



**Minneapolis**  
Park & Recreation Board

# Midtown Greenway Regional Trail Plan

MPRB Board of Commissioners Study Item  
March 15, 2023

- I. Background
- II. Research
- III. Scenarios
- IV. Guidance

# Project background

- MPRB, the City of Minneapolis , and Hennepin County have been in conversation for several years about MPRB taking a formal role in operations of the Midtown Greenway.
- This idea gained the support of the Metropolitan Council as a Regional Trail Search Corridor in the 2020 Regional Parks Policy Plan, and as a result, MPRB has recently launched a formal regional trail and operations planning process.
- Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) will remain the underlying landowner and maintain southern part of the corridor for transit.
- The City of Minneapolis is the current trail operator and will be part of the operations plan along with HCRRA.
- The underlying land ownership and operations of the Greenway will continue to be a multi-agency effort into the future.
- If the Regional Trail Plan is adopted by MPRB and the Met Council, MPRB will bring specific operational expertise to the trail, and as a result, the trail will be incorporated into the regional trail system and unlock regional parks and trails dollars to MPRB for operations and capital improvements.
- HCRRA and City are not eligible to bring Greenway into the Met Council Regional Trail System.
- The trail is full built and has been planned extensively by other agencies - MPRB's regional trail plan would build off the vision and plans of other agencies as well as past and recent community engagement.

## **Project Advisory Committee**

- Project Advisory Committee is comprised of MPRB staff and will provide guidance on the master plan, and receive updates on the operations agreement
- Meet 3-4 times during master plan process and advise on the planning process

## Technical Advisory Committee

- Technical Advisory Committee is comprised of a broader set of agency and organizational partners that have worked on the Greenway and will provide guidance on the master plan, and receive updates on the operations agreement
  - Midtown Greenway Coalition
  - Lake Street Council
  - Henn County Bike and Ped staff
  - Henn County Sheriff's Office
  - City of Minneapolis PW
  - City of Minneapolis Bike and Ped staff
- Meet 3-4 times during master plan process, review the draft plan within each agency, and advise on the planning process

## **Operations Workgroup**

- The Operations Workgroup will focus on developing an Operations Agreement/JPA for the Midtown Greenway Regional Trail
- Members: City of Minneapolis, HCRRA, MPRB
- Develop clear sense of operations
- Make decisions about which entity will be responsible for what aspect of operations
- Confirm boundaries of the Greenway Regional Trail
- Develop cost estimates for operations
- Meet monthly and guide agreement through agency approvals

**MIDTOWN GREENWAY  
COMMUNITY SAFETY DESIGN**

**SECTION 1  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

JUNE 2020



**Hennepin County**  
Regional Railroad Authority



**Hennepin County**  
Community Works

# 1 // SITE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AREAS OF CONCERN

## 1.1: Stairs: Increase safety/visibility of stairs

- Provide strategies to increase the safety and visibility at 'hot spot' stair entrances (such as Bloomington).



## 1.4: Modify vegetation to aid surveillance/reduce maintenance

- Continue to maintain vegetation.
- Provide 'cues of care' with vegetation management; Phase in new planting regime (See Section 2B: Design Solutions).



## 1.7: Activate 29th Street Level

- Activate vacant space along 29th Street (between 17th & 18th Avenues) at street level (adjacent to Midtown Greenway) to support positive community uses,



## 1.2: Bridges: Improve safety under bridges

- Install rip rap and/or fencing under bridges to discourage loitering.



## 1.5: Entrances: Signage and other wayfinding

- Provide public realm improvements at entrances/exits.
- Provide signage, including wayfinding and code of conduct, at all entrances/exits.
- Clearly identify entrances.



## 1.3: New lighting in dark areas

- Provide consistent lighting along full Greenway.
- Install lighting under bridges.
- Improve lighting at entrances/exits.
- Provide pole lighting where there are gaps in lighting along trail.



## 1.6: Trash: Expanded refuse collection areas

- Expand refuse collection areas - more trash and recycling receptacles.



