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## With fund-raising goal reached, Water Trails Engineering Study is underway

Work has begun on the Water Trails Engineering Study thanks to a public-private partnership that raised more than \$500,000 for the effort.

The Water Trails Engineering Study is the first phase of implementation of the Greater Des Moines Water Trails and Greenways Master Plan, adopted in November 2016, providing the region with a road-map for enhancing citizen experiences in and along the 150 miles of waterways in Greater Des Moines. While the master plan lays out a vision, the Water Trails Engineering Study will determine the feasibility and estimate costs of the recommended projects.

“We want the public to know that there is a lot of support and momentum behind water trails,” said Rick Tollakson, President and CEO of Hubbell Realty and Chair of the Water Trails Advisory Committee. “With thanks to the business community and local governments for their significant contributions, we’re moving forward as quickly as possible.”

Draft recommendations from the engineering study are expected by fall, at which time the public will be invited to provide feedback. The study is expected to be complete by early next year. Once complete, the study will provide local governments and funding partners the information they need to begin prioritizing and budgeting for projects.

Two teams are conducting the engineering study. One team, McLaughlin Whitewater Group together with local subcontractors RDG and HDR, will tackle the unique and challenging constraints of the water trail recommendations for downtown Des Moines, including the mitigation of the low-head dams. A second team, ISG Engineering and Architecture, will focus on the proposed projects throughout the region. More details are at [www.dmampo.org/water-trails-engineering-study](http://www.dmampo.org/water-trails-engineering-study).

Investors view water trails as important for several reasons: improving quality of life, economic development, tourism, more outdoor recreation, creating advocates for water quality, and workforce recruitment and retention.

### **Engineering Study Funders**

Leadership Circle of the Greater Des Moines Community Foundation – \$205,000

Area jurisdictions – \$196,000

Includes: Altoona, Ankeny, Bondurant, Carlisle, Clive, Des Moines, Grimes, Johnston, Mitchellville, Norwalk, Pleasant Hill, Urbandale, Waukee, West Des Moines, Windsor Heights, Polk County, Van Meter, and Warren County

Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau – \$30,000

Greater Des Moines Partnership – \$30,000

Polk County Conservation – \$30,000

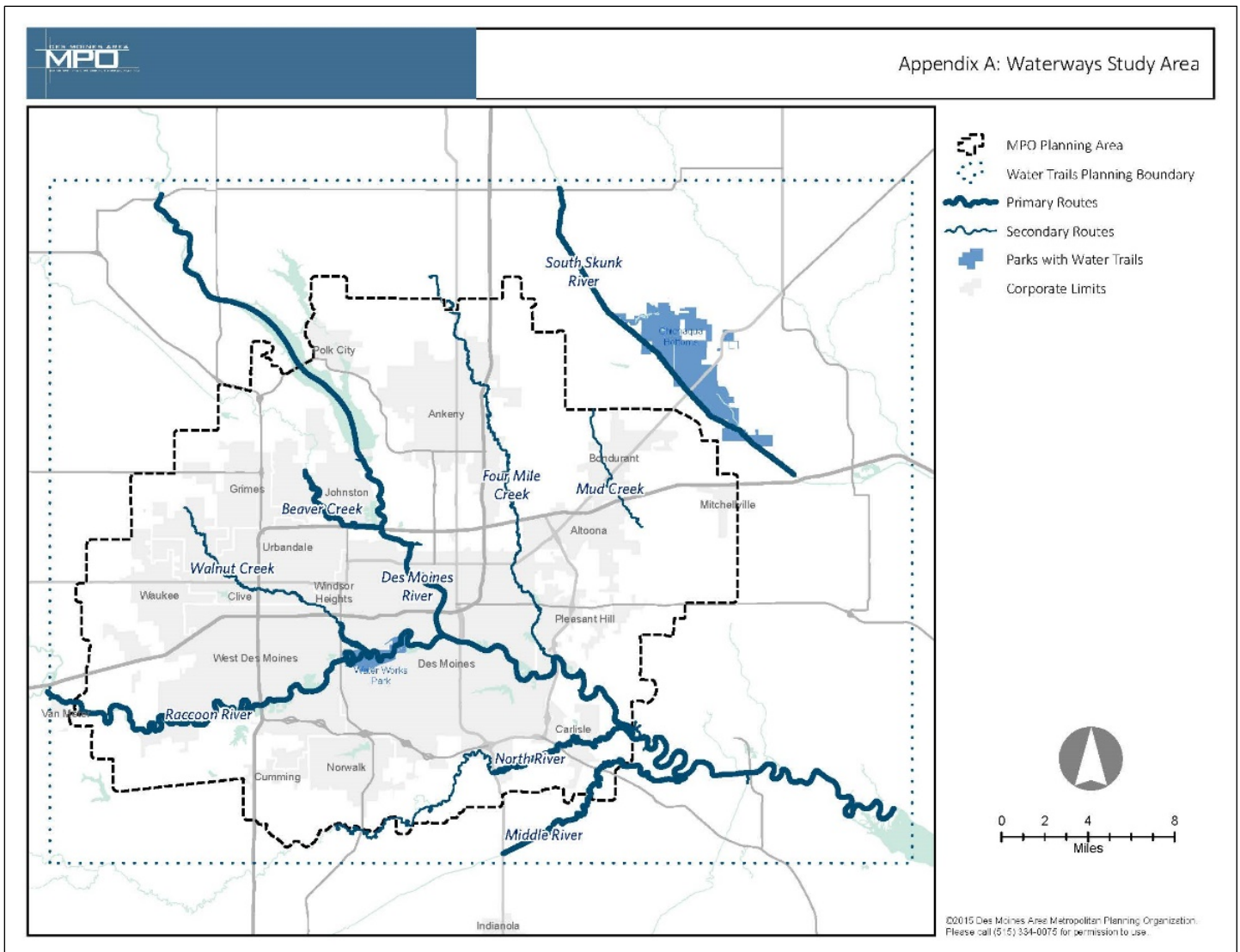
Des Moines Area Association of REALTORS – \$16,500

“We know there is tremendous passion among the public to see this project happen, and we would like to thank the funders from the public and private sectors for making this happen,” said Todd Ashby, executive director of the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which developing the water trails plan on behalf of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

## What are Water Trails?

“Water Trails” is a designation given by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and are defined as recreational corridors and routes on rivers and lakes that provide a unique experience for all water users. Water trails help re-connect Iowans to their waterways’ history, heritage, geology, fisheries, and wildlife. Water trails provide adequate access and can include amenities like riverside camping, wild spaces, picnic areas, and restrooms, and watercraft rentals provided by local, state, and federal partners. Coordinated signage and mapping systems guide users toward the types of experiences they seek, ranging from a highly social first-time river experience lasting a few hours to multi-day adventures. Water trails help boost local economies and give central Iowans outdoor experiences just out their back doors.

## Study Area for Greater Des Moines Water Trails and Greenways Plan & Engineering Study



**Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** acts as a regional forum to ensure coordination between the public and local, state, and federal agencies in regard to planning issues and to prepare transportation plans and programs. The MPO develops both long- and short-range multimodal transportation plans, selects and approves projects for federal funding based upon regional priorities, and develops methods to reduce traffic congestion.