of the Cottonwood River and the Minnesota River. In 1854, the Chicago Land Company sent a few settlers out to find land to start a new city. They traveled from Iowa to Michigan and eventually into Minnesota (Hoisington 12,13). With the help of settlers and traders near Swan Lake, these men from Chicago were eventually directed to the area that is currently New Ulm. The city was named after Ulm, Germany, and it is known for its German heritage. Many of the city’s settlers were originally from Germany. These settlers were proud of their German culture and sought to preserve it. In 1858, Christian Prignitz was hired under the direction of the Turner Society to create the new plat for New Ulm (Hoisington 14). The plat is very formal and symmetrical. The very wide main streets were sited parallel to the river; the intersecting streets, though generous, were not as wide. The river provided the main form of transportation as well as an economic base for New Ulm. Milling and brewing were the two major industries in New Ulm in the early days. August Schell opened his brewery in 1861, but the first local beer was brewed in March 1858. A distillery was also active from 1859 to 1862, producing “unbeatable” whiskey, bitters, and punch extract (Hoisington 17).

With the breakout of the Civil War in 1861, New Ulm showed its patriotism by forming a local volunteer company that trained within the city before enlisting at Fort Snelling (Hoisington 24). During the Civil War another war began in New Ulm in 1862. Broken promises made to the Dakota erupted into an armed conflict when the starving Dakota attacked settlers. Farm families fled into the town for safety, while the Dakota raided the abandoned farmsteads. Women and children found shelter in the Dacotah House and other nearby buildings. The first battle occurred on August 12, 1862, with a second attack by the Dakota on the 23rd. In the second battle, the Dakota moved through the city by hiding behind houses. In order to open up lines of fire and eliminate hiding places for snipers, the settlers set the houses on fire. Thirty-four settlers died and 60 were wounded that day. The next day, the Dakota retreated, looting as they went. About 2,000 settlers from the New Ulm area retreated to Mankato, just as a company of 100 men arrived to help in the battle. One hundred and fifty-three wagons were used to remove the women, children, the sick, and the wounded (Hoisington 38). Two days later a group of settlers returned to the city to find most of the buildings burned to the ground, streets littered with animal carcasses, and shallow graves with small earthen mounds.

After a few additional battles the Dakota surrendered on September 26, 1862. Many Indians were tried and executed (Hoisington 40). Within weeks people began rebuilding New Ulm. A new school was one of the town’s priorities.

From the town’s beginning, river industry has played an important role in the development of New Ulm. After the civil war, the river was still the primary means of shipping goods to and from the town. Many dry seasons in the 1860’s made the Minnesota River level too low for the shipment of goods, so New Ulm sought a railroad. In 1872, the Winona & St. Peter Company Railroad completed a link to New Ulm (Hoisington 49). Starting in the 1870’s, milling, brewing, tobacco processing, and brick making industries dominated the local economy for nearly fifty years. From World War I through World War II, the Staffert Cement Construction Company became a prominent industry. Though it changed its name many times, eventually becoming American Artstone, its leadership and innovative designs for machines and masonry products helped the company thrive. Eagle Mill, another important city industry, concentrated on flour, but expanded to other products that included cereal, rye, and corn.

Before the United States entered the First World War, many people of New Ulm supported the nation’s decision to be neutral during the initial war years. When the United States entered the war, articles written in opposition to the French and English were no longer allowed in the local paper, and New Ulm men were sent off to war. Because of their German heritage, it was not uncommon for New Ulm families to have their European German relatives fighting on the other side. Because many fellow Minnesotans questioned the loyalty of many of New Ulm’s citizens during this war, the town was open to having a prisoner of war camp during the Second World War. It was located within the boundaries of the current Flandrau State Park (Buck).
New Ulm Plat 1858
Brown County (Hoisington, p. 14)

Eagle Roller Mill 1906
Brown County Historical Society (Hoisington, p. 31)

Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Depot 1895
Brown County Historical Society (Hoisington, p. 80)

POW camp buildings in Flandrau State Park
Brown County Historical Society (Buck, p. 2)

Schell’s Brewery 1910’s
MHS Visual Resources Database

Turner Hall 1890’s
MHS Visual Resources Database

August Schell Brewery, New Ulm, Minn.
MHS Visual Resources Database
CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Even though New Ulm is an agricultural center in the fertile and productive southwestern agricultural region of Minnesota, ever since the town’s founding, industry has had a major role in New Ulm’s development. Today industry still has a vital presence along the river.