RECOMMENDATION	COST	PRIORITY
1.1: <u>Staircases</u>	\$\$\$	●●●
1.2: <u>Bridges</u>	\$	●●●
1.3: <u>Lighting</u>	\$\$\$	●●●
1.4: <u>Vegetation</u>	\$\$\$	●●●
1.5: <u>Entrances</u>	\$	●●○
1.6: <u>Trash</u>	\$	●●●
1.7: <u>Activate 29th</u>	\$	●●●

# GREENWAY-WIDE 2/

INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION	COST	PRIORITY
2.1: <u>Wayfinding</u>	\$\$\$	●●●
2.2: <u>New street signs</u> on bridges/ coordination with emergency services	\$	●●●
2.3: <u>Frequent Programming/Community Engagement</u>	\$\$	●●○
2.4: <u>Policy for Programming</u> - designate programmed areas	\$	●●●
2.5: Implement <u>Code of Conduct</u> (post signage)	\$	●●●
2.6: Expanded <u>Art Program</u>	\$\$	●●○

### 2.1: Clear Wayfinding Signage

- Provide clear wayfinding signage throughout the Midtown Greenway.
- Provide clear signage at entrances/exits.
- See previous report: “Making the Connection: Midtown to Lake Street”.



### 2.2: New Street Signs on Bridges

- Provide mile markers and/or geocode location markers to connect with emergency services and provide greater orientation for trail users.
- Install consistent bridge identification signage. The signs should be visible from the emergency blue phones.



### 2.3: Frequent Programming/Comm. Engagement

- Increase frequency of programming.
- Increase community engagement in neighborhoods adjacent to the Greenway (i.e. similar to the Ambassador Program by the LaFitte Trail).



### 2.4: Develop Policy for Areas of Programming

- Develop & implement policy designating areas for programming.
- Identifying areas that can and cannot be used.
- Support positive/welcoming activities.
- Identify acceptable temporary southside uses of the corridor.



### 2.5: Implement Code of Code/Hours of Operation

- Implement a code of conduct and hours of operation - see Appendix D: Precedent Studies for specific examples from other greenways.
- Post code of conduct and hours on signage at all entrances/exits.



### 2.6: Expanded Art Program

- Increase opportunities for art programming.
- Expand mural program.
- Identify federal/state art grants, similar to the Beltline and Dequindre precedents (see Appendix B).
- Revise art approval process.



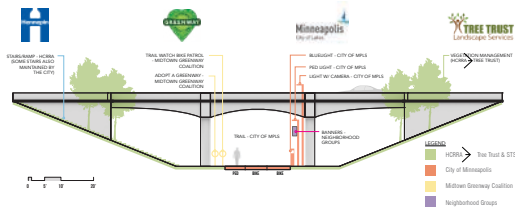
# SYSTEM-LEVEL CHANGES

RECOMMENDATION	COST	PRIORITY
3.1: <u>Regional Trail Designation</u>	N/A	●●●
3.2: <u>Dedicated Security Staff</u>	\$\$\$	●●●
3.3: <u>Dedicated Social Services</u>	\$\$\$	●●○

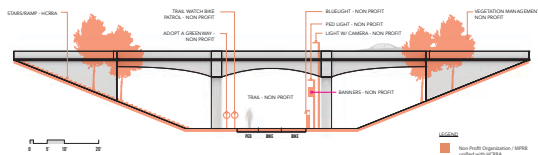
### 3.1: Regional Trail Designation

- Work with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to apply for Regional Trail Designation classification for the Midtown Greenway. This would provide a more unified management approach by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

Current Management Spread Across Many Jurisdictions & Entities



A More Unified Management Approach with Regional Trail Designation



### 3.2: Dedicated Security/Regular Patrolling

- Establish dedicated Security Staff.
- Increase Minneapolis Police Department presence.
- Create a Dedicated Ambassadors program for safety and cleaning (i.e. like Downtown DID).
- Post hours of operation.
- Clearly post code of conduct expectations.
- Adopt Hennepin County's public space policy.



### 3.3: Dedicated Social Services

- Fund dedicated outreach workers.
- Post signs with information on available resources for help.



# PARTNERS 4/

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AGENCY PARTNERS

The following recommendations were identified in the study but are outside of HCRRA's purview. Further action would need to be headed by partner agencies. Additional assessment of the effectiveness of these strategies is also needed.

