

**NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA ITEM**

**SUBJECT:** Hank Aaron State Trail Amendment

**FOR:** MAY 2008 **BOARD MEETING**

**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Peter Biermeier / Jeff Prey

**SUMMARY:**

This amendment proposes modifications to the 470 acre project boundary to expanded access points within the Hank Aaron State Trail corridor located in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin. Since the original master plan was approved a series of developments have occurred that will enhance the Trail and provide environmental benefits. This amendment proposes adding 104 acres but also removing 304 acres for a net reduction of 200 acres that will result in a new project boundary of 270 acres. The majority of these HAST modifications are upon existing public lands. These adjustments taken as a whole will allow for easier access to the Trail plus provide connections to a number of state and local recreation facilities.

The amendment also recommends entering into discussions with the Hank Aaron State Trail partners on the development and management of central trail corridor lands for public use. Taken together, the proposed actions will provide expanded recreation and environmental restoration within the center of the Menomonee Valley.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval per Ch NR 44.04(4) Master plan development, adoption and public involvement. Plan variance and minor plan amendment initiation and approval.

**LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:**

- |    |                                     |   |     |                                     |          |
|----|-------------------------------------|---|-----|-------------------------------------|----------|
| No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fiscal Estimate Required                              | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Attached |
| No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement Required | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Attached |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Background Memo                                       | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Attached |

**APPROVED:**

_____ /s/	4/21/08
Bureau Director, William H. Smith, Acting Director	Date
_____ /s/	4/22/08
Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf	Date
_____ /s/	5/16/08
Secretary, Matt Frank	Date

cc: Laurie J. Ross - AD/5  
 L. Osterndorf-AD/5  
 B. Smith-PR/6  
 P. Biermeier-PR/6  
 J. Prey-PR/6

L. Netzer-PR/6

DATE: May 9, 2008

TO: Natural Resources Board

FROM: Matthew J. Frank

SUBJECT: Hank Aaron State Trail Amendment

The Natural Resources Board approved the original master plan for the Hank Aaron State Trail in October, 1996. The plan was amended by the NRB in May, 2006 to acquire the western extension of the Hank Aaron State Trail (5.5 miles), and again in December, 2007 to connect the Trail segments at the Valley Passage. This request would add several small parcels of land to the project to improve Trail connections, develop and manage open green space, and improve community access to the Hank Aaron State Trail corridor and Menomonee Valley.

### **Hank Aaron State Trail**

The Hank Aaron State Trail has been one of the catalysts for the redevelopment and revitalization of the Menomonee Valley located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Menomonee Valley is home to unique tourist destinations, excellent urban park space, and thousands of family-supporting jobs. Linking all of these components of the Valley's redevelopment is the 7-mile Hank Aaron State Trail.

The Trail is named for baseball legend and former Milwaukee Braves and Brewers player Hank Aaron. Today, interpretive signs and murals along the Trail detail Hank Aaron's career and show the diversity of the neighborhoods bordering the Valley.

Since the establishment of the trail in 1996, the Department, the City of Milwaukee, the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, the Department of Transportation, and the Menomonee Valley Partners, Inc., have worked in partnership for improvements in outdoor recreation and conservation within the Menomonee Valley.

### **Trail Linkages**

A goal of the original master plan was to provide a connection to the Lake Michigan shoreline and the Waukesha County Trail System. This amendment will provide a connection to Lakeshore State Park and Waukesha County by a series of boundary modifications to expanded access points to the Hank Aaron State Trail corridor. The boundary adjustments will allow for a more linear connection from Lakeshore State Park to Waukesha County. These adjustments taken as a whole will allow for easier access to the Trail plus provide connections to a number of state and local recreation facilities. Acreage additions and removals from the project boundary will result in a net reduction of about 200 acres, resulting in a new current project boundary of 296.28 acres. The majority of these Trail modifications are upon existing public lands.

The Hank Aaron State Trail and western extension will also link 16 of the top tourist destinations in the region including the Henry Maier Festival Park, Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward, the Milwaukee Art Museum, the Marquette Soccer Fields, Miller Park Stadium, State Fair Park, Pettit National Ice Center,

the Milwaukee County Zoo and the Oak Leaf Trail System.

### **Green Space**

A number of developments and restorations have been conceptually proposed within the HAST central section corridor that could greatly enhance public recreation. Improvement to this central section will provide for additional open space and outdoor recreation benefits. Redevelopment of this area will include 1.3 miles of trail, riverbank restoration areas and open space for nature-based recreation.