New Ulm is built on river terraces and has a number of natural amenities. The Cottonwood River winds its way through Flandrau State Park. The banks of the Minnesota River form the town’s northern boundary. The community’s many cultural amenities reflect its German heritage. Small shops, cafes, and bars in historic buildings fill the downtown, a popular tourist destination. Additional points of interest for tourists are the historic Schell’s Brewery and museum and the city’s many historic residential, civic, and commercial buildings.
A TERRACE TOWN

New Ulm is built upon three river terraces. A slight hill separates the lowest terrace from the middle one, and a vegetated bluff line defines the edge between the upper and middle terraces. The great glacial River Warren carved these terraces centuries ago in an otherwise flat landscape. Each terrace has a distinct character. The Lower Terrace is a thin strip that runs along the Minnesota River. River related industry was built on this terrace during the nineteenth century; today the majority of New Ulm’s industry is still located there. The rail line is sited where the middle and lower terraces meet. The strip of industry along the lower terrace and the railroad line separate the town from the river.

Most of the town is on the middle terrace; the historic downtown, schools, churches, other civic institutions, and a number of residential neighborhoods are located there. The original grid system of parks and very wide streets organize the middle terrace. The upper terrace is separated from the rest of the town by a steep bluff. Newer houses, a city park with a monument honoring the community’s German roots, and a college occupy the edge of upper terrace. The homes along the edge of the bluff look out over the River Warren Valley. The roads wind around the bluff’s coulees to reach to the top. Newer housing extends to the south. Where the residential development ends, the long expanses of agriculture begin.
A TERRACE TOWN

UPPER TERRACE
- AGRICULTURE
- NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS
- VALLEY VIEWS

MIDDLE TERRACE
- URBAN GRID
- HISTORICAL SITES
- CIVIC CENTERS

LOWER TERRACE
- RIVER INDUSTRY & TRANSPORTATION
- RIVER/CITY HISTORY
COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

Land Form:
New Ulm’s landforms define distinct areas and provide some magnificent views of the town and the River Warren Valley; however this change in topography also presents challenges for siting a bicycle trail. The diagram shows how the steep bluff separates the upper terrace from the rest of the community and creates challenges in bringing a trail through the state park. Going up and down the steep bluffs safely and comfortably is problematic.

Siting trails on certain landforms can also create environmental concerns. Trails cannot be built in some areas of Flandrau State Park because of some of the bluffs that overlook the Cottonwood River. As the dark green in the diagram indicates, steep bluffs are barriers to entering and exiting the park from most directions. Some bluffs are too steep to create environmentally sensitive bike paths. Shown in the diagram are the major trail pinch points where the river is close to the base of the bluff and the areas where a siting a trail is a challenge because of erosion concerns.

Land Use:
The land use map shows the concentration of parks, schools, and other community buildings on the middle terrace, and the barrier that industry creates between the river and the downtown. Some of the parks, schools, and civic buildings are dispersed and separated by busy streets.

Circulation:
Broadway is the main road that runs northwest to southeast through town. It acts as a barrier to pedestrian traffic because this wide road is busy with many cars and large trucks. Central Street is a monumental civic street that connects all three terraces; it runs from the river to the Hermann Monument Park on the upper terrace and beyond. Center Street and 7th Street North are the city’s other main entrance roads. The busy railroad corridor that separates the middle and lower terrace is a barrier to pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Not all the streets cross the tracks, and all but three road/pedestrian crossings are at the same grade as the railroad. The lack of grade-separated crossings will create more issues in the future if the DM&E line is expanded as planned. With the expansion, coal trains from Wyoming will be longer and run more frequently causing more interruptions to pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

A steep bluff separates the middle and upper terraces from each other. Fifth North Street is the least steep of the few roads that lead up to the upper terrace area while 10th South Street and Central Street are the steepest.

Flandrau State Park contains many unpaved hiking trails, but almost all of them are located north of the Cottonwood River. A popular paved bike trail runs from one end of town to another. The citizens of New Ulm are very proud of this trail and their plan is to expand this trail until it eventually circles the city. Adding a trail along the future Highland Avenue Extension is a part of this plan.