RECOMMENDATION	COST	PRIORITY
4.1: <u>Cameras</u>	\$\$	●○○
4.2: <u>Safe needle collection</u>	\$	●●○
4.3: <u>Blue phones</u>	\$	●○○

### 4.1: Security Cameras: Adjust existing/Add more

- Adjust cameras with direction from the City of Minneapolis Police Department for best angles and to prevent glare from light poles.
- Provide more security cameras with direction from the City of Minneapolis Police Department.
- Add communication ability to some of the cameras at key locations.



### 4.2: Safe Needle Collection

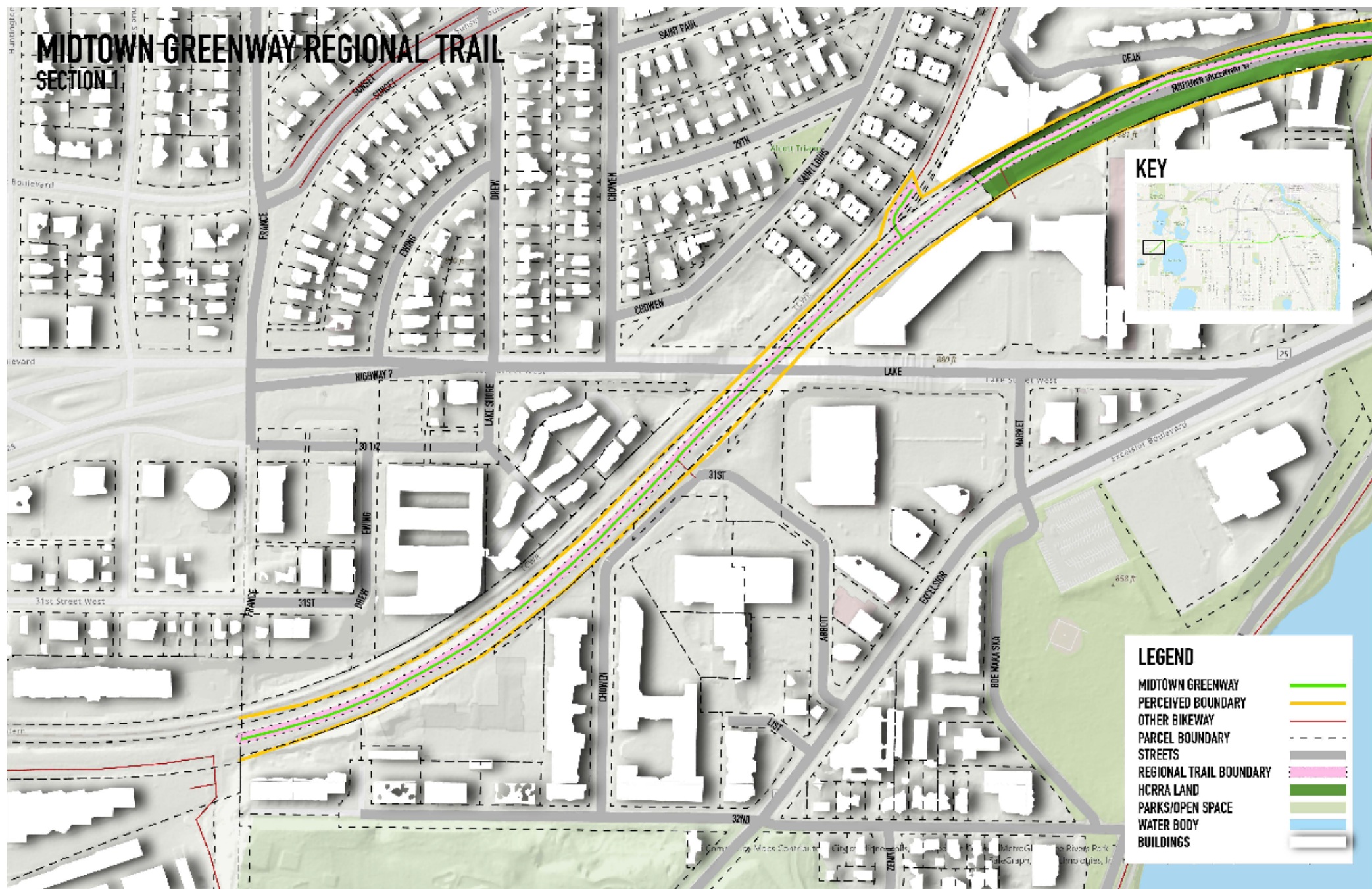
- Review effectiveness of the City of Minneapolis' needle deposit box pilot program
- Place needle collection facilities, such as the ones pictured, in key places along the Midtown Greenway. Work with social services to identify best locations and quantity.