### **Community Access**

There are also a number of proposed bridges that will connect the surrounding neighborhoods to the Trail, Menomonee River, and associated recreation developments. These bridges will also make connections to Menomonee Valley businesses that will allow workers to bike or walk to their employers.

Taken as a whole, the proposed actions of this amendment will provide expanded recreation and environmental restoration within the center of the Menomonee Valley and connections across Milwaukee County that will serve the over 415,000 residents of southeastern Wisconsin living within a 15-minute bicycle ride of the Trail.

### **Public Comment**

A public meeting was held in Milwaukee on May 1, 2008, with more than 50 people in attendance. Eleven e-mails and one letter were received outside of the meeting from both citizens and representatives of businesses in close proximity to the Trail, as well as the Greater Milwaukee Association of Realtors. All comments received have been in support of the Amendment for the Hank Aaron State Trail Master Plan.

### **Environmental Analysis**

This is a Type III action under Chapter 150, Wis. Adm. Code, and neither an environmental impact statement nor an environmental assessment is required.

### **Action Requested of the Natural Resources Board**

The Department is requesting the Board's approval of the Amendment for the Hank Aaron State Trail Master Plan.

# Master Plan Amendment

**Property Name:** Hank Aaron State Trail

**Date Master Plan was Approved:** October, 1996

## Proposed Amendments to the Master Plan

This amendment proposes boundary modifications to expanded access points within the Hank Aaron State Trail (HAST) corridor. The proposed actions will provide the opportunity for expanded recreation and environmental restoration within the center of the Menomonee Valley that will serve over 415,000 residents of southeastern Wisconsin living within a 15-minute bicycle ride of the HAST.

### ***Boundary Modifications***

A series of boundary modifications are proposed for the HAST. The current project boundary of approximately 470 acres will be modified to 270 acres, for a reduction of 200 acres. The majority of these HAST modifications are upon existing public lands.

For clarity, these boundary modifications are described below as eastern, central and western trail corridor sections:

#### ***Eastern Trail Corridor Section Modifications (see Map A)***

Proposed Actions:

- ❖ Expansion of the eastern boundary by 24 acres that will connect the Hank Aaron State Trail to Lakeshore State Park.

A goal of the original master plan was to provide a connection to the Lake Michigan shoreline. With Lakeshore State Park open to the public since 2007 there is now an opportunity to provide this connection. As shown in Map A, a series of public streets and private lands will be incorporated into the project boundary that will allow a recreational user to enjoy Lakeshore State Park. Portions of streets to be part of this boundary adjustment are 2<sup>nd</sup>, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Erie, Florida, Harbor and Chicago Streets. For the most part, these street additions are part of an administrative adjustment as portions of the trail have already been marked and established upon some of these streets

There are also two private parcels as part of this adjustment. The MMSD parcel will be removed, but the Atlas property will be added allowing for the trail to be moved off of Florida Street.

Also shown on Map A, the water portion between Hwy 43 to 6<sup>th</sup> street will be removed.

Combined, these changes will add 24 acres to the project boundary and allow for a safer and better defined route to Lakeshore State Park.

#### ***Central Trail Corridor Section Modifications (see Map B)***

Proposed Actions:

- ❖ Boundary modifications near 35<sup>th</sup> and Canal Streets that will add 22 acres.

- ❖ A boundary addition of 5 acres for a connection to Mitchell County Park.
- ❖ Removal of Milwaukee County Valley Park and a portion of a Miller Stadium parking lot for a reduction of approximately 40 acres.
- ❖ Enter into partnership discussions on the development and management of central corridor lands for public use.

As shown on Map B, a number of minor adjustments are proposed within the central section of the trail corridor. Since the original master plan was approved a series of developments have occurred that will enhance the HAST and provide environmental benefits. The most significant of these modifications is the addition of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee stormwater treatment park. This developed wetland serves as the stormwater treatment system for nearby development sites. Once completed, this site will have a range of landscapes including forest, savannah, prairie and wetland, as well as bike/pedestrian connections and improved river access. This addition will add approximately 20 acres. Another 2 acres will also be added along Canal Street to allow for better routing of the trail.

A smaller, but equally important addition is an adjustment to allow for a trail connection to Mitchell County Park. This important connection will allow for another point of access to the trail from the heavily populated southern corridor boundary. This addition will be approximately 5 acres.

The Milwaukee County Valley Park will be removed from the project boundary. This 2 acre park was originally included in the project boundary as an option for a trail connection. Since the addition of Miller Stadium the trail has been routed over the river closer to the stadium. Because of this, the County Park is now on the opposite side of the river from the trail and does not need to be included in the project boundary.

