

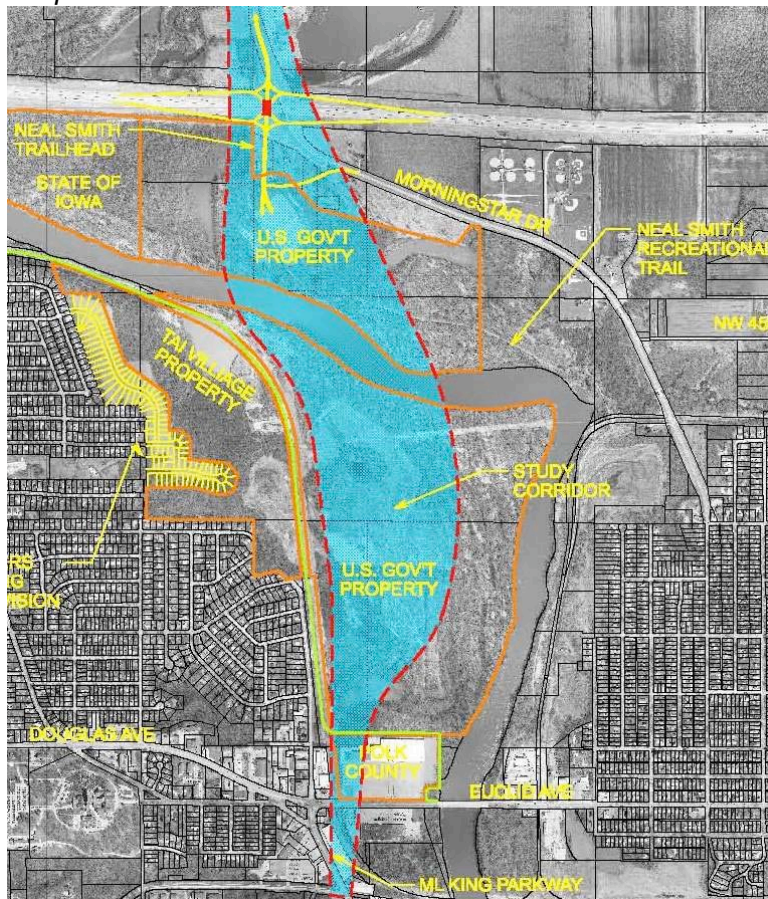
Des Moines River Trails and Greenbelt Threatened by Proposed Highway

A 2400-acre greenbelt extending from the Saylorville Dam to the 6th Avenue Bridge in Des Moines was given to the people of Iowa in 1975 for mitigating the periodic flooding of Ledges State Park by Saylorville floodwaters. This greenbelt has become an important natural and recreational area, and is one of the largest urban greenways in the state.

Polk County is now planning a major expressway through the wildest and most scenic part of this greenbelt. The extension of MLK Parkway from Euclid to I-35/80 and the creation of an interchange at I-35/80 and NW 26th Street would severely impact neighborhoods, local recreation, and our natural resources.

Excerpts from the 1975 Special Report issued by the Corps of Engineers establishing the Greenbelt:

- *...the establishment of the flood plain environmental corridor will provide the opportunity to create a recreation facility unique in the region if not in the entire Midwest.*
- *The acquisition of a flood way corridor...would provide a means of preserving existing natural values within the flood plain by eliminating possible future encroachment in the area.*



Facts about the Proposed Expressway Project

- Length: 1.9 miles
- Estimated Traffic Volume: 34,000 cars and trucks per day (equivalent to SE 14th Street)
- Proposed Speed: 45 mph
- Expected truck route, including full-size semi trucks
- Estimated Start Date: 2009

Facts about the Threatened Greenbelt Area

- Existing bike and water trails: Neal Smith Paved Bicycle Trail (part of the cross-country American Discovery Trail), Sycamore Mountain Bike Trail, Trestle-to-Trestle Trail, and the Des Moines River Water Trail (more information on the back side)
- Wetland areas and the Des Moines River floodplain, owned by the Corps of Engineers, and managed by the DNR or the Polk County Conservation Board
- Diverse wildlife, including wild turkey, red fox, wintering bald eagles, pelicans, herons, migratory songbirds, and water fowl
- Native American Burial Mound area and a Native American Prehistoric Village

Other Key Reasons we are Opposed:

- Damage to existing Des Moines neighborhoods from increased car and truck traffic, such as increased noise and air pollution, resulting in decreased neighborhood property values
- Encourages more sprawl to encroach on farmland and natural areas in Northern Polk County

Action – What Can You Do?

1) Join us in opposition to this project

The Neighborhood and Natural Recreation Preservation Project (NNRPP) is leading the effort. Email us at nnrpp.mlk@gmail.com or call 288-5364.

2) Contact elected officials and agencies to express your concerns. (See contact information on back side)

This Road does not have to be built!

There are alternatives to expensive new highways built through natural areas. Environmental corridors are under threat from road construction throughout Central Iowa. Let's work together to preserve the few remaining green spaces we have left.

Des Moines River Trails and Greenbelt Threatened by Proposed Highway

The following trails are used by bicyclers, cross country skiers, hikers joggers, in-line skaters, canoers, and boaters:

Sycamore Mountain Bike Trail

- 7.5 miles
- Only mountain bike trail managed by the Polk County Conservation Board
- 1 of 2 legal mountain bike trails in the county
- Very close to the Des Moines River—provides great solitude

Trestle-to-Trestle Trail

- 3.7 miles
- Connects Johnston to the Des Moines Trail System
- Connects over 80 miles of hard-surface trails, making it the largest connected bike trail system in Iowa
- New in 2007



Des Moines River Water Trail

- Covers 404 miles of the Des Moines River
- Endorsed by 17 County Conservation Boards
- Iowa's largest water trail
- 1 of only 3 water trails in Iowa
- Contains many beautiful sandbars

Neal Smith Trail

- 26 miles
- Backbone for the Des Moines trail system
- Covers multiple landscapes: bottomland, shaded forests, oak uplands, and prairie
- Lots of visible wildlife
- Used for hiking, biking, nature observation, inline skating, and cross-country skiing in the winter
- Part of the Nation-long American Discovery Trail
 - Only coast-to-coast non-motorized trail
 - 6800 miles long
 - Backbone for the national trails system
 - Passes through 14 national parks and 16 national forest

Contact Information—Call, email, or write these individuals today!

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