### 4.3: Confirm emergency blue phones are working

- Check all of the Emergency Blue Phones to make sure that they are in working order. Verify with the City of Minneapolis Police Department.





Establish a Regional Trail Boundary – Master Plan Outcome

# Operations Tasks + Current Operator

TASK	Current Operator		
Safety		Public art	
Emergency Call Boxes (own, install, manage, monitor)	City	Murals	HCRRA
Emergency Services	Law enforcement and policing (primary = MPD and supplemental=HCSO), fire response (MFD), EMS response (Henn EMS), and mental health response (Behavioral Crisis Response of City and MPD), animal control (City Animal Care and Control)	Sculptures	HCRRA grants a permit
Access Control (fences)	Mostly HCRRA (in trench), Wooden privacy fence on northside around Dean Pkwy (City)	Temporary installations and pop-up	HCRRA permits -- others program
Needle deposit box	City Health Dept on Street ROW adjacent but not on greenway. There are none on HCRRA property. Just on City ROW.	Vegetation	
Security cameras	City (City IT maintains with PW funding)	Urban tree canopy	HCRRA
Outreach to people experiencing homelessness	County and 3 <sup>rd</sup> party	Erosion Control	HCRRA
Patrol	Henn Co Security + MPD + HCSO	Urban ag	Agreement with community partners (4 sisters, urban ventures), MPRB Soo Line
Trail watch bike patrol	Midtown Greenway Coalition volunteer	Ornamental plantings	HCRRA permit to community partner
Maintenance		Adjacent area/trench mowing	HCRRA
Graffiti removal	HCRRA and City and private entities	Trail sweeping	
Trash and recycling cans and pick up	HCRRA does trash cans. City has notes that they do litter pick up.	Trail + edge mowing	HCRRA
Encampment management	HCRRA (when necessary)	Trail + edge plowing	City
Litter pick up	HCRRA does trash cans. City has notes that they do litter pick up.	Operations	
Adopt-a-greenway program	Greenway Coalition	Programming	Programmed by community partner and permitted by HCRRA
		Hours of operation	na
		Ordinances, Laws, Rules and Regulations	HCRRA and City
		Level of Care Standards	TBD
		Trail maintenance	
		Resurfacing/reconstruction	City
		Patching	City
		Plowing	City
		Lighting maintenance + bill	City
		Striping	City
		Mowing edge	HCRRA
		Capital improvements	Full reconstruction City
		Railings (hand)	TBD based on location
		Construction permits	HCRRA
		Trail Adjacent Areas	
		Bridges	HCRRA and City and County
		Stairs	HCRRA for most of them
		Ramps	Any public ramps - City
		Above Trench at Street Grade Areas	HCRRA
		Cross streets (at grade or above grade)	City unless County Rd
		Signage and wayfinding	
		Kiosks	Midtown Greenway Coalition, Historical ones put in by Henn Co. Community Works which have been "redlined"
		Signage related to trail (stop signs, regulatory, street signs)	City
		Gateway signage and neighborhood wayfinding	City and trail wayfinding
		Communications and Promotion	
		Calendar of events	Midtown Greenway Coalition and community partners
		Events	
		Permits	HCRRA
		Security	Permit holder
		Organizing	Permit holder
		Funding/fundraising	Permit holder
		Lighting	
		Capital costs	City
		Operation	City
		Repair/replace	City
		Customer Service	
		Questions or comments	City 311 and HCRRA
		Liability	

