* Currently the Gateway State Trail runs from Cuyuga Street in St. Paul to Pine Point Park in Washington County, a distance of 19 miles.
* Browns Creek State Trail, which was developed in 2014, connects the Gateway to the City of Stillwater with a junction in Grant.
* The DNR, along with other community partners, are working to extend the Gateway from Pine Point Park, through Wilder Forest and William O’Brien State Park, to the City of Scandia.
* The long-term vision is to develop the Gateway to Taylor’s Falls and eventually to connect with other trails and recreation areas in a Twin Cities to Duluth Trail system, connecting surrounding communities and enhancing adjacent natural areas.
* Our request for the Gateway Trail Extension into Scandia is based on exceptional community interest and support and its potential for cycling enthusiasts as well as enhancing the economic viability of Scandia.
* In 2017 the state completed acquisition of the final linkage for connecting the Gateway State Trail from Marine on St. Croix, through William O’Brien State Park to Scandia.
* As you know, in 2019 based on the bills that you and Representative Dettmer introduced into your legislative bodies, the legislature removed an Agricultural Preserve restriction to allow the final link of the Gateway between William O’Brien and Scandia to be developed now.
* Predesign work on a portion of the trail was completed in 2018 using previously appropriated funds from the DNR. This project is now ready to move ahead with the final design and construction.
* This project will result in the extension of the state’s most popular bike trail the additional 3 miles from the William O’Brien State Park to the Scandia Village Center. There is an existing paved trail in the Highway 95 road right-of-way from the Park to Marine on St. Croix.
* Bringing the Gateway into Scandia will allow access from the Park to the Scandia Village Center including to two tot-lots, tennis courts, a skating rink, multiple sports fields, restaurants and other commercial facilities, the Hay Lake School and the monument to Minnesota’s first Swedish settlers, and the Gammelgarden Museum.
* This is a trail segment anticipated to have very heavy use by families and children.
* Design and engineering work for the north and south linkages is also proposed to be funded to accelerate completion of the linkage to the Immigrant Trail and Interstate Park and ultimately links to the Munger Trails to connect to Duluth*.*
* While Scandia is a highly popular on-road bicycling destination, there is strong community and state need for the off-road trails funded in this request to provide greater appeal and safety for families and children that use the State Park including the Scandia elementary school population.

What’s needed now:

* Approximately 1/3 of the segment between the Park’s northern border and the Scandia Village Center has been fully designed.
* Funding is now needed to complete the trail design which will include a tunnel and re-design of a portion of Oakhill Road, and subsequently construction of this segment of trail.
* The Park Master Plan for William O’Brien State Park developed in 2007 includes a corridor for the Gateway Trail to extend through the park.
* DNR staff have examined a number of possible routes for the trail. Funding will allow the completion of engineering detail and of natural resource investigations in order to arrive at a preferred route and destination.
* It will also allow for construction of the trail from the northern border of William O’Brien State Park to a terminus within the park determined by the DNR Parks and Trails, thus completing a bicycling trail system from the Scandia Village Center that will provide greater appeal and safety for families and children that use the State Park
* As it brings in trail users to the Scandia Village Center, it will also add to the city’s economic vitality as it works to increase its appeal to residents and visitors to enjoy and utilize the natural and historic resources of the City.
* Thank you for your support thus far. We hope you will extend that support by carrying forward this bill.

A bill for an act

relating to capital investment; authorizing spending to better the Gateway Trail within William O’Brien State Park

and between the Park and the Village Center of the City of Scandia,

and to design and engineer suitable connections to the Swedish Immigrant Region Trail and the current terminus of the Gateway Trail at Pine Point Park;

authorizing the sale and issuance of state bonds; appropriating money

Christine Maefsky

Mayor, City of Scandia

10-14-19