Points of Interest:
Clusters of buildings and monuments found on the National Register of Historic Places are located in and around the downtown area, but not all of the important historic places of interest are there. They are spread throughout the town. Examples of historic sites outside the core include the Schell Brewery, Hermann Monument, and World War II Prisoner-of-War Camp. Historic industry is located along the Minnesota River.
COMMUNITY ANALYSIS: TRAIL CONSTRAINTS

Bluff Lines created by both the River Warren and the Cottonwood River are major constraints to trail design because the changes in topography make it difficult to cycle up the steep grades. The nature of the Cottonwood and Minnesota Rivers and their banks also create constraints to trail design. Because both rivers meander through flat river bottoms, are prone to flooding, and have soft, easily eroded banks. These characteristics make it a challenge to site trails close to the river. This challenge is very evident in Flaudrau State Park where several pinch points are created where the Cottonwood meanders close to the base of the bluffs.

The industrial development along the river, the railroad track, and the major roadways are all barriers to easy pedestrian and bicycle movement through town and constraints to connecting downtown and the neighborhoods to the river. Much of the waterfront in New Ulm is occupied by industry. In other areas industrial uses along the rail line separate the parks along the river and the Goose Town neighborhood from the rest of the city. The busy rail line that is planned to get busier is a safety hazard for pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic because most crossings are at grade. The three crossings that are not at grade are concentrated in one area. Broadway, the main road through town, is a busy street that is difficult to cross.

The large Marketplatz shopping center and parking ramp blocks the view from downtown to the river.
COMMUNITY TRAIL CONSTRAINTS

- Industrial
- Floodplain
- Railroad
- Major Roads
- Steep Slopes
- Eroding Bluff
- Trail Pinch Points
COMMUNITY ANALYSIS: TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

Because New Ulm has many parks, community centers, historic buildings, natural features, a vibrant historic downtown, and a popular trail between the downtown and the river, routing the state trail through the town is very desirable. Most of the historic buildings are clustered together making them easily accessible from the downtown. However, some very important sites such as Schell’s Brewery, the Hermann Monument, and Flandrau State Park are not close to downtown. Currently there is no local trail system that links the neighborhood amenities to each other. It is desirable to make a neighborhood trail system that links to the state trail in order to greatly increase opportunities for trail use by providing local access to local amenities and the state trail. The many amenities that New Ulm offers add greatly to the state trail’s value as a recreational asset.
COMMUNITY TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES
COMMUNITY TRAIL OPTIONS
A loop trail system that connects the town to its amenities is suggested. The existing bike trail and the planned trail by the Highland Extension are part of this loop. Most of the suggested local trail system’s routes are made up of a series of striped lanes on street rights-of-ways. The trails are sited to connect most of the parks, schools, and community facilities to each other. Most of the community’s residents will only be two or three blocks away from them. A small loop option connects the historic downtown to the Minnesota River. Most of these trail options provide community access to the state trail.
FLANDRAU STATE PARK TRAIL OPTIONS

Flandrau State Park with its swimming pool, historic Works Progress Administration buildings, campsites, picnic areas, and trails along the Cottonwood River is a state and community asset visited by 250,000 people each year. It could be a camping destination along the state trail, a trailhead location, and/or a place to stop, rest, and swim. This wonderful park has some shortcomings that offer some challenges to state trail design.

Currently the park is bifurcated by the Cottonwood River, which separates the group camp at the site of the World War II prisoner-of-war camp from the pool and the other park amenities. Reaching and using these facilities by group campers requires a trip that is 5 miles long.

Siting trails within the park or along its edges is challenging. Although the park has a trail system, some trail segments along the Cottonwood River are threatened by the river’s eroding action on its banks. Grade changes offer challenges. One segment of the existing trail has 100 steps. The Cottonwood River meanders from side to side through the flood plain creating a number of pinch points between the steep bluffs and the riverbank.

Although the park is in New Ulm, it is separated from the community. The park entrance is down a long, beautiful, steep, and narrow road that is not bicycle friendly. Community members have expressed a strong desire for a safe and easily accessible trail connection from this popular park to New Ulm’s downtown.