# Considerations: From PAC and TAC

## Questions and Concerns:

- O and M fees: Met Council funding typically only brings 10% of O and M fees. Need to determine costs for O and M and establish how that will be covered.
- Ordinances: Park Ordinances could apply, but would MPD and Henn Co Sherriff's office enforce? If we have two different ordinances from different agencies, what ordinance is the one that leads?
- Liability: Liability history and indemnity?
- Safety: Concerns by Maintenance staff for safety, especially without support of Park Police, and site lines in trench are challenging for public safety. Encampments are a reality for public and staff.
- Customer Service: How will the trail be signed for customer service? Who is responsible for community requests and customer service?
- Levels of Service and Life Cycle: Trail rehab and capital improvements including surface and lighting
- Streamlining operations is not necessarily the outcome

## Benefits and Support:

- Financial benefit to regional park system: 36 acre estimate of additional parkland, 6 miles of regional trail with approx. 50', and estimated 1 million+ users
- Community would like us to take this on in hopes of streamlining trail operations and aligning level of service with other regional trails and parks
- We could help transform the greenway from a trail to a park
- Additive level of service
- It's an important link and trail connection between east and west Minneapolis (and one of the most popular trails in the state)

## Immediate Needs

- Lights in need of update
- Signage/wayfinding in need of update
- Trail surface lifecycle analysis and update
- Gathering space design and construction

## Costs?

### MPRB Capital Investment Example:

- Lights every 80 feet along a 6-mile stretch of Greenway trail (on one side) = 400 lights
- MPRB typical trail light is approximately \$8000 per light (installed)
- $400 \times 8000 = \$3.2$  million

**Scenario 1:** MPRB takes on plowing only.

*Questions: Ordinances, Levels of Service, Safety, Liability*

**Scenario 2:** MPRB take on plowing and mowing only.

*Questions: Ordinances, Levels of Service, Safety, Liability*

**Scenario 3:** MPRB does not play a role in operations but starting in 2029 contributes capital improvements.

*Questions: Per Met Council requirements, could we create a capital only JPA and can MPRB reimburse the 10% of operations to another agency?*

**Scenario 4:** All operations covered by MPRB.

*Questions: What are the costs associated? Where would the gap funding come from for 90% of estimated costs?*

**Scenario 5:** MPRB ownership and operations long-term.

*Questions: If and when transit corridor is established, would MPRB be interested in ownership? Could ownership or 50-year lease of entire trench with operations oversight (permitting, maintenance, etc) be an option?*

**Scenario 6:** MPRB does not move forward with master plan.

**Guiding question: How does regional trail status benefit residents/users and MPRB?**

## Fact Finding

- Cost estimating
- MPRB staff advisors
- Agency partner advisors
- Met Council guidance
- Operations Workgroup insights

# Met Council Guidance on Scenarios and Financial Contribution per User Estimate

- **Met Council financial allocations estimates based on 36 acres and 1 million visits:** By applying the Midtown Greenway acres and estimated visits to the last biennium's FY22/FY23 shares calculator (for which we have the most complete data set), **MPRB would have received roughly \$40,000 in additional annual O&M funding** and respectively **\$70,000 per fiscal year for their Legacy shares** (\$140,000 total for the biennium). All of these inputs are variable for a future biennium and respective shares calculators.
- **Scenario considerations:**
  - **Operations:** A plow only option and mow/plow only option will reduce the estimate funds allocated to O&M since it's on a reimbursement only. There were questions raised by Met Council staff if the limited O&M role qualifies as operations.
  - **Capital:** If MPRB did not play a role in daily or seasonal operations, but did allocate capital to the Greenway, this is a feasible alternative according to Met Council staff. Capital would be allocated through the Equity Metric for Regional Parks and the Greenway would likely score very high. MPRB could determine the amount that would be allocated (\$70,000 per year or more standard allocations like \$1million every few years starting in 2029)

# Operations and staffing level increase and cost estimates

<b>Proposed MPRB Roles</b>	
Trail annual seal coat, patching, remove/replace	\$75,000
Scope of Work	Total Cost
Main staff completing plowing and snow removal operations in the winter and mowing in the summer	\$190,000
Support staff in summer for mowing and vegetation management	\$30,000
Support maintenance operations in summer to allow for mowing. Assist in vegetation management (weed whip/detail mowing/etc)	\$30,000
Support and manage operations	\$27,500
	\$277,500
Skidsteer	\$50,000
4x4 Vehicle w