Another adjustment will be the removal of a portion of the Miller Stadium parking lot. At the time of the original master plan this section was targeted as possible green space. Since the plan was written this parcel was used as part of the Miller Stadium development and is not needed for the trail.

In total, these modifications in the central section will result in the removal of approximately 13 acres from the project boundary. These boundary modifications are supported by Milwaukee County.

A number of developments and restorations have been conceptually proposed within the HAST central section corridor that could greatly enhance public recreation. With over 415,000 southeastern Wisconsin residents living within a 15-minute bicycle ride of the HAST, this section has been targeted to provide additional open space and outdoor recreation benefits. As shown in Figure 1, a conceptual plan has been developed to enhance access to the HAST and the Menomonee River. The Department will continue to work with partners including the City of Milwaukee, the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee, the Menomonee Valley Partners, Inc., the Department of Transportation and CP Rail on implementation plans for the central corridor lands.

#### ***Western Trail Corridor Section Modifications (see Map C)***

Proposed actions:

- ❖ Removal of the northern boundary corridor segment with a reduction of 243 acres.
- ❖ A connection to Waukesha County and the Oak Leaf Trail system for an addition of 10 acres.
- ❖ A connection to the Milwaukee County Zoo for an addition of 31 acres.

In 2006 an additional five miles of HAST corridor was acquired upon an abandoned rail grade that creates a direct east-west route across Milwaukee County. At the time the northern project boundary was left in place to provide options for possible connections to other recreational facilities. After further study it was determined a northern and southern section are both not needed. The removal of this northern section will allow for a more direct route to the Waukesha County trail system. The 2006 southern addition is a grade separated corridor that will allow for a much safer route across Milwaukee County allowing connections to State Fair Park and the Milwaukee County Zoo.

There are also two other minor boundary additions that will connect the Milwaukee County Zoo, Oak Leaf Trail and Waukesha County to the HAST. The first addition is 31 acres that will use an existing tunnel as a HWY I-94 underpass to the Milwaukee County Zoo. This existing tunnel will be configured for bike and pedestrian traffic that connects to a service road. The second adjustment is 10 acres that will allow for a ramp to be built for connection to the Oak Leaf Trail and Waukesha County. Once this connection is established there are other trail opportunities within Waukesha County.

In summary the proposed actions will remove 202 acres from the current project boundary in this western corridor section.

**Boundary Modifications Summary**

As shown in Map D, the overall view of the boundary adjustments allows for a more linear connection from Lakeshore State Park to Waukesha County. These adjustments taken as a whole will allow for easier access to the HAST plus provide connections to a number of state and local recreation facilities. As shown in Table 1, acreage additions and removals from the project boundary will result in a net reduction of about 200 acres, resulting in new current project boundary of 296.28 acres. The majority of these HAST modifications are upon existing public lands.

Table 1: Boundary Modification Summary (acres)

<b>Current</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Addition</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Removal</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>New Total</b>
HAST	469.40	Atlas Property	+19.67	North Section	-243.16	
		Street ROW	+16.06	Canal Segment	-9.00	
		Zoo Connection	+30.59	MMSD Property	-11.71	
		Stormwater Park	+19.85	Valley County Park	-1.95	
		Connect to Oak Leaf	+9.53	Miller Park Stadium Lot	-38.03	
		Canal Street	+2.28			
		Mitchell Park	+5.76			
<b>Total</b>	<b>469.40</b>		<b>+103.73</b>		<b>-303.85</b>	<b>269.28</b>

**The Amendment Requires the Following Change in Land Use Classification(s) (include an explanation and a new map):**

No changes in land use classifications are needed. The proposed boundary changes will still be classified as State Trail and State Recreation Area with a Type 4 recreational use setting.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **Purpose and Need for the Proposed Plan Amendment**

The plan amendment will allow for a better defined continuous trail that will connect Lakeshore State Park to other recreation and tourism destinations along the trail corridor. Map D shows an overview of the current and proposed project boundaries. In total, 200 acres will be removed from the current project boundary but resulting in 1.3 additional miles of trail. Maps A, B and C show a more detailed view of the boundary adjustments. Taken as a whole, these boundary modifications will provide the public with expanded recreational opportunities and access to the Menomonee River.

### **Anticipated Primary Benefits of the Proposed Amendment:**

The primary benefits of the amendment are to restore, protect, and enhance the natural, scenic, historical and cultural resources of the Menomonee River corridor. This will be done with the proposed amendment. Additional benefits will occur by providing expanded recreational opportunities, access to the river, and pedestrian/bike access to jobs. This is particularly important to the neighborhoods directly adjacent to the Menomonee Valley where 40% of residents live at or below the poverty line and only 25% of residents have access to an automobile, making suburban jobs out of their reach.