Four trail alignment options were identified that address these challenges. All four suggest two trail bridges across the river in order to avoid the hundred steps on the current trail. If these two bridges were not built and this existing trail were to be a part of the state trail, a bike wheel track could assist cyclists as they walk their bikes up and down the grade. The composite drawing on the next page shows all the options. Each option is described separately on the following page.
FLANDRAU STATE PARK TRAIL OPTIONS
There are several trail alignment options through Flandrau Park that connect to downtown New Ulm. Bridges permit the trail to avoid the pinch points created by the closeness of the river to the steep bluffs. Siting two bridges near the main park area to avoid a major pinch point and change in grade is very desirable because it avoids using the segment of the existing hiking trail that has stairs with over a hundred steps. Users would have to walk their bikes up and down the grade on a bike wheel track if this existing trail segment were not bypassed. The two bridges are shown with each option along with the route that includes the stairs if the bridges were not built.

The Brewery Route: 2+2 Bridges
The Brewery Route alignment improves the park considerably because it connects the main park area to the former location of the World War II Prisoner of War Camp that is now the group camping area. Because the park has two parts that are separated by the river, group campers must leave the park and drive miles to reach the main park area with the swimming pool. From the group camping area the trail continues on to the old dam site on the maintenance road. The bluff’s seep points and the cutting action of the river need to be stabilized if the old dam maintenance road is used for the trail. The trail crosses the river on a bridge at the old dam site to follow the existing hiking trail up to Schell’s Brewery where it follows Schell’s Road to Cartway and 18th South Street to connect with the on-road bike trails. The narrowness of Schell’s Road makes siting a bike trail along its right-of-way very problematic.

The Short Valley Route: 2+3 Bridges
The Short Valley Route has the same alignment near the main park and the group campground as does the Brewery Route, but it does not use Schell’s Road to leave the park. It passes the existing spur to Shell’s Brewery, continues along the base of the bluff, and crosses the small creek below Junior Pioneer Park on a new bridge to connect to the on-road trail system. A retaining wall is needed for one section of the trail where the bluff is very steep.

The Long Valley Route: 2+3 Bridges
The Long Valley Route is similar to the Short Valley Route, but instead of crossing the creek below the Junior Pioneer Park, the trail crosses the Cottonwood River on a new bridge, and crosses it again on the Cottonwood Street Bridge to link to the on-road trail system on Broadway.

The South Route: 2+1 Bridges
The South Route stays on the south side of the Cottonwood River after crossing the river on a bridge by the campgrounds. It follows the maintenance road to the old dam site and continues along the bottom of the bluff until it climbs up a steep coulee to the top of the hill that has grand views. The trail then follows the ridgeline down to the water access point. The change in grade may require stairs, and there are private land ownership issues.
FLANDRAU STATE PARK TRAIL OPTIONS

- Brewery Route (4 Bridges)
- Short Valley Route (5 Bridges and Retaining Wall)
- Long Valley Route (5 Bridges)
- South Route (3 Bridges)
CONNECTING THE DOWNTOWN TO THE MINNESOTA RIVER

Since the railroad tracks and the river industry are currently barriers between the historic downtown and the river, improvements are suggested to create a more defined connection between the two. The streets are redesigned as boulevards, making them more bicycle and pedestrian friendly and elevating their civic importance. On-street bike lanes and boulevard trees define the pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile spaces and define the street as an important civic armature.

If German Park were to be selected as the site for a trailhead, Third North Street will be the boulevard connecting the downtown to the river. If Riverside Park is selected as the trailhead location, First South Street will be the boulevard. If both streets were to be made boulevards with designated bicycle lanes, a loop connection from downtown to the river would be created.
DEFINING THE TERRACES

New Ulm is sited on three river terraces. Because each of the terraces is a different landscape type, street trees are chosen that are appropriate for each landscape type to give each terrace a recognizable identity. The section drawings show the tree species that are recommended for each terrace. These species reflect pre-settlement vegetation based on topography, soil conditions, and proximity to water. The suggested species can be used to fill in the open areas and added slowly as other street trees die along the bike routes. Trees will add cooling during the hot summer months when the trail will have its greatest use. Oak trees are used on the upper terrace because it is an oak savanna. The middle terrace is upland; it is planted with maple and linden trees. The lower terrace is a riparian landscape, so poplar trees are used.

