



2026

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



**Dakota Rail
Regional Trail**
Minnesota



Dakota Rail Regional Trail

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The nearly 29-mile Dakota Rail Regional Trail leaves off from its eastern end at the lakefront in downtown Wayzata, an idyllic suburb of Minneapolis. The paved rail trail carries trail users across the suburbs that border the scenic Lak Minnetonka and west away from the urban Minneapolis region.

About the Route

Lake views are never far away for much of the trail's journey through Hennepin County. Many of these communities were developed in the late 19th century as popular resort towns because of their stunning views of the clear water and convenient location along the expanding railroad lines. These towns, which are now largely residential, include Orono, Minnetonka Beach,

Spring Park, and Mound. After passing through the town of St. Bonifacius, the trail enters Carver County.

The Carver County section of the trail, like the first portion of the trail, offers striking lake views, now of vast Lake Waconia. After passing the lake, the trail passes through an equally beautiful mix of open fields and forest.

The newest section of the Dakota Rail Regional Trail opened in early 2013. Running from Mayer to the Carver–McLeod county line, the trail parallels a lightly used rural road. Trail users pass through the tiny town of New Germany before reaching the current western endpoint. Currently, all open sections of the trail are paved.

Trail History

Sections of the Dakota Rail Regional Trail have been opening since June 2009. The trail occupies the former Dakota Rail corridor, which ran for a total length of 44 miles to Hutchinson, Minnesota, before falling out of use in 2001. That same year, the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, Carver County, and McLeod County jointly purchased the corridor with the goal of establishing a rail trail.



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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Dakota Rail Regional Trail

Minnesota

States: Minnesota

Counties: Carver, Hennepin, McLeod

Length: 28.8 miles

Trail end points: Grove Lane E (Wayzata) to Babcock Ave. (Lester Prairie)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Fishing, Inline Skating, Walking, Wheelchair Accessible, Cross Country Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

The Dakota Rail Regional Trail runs between Grove Lane E (Wayzata), where parking is available, and Babcock Ave. (Lester Prairie).

Parking is also available at:

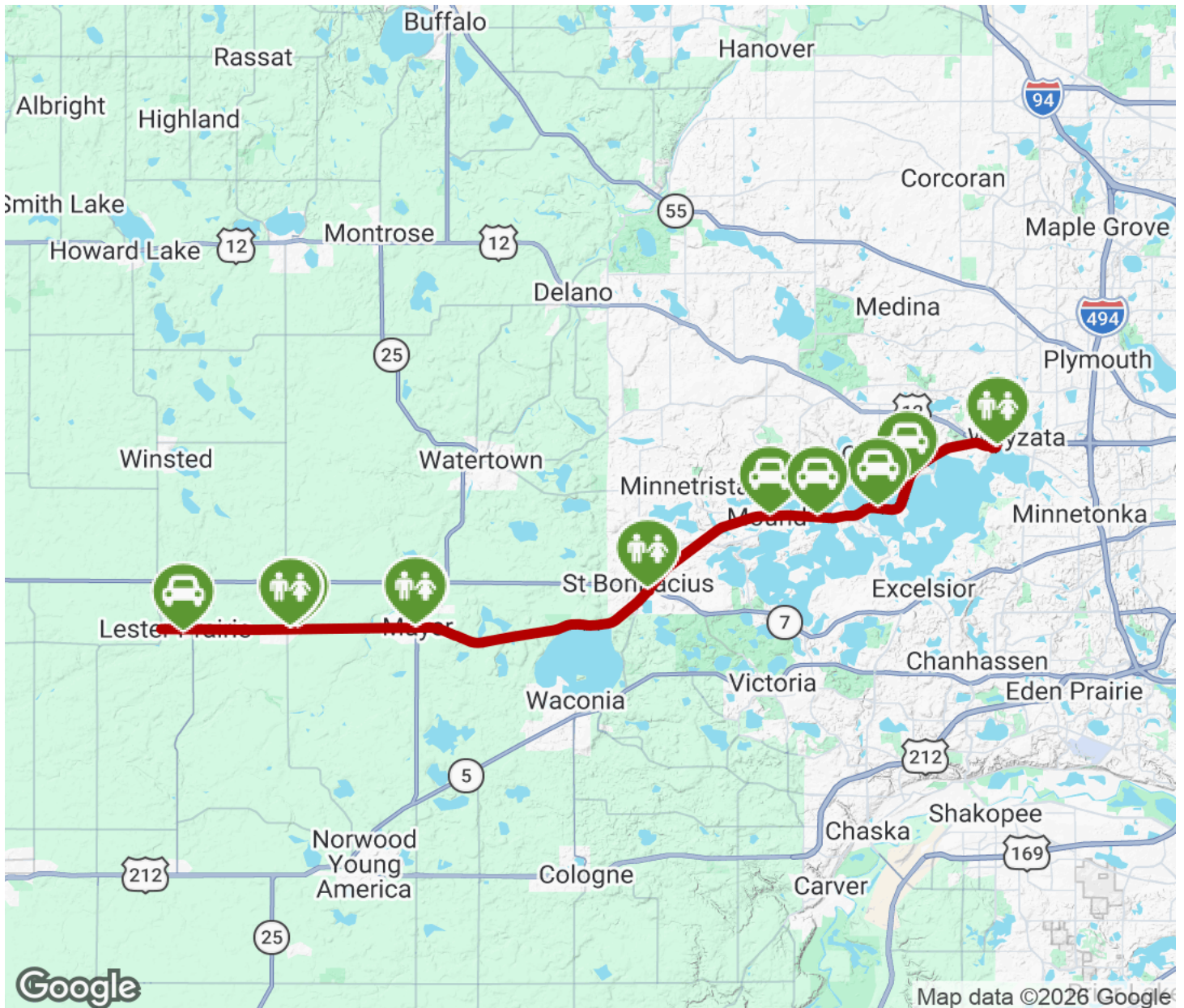
- 901 2nd Ave S (Lester Prairie)

View the [TrailLink map](#) for all options and detailed directions.



Dakota Rail Regional Trail

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



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