### **How the proposed plan amendment is consistent with or relates to the master plan's vision and goals:**

As an amendment to the HAST master plan (1996), the goals of the proposed project reflect those of the original trail. Modifying the trail boundary contributes to the goal of restoring, protecting and enhancing the natural, scenic, historical and cultural resources of the Menomonee River corridor while providing the public with recreational opportunities and access to the river.

### **Compatibility with Statutes, Codes and Department Policies:**

The property will continue to be designated as a State Trail under the provisions of Wisconsin State Statute NR 23.175.

The HAST will remain classified under NR 44 – Master Planning for Department Properties as a Recreation Management Area with a Type 4 Recreation Use Setting. The management objective of a Recreation Management Area is to provide and maintain land and water areas and facilities for outdoor public recreation or education. The management objective for a Type 4 Recreational Use Setting is to provide areas offering opportunities for intensive recreational use activities and experiences. Facilities, when present, may provide a relatively high level of user comfort, convenience, and environmental education.

**Federal Aid Limitations** (cite if any federal aid moneys are involved with either acquisition or management of the property and whether the proposed plan amendment is compatible with the aid requirements):

Two federal funding sources have been used with this project, these are:

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) that is used for pedestrian and bicycle programs (e.g., development of bicycle trails, storage facilities, and pedestrian walkways, as well as promotional activities)

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) which is a recreational trails program to develop and maintain trails for recreational purposes that include pedestrian, equestrian, bicycling and non-motorized snow activities as well as off-

road motorized vehicle activities. New eligibilities are provided, including construction and maintenance equipment, real estate costs, educational program costs, State administration costs, and assessment of trail conditions.

Both of the sources are compatible with this amendment and the purpose of the trail.

**Unavoidable Adverse Impacts:**

Few, if any negative effects are associated with this amendment. This corridor has been in existence since 1864; and portions are now being used for the Hank Aaron State Trail. The project passes through residential, commercial, and industrial areas. No prime farmlands are affected. No historic or cultural resources are located within the immediate corridor nor are there any state or federal endangered or threatened species.

This amendment has the potential to enhance the quality of the environment by improving the environmental condition of the corridor, returning valuable habitat for native plant and animal species, and improving air quality. The proposed project promotes improved air quality because it will provide the opportunity for an increased number of people choosing to ride bikes or walk, for both commuting and recreational purposes, rather than use automobiles for their transportation needs. Given the densely populated areas adjacent to the Hank Aaron State Trail, there is considerable potential in Milwaukee County to reduce automobile use.

**Summary of Alternatives Considered:**

Alternatives considered included keeping the northern portion of the HAST segment within the project boundary. While feasible, keeping this segment tends to split the trail and thus may cause confusion to the user. This northern segment also does not tie into the new rail segment that was acquired in 2006.

**The Public Review Process** (summary of who was notified about the proposal or otherwise reviewed the proposal and the meetings, mailings and other techniques used):

A public meeting was held in Milwaukee on May 1, 2008, and public comments were taken through May 9, 2008. A news release was faxed to all Milwaukee and Waukesha County media and e-mailed to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and Wisconsin State Journal. An article appeared in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel announcing the public meeting and included a brief summary of the Amendment and Trail.

The meeting announcement was e-mailed to the Menomonee Valley Partners who forwarded the e-mail to a list of approximately 2,000 people who had previously indicated an interest in the Trail.

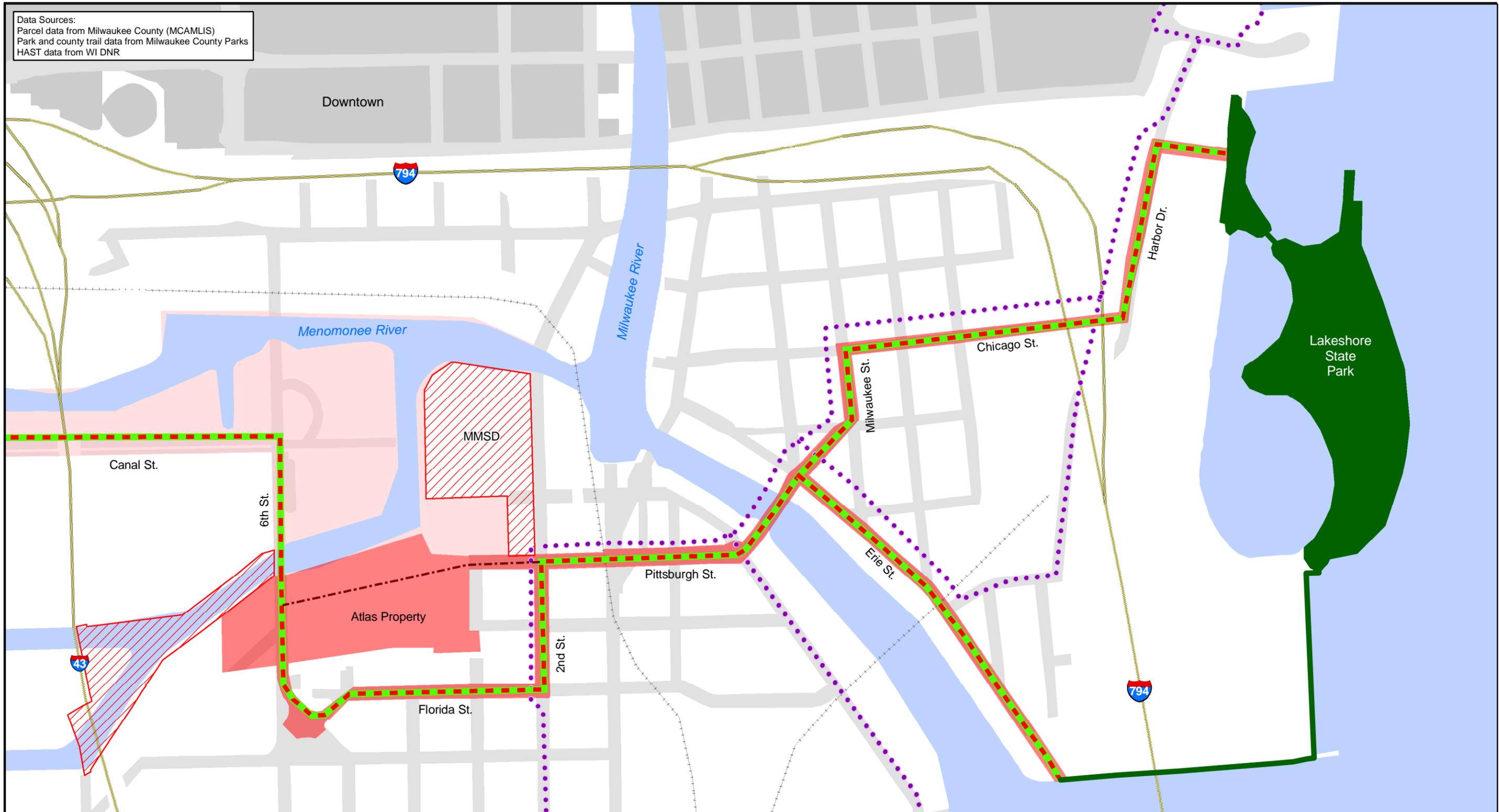
The public meeting announcement was posted to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Master Planning web site for the Hank Aaron State Trail and also added to the DNR Hearing and Meeting Calendar.

**Description of the Support and/or Opposition to the Proposed Plan Amendment (including reasons for the various positions taken) and Any Unresolved Issues or Concerns:**

A public meeting was held in Milwaukee on May 1, 2008, with more than 50 people in attendance. Eleven e-mails and one letter were received outside of the meeting from both citizens and representatives of businesses in close proximity to the trail, as well as the Greater Milwaukee Association of Realtors. All comments received have been in support of the Amendment for the Hank Aaron State Trail Master Plan.

Reasons for support of the Proposed Plan Amendment included increased access opportunities to the Menomonee River and Valley, a feeling of enhanced safety, additional parkland along the corridor, and the revitalization of the area as evidenced by the already existing Hank Aaron State Trail.

Data Sources:  
 Parcel data from Milwaukee County (MCAMLIS)  
 Park and county trail data from Milwaukee County Parks  
 HAST data from WI DNR