Stripped Bike Lanes:

Most of the roads in New Ulm are wide enough to allow for striped, on-street bike lanes as well as parking on both sides of the street. Parking may need to be removed on one side of the street to allow for bike lanes on narrower streets when a trail is needed on them. Designated bike trails defined by striped lanes are safer than unmarked lanes for bike use by residents and visitors. Stop signs at some intersections may need to be added to control traffic and increase safety.
DEFINING THE TERRACES

32’ ROADWAY WITH BIKE LANES
- No parking
- Lower terrace with poplar trees

52’ ROADWAY WITH BIKE LANES
- Parking on both sides
- Upper terrace with oak trees

42’ ROADWAY WITH BIKE LANES
- Parking on one side
- Middle terrace with linden trees

68’ ROADWAY WITH BIKE LANES IN BOULEVARD
- Parking on both sides
- Middle terrace with maple trees

PRECEDENTS

SUMMIT AVENUE, ST. PAUL, MN
- Bike lanes
- No parking

SUMMIT AVENUE, ST. PAUL, MN
- Bike lanes
- Parking on both sides

SUMMIT AVENUE, ST. PAUL, MN
- Bike lanes
- Parking
- Central boulevard

VICTORY MEMORIAL PARKWAY, MINNEAPOLIS, MN
- Bike lanes
- Walking lane
- Lanes located within central boulevard
NEW ULM: THE TERRACE COMMUNITY

GERMAN PARK TRAILHEAD OPTION

The existing German Park is expanded in this design to create a trailhead. The park is formal, like the rest of the town. Creating a trailhead at German Park leaves the existing park area mostly as it is while making it larger by expanding it into the adjacent vacant area towards the river. The park is located a block from downtown and a few blocks away from the river within the same block as the town’s electrical plant, the existing bike trail, and the railroad tracks. If the trailhead were located in German Park, many existing park amenities could be used and enjoyed by trail users. These include restrooms, an arbor, small play structure, open-air pavilions, a fountain, formal gardens, and a parking lot.

There are only two changes to the existing German Park in this design. The first one is the addition of two handicap accessible sidewalks leading from the parking lot up to the main park area. Currently the only wheelchair access is on the sidewalk along the Third North Street. The other change involves the addition of vegetation. Trees and shrubs are added along the proposed sidewalks. In addition, many conifers are added along the edge of the park that borders the electrical plant. This screen continues from North German Street down to the bike trail. The conifer screen closes off the current connection between the park parking lot and the parking and service area for the industrial buildings for safety and visual reasons.

The new trailhead is in the vacant lot. A small plaza area has a building for bike rentals and trail information. A wall of New Ulm and Minnesota River history also serves as a seat wall. A viewing platform and interpretive area for the railroad and river industry is located on a new mounded landform. A large open green space on the mound is between the interpretive area and the information building. Multiple welcome plazas provide spaces for posting trail information. Seating is provided beneath flowering trees.
GERMAN PARK TRAILHEAD OPTION
RIVERSIDE PARK TRAILHEAD OPTION

The design of a trailhead within Riverside Park creates a strong tie to the Minnesota River. The existing historic school building and water access ramp add to its potential as a major community—river site along the trail. Currently the park is very informally structured. Users park vehicles and set up tents anywhere. The new design includes more uses for more users. The bike trail is sited along the river and has two connections to the historic downtown. Bike racks and trail information are provided. The existing boat launch is retained, but the playground and basketball court are removed to accommodate a new parking lot and gardens. In order to prevent pollutants from entering the river, a small rainwater garden is created to catch and treat most of the water from the parking lot. A picnic pavilion is added.

This trailhead option utilizes the historic Franklin School building that is being converted into a river research and interpretive center that will rent canoes and rent fishing supplies. This facility also has the potential for bike rentals. Because there is only one single toilet in this building, a new restroom building is placed near the new parking lot. A deck and patio are added to the riverside of the Franklin School building to provide good views of the park and the river. The deck can also serve as a stage with the building as a backdrop for riverfront concerts. River interpretive exhibits will be displayed on the first floor while the fishing and boating rentals will be in the walkout basement level. Additional canoe and kayak storage racks are below the deck on this level. Riverside Park is largely located within the floodplain, so most of the space must be left undeveloped for environmental and maintenance reasons. Dense planting near the water’s edge stabilizes the shoreline. The short plants do not obstruct views of the river from the interpretive center. A canoe and kayak water access point is added to provide safer entry for non-power boaters. A large expanse of grass creates The Great Lawn, a civic space for river festivals and other events. No mow turf is proposed in this area to reduce maintenance costs.