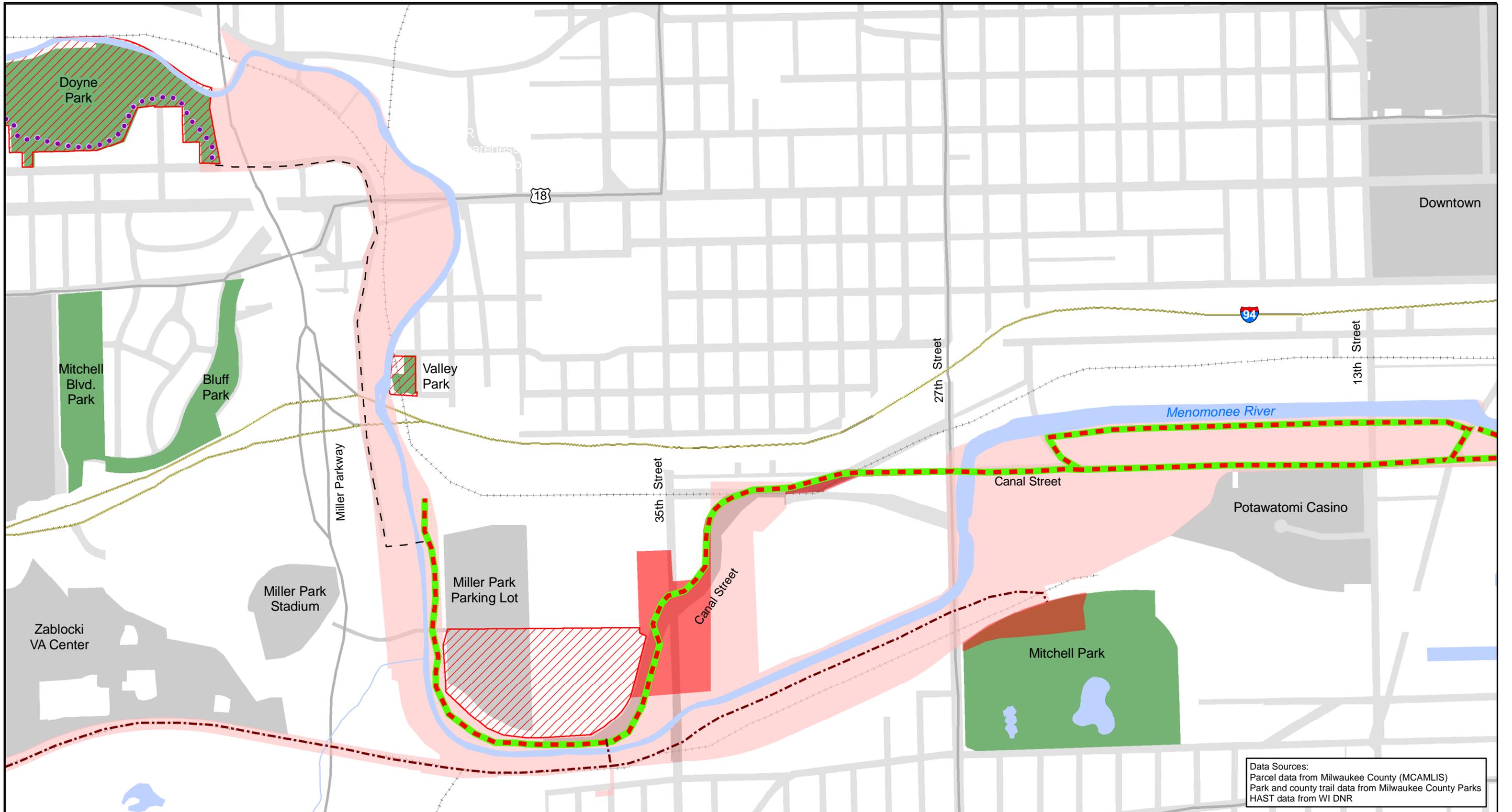
# Hank Aaron State Trail

## Project Boundary Adjustments

### Map A

- |  |   |   |                                   |   |                            |
|--|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
|  | Existing Project Boundary (To Be Removed) |  | Hank Aaron State Trail (Complete) |  | DNR Managed Land           |
|  | Existing Project Boundary (No Change)     |  | Hank Aaron State Trail (Proposed) |  | Oak Leaf Trail (Milw. Co.) |
|  | Project Boundary (Proposed Additions)     |   |                                   |   |                            |





Data Sources:  
 Parcel data from Milwaukee County (MCAMLIS)  
 Park and county trail data from Milwaukee County Parks  
 HAST data from WI DNR

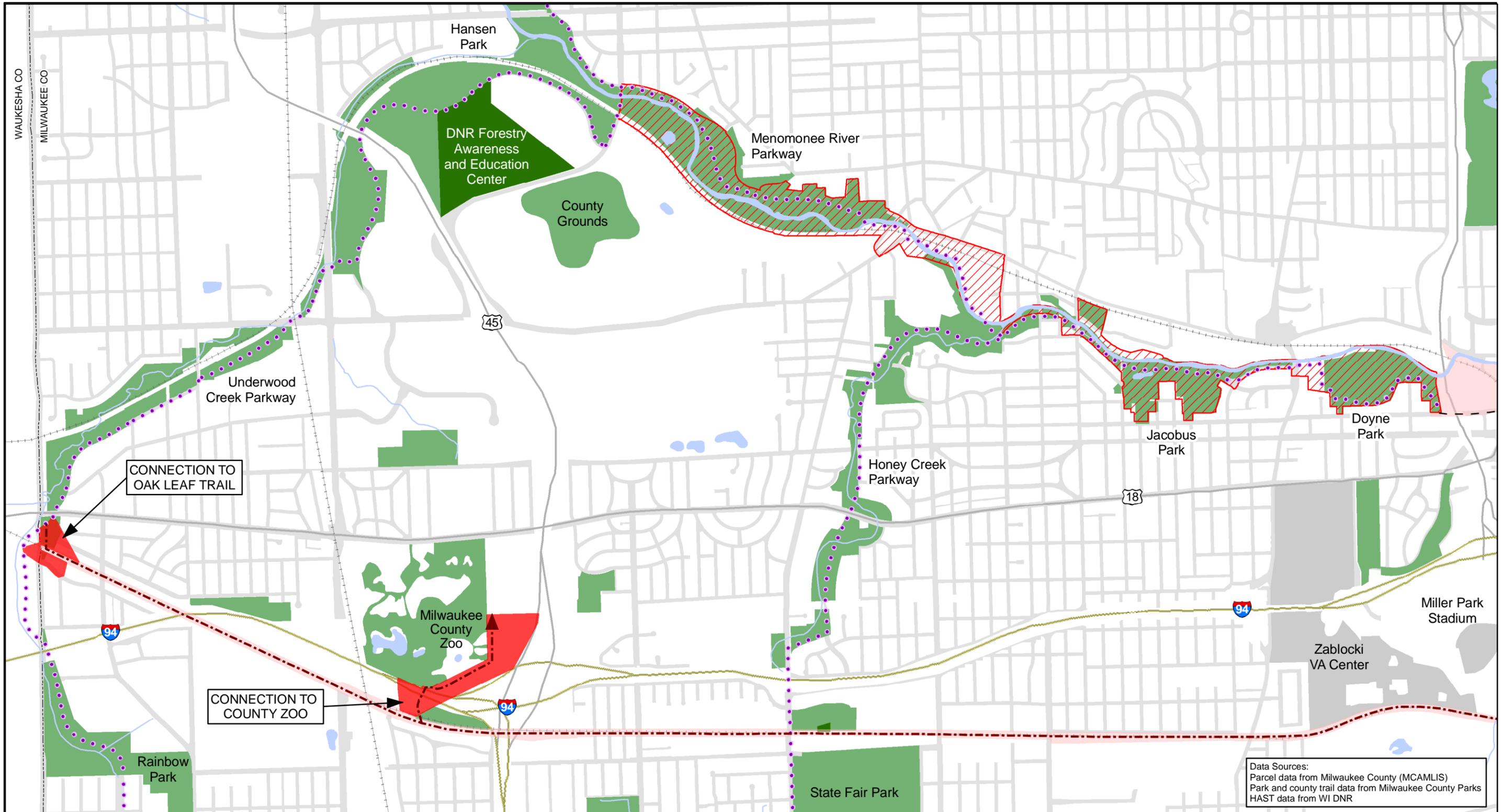
# Hank Aaron State Trail

## Project Boundary Adjustments

### Map B

- |  |   |   |                                   |   |                            |
|--|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
|  | Existing Project Boundary (To Be Removed) |  | Hank Aaron State Trail (Complete) |  | Milwaukee County Parks     |
|  | Existing Project Boundary (No Change)     |  | Hank Aaron State Trail (Proposed) |  | Oak Leaf Trail (Milw. Co.) |
|  | Project Boundary (Proposed Additions)     |  | Trail Connector                   |   |                            |





Data Sources:  
 Parcel data from Milwaukee County (MCAMLIS)  
 Park and county trail data from Milwaukee County Parks  
 HAST data from WI DNR

# Hank Aaron State Trail

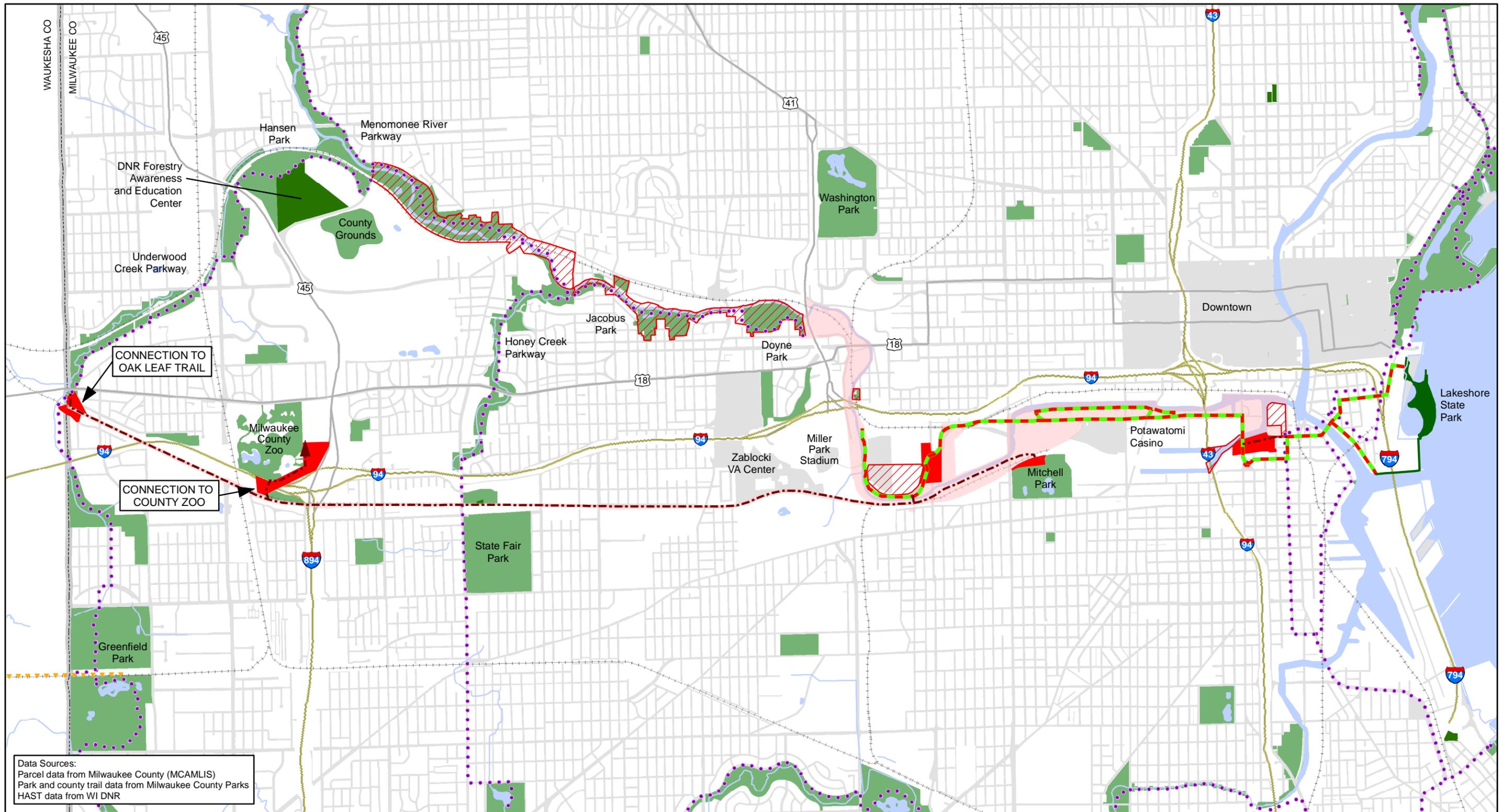
## Project Boundary Adjustments

### Map C

- Existing Project Boundary (To Be Removed)
- Existing Project Boundary (No Change)
- Project Boundary (Proposed Additions)
- Milwaukee Co Parks
- DNR Managed Land
- Hank Aaron State Trail (Complete)
- Hank Aaron State Trail (Proposed)
- Oak Leaf Trail (Milw. Co.)



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Data Sources:  
 Parcel data from Milwaukee County (MCAMLIS)  
 Park and county trail data from Milwaukee County Parks  
 HAST data from WI DNR

# Hank Aaron State Trail

## Project Boundary Changes

### Map D

- |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
|  Existing Project Boundary (To Be Removed) |  Milwaukee Co Parks |  Hank Aaron State Trail (Complete) |  Oak Leaf Trail (Milw. Co.)       |
|  Existing Project Boundary (No Change)     |  DNR Managed Land   |  Hank Aaron State Trail (Proposed) |  New Berlin Rec Trail (Wauk. Co.) |
|  Project Boundary (Proposed Additions)     |  |   |  |



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Figure 1  
Proposed Hank Aaron State Trail Central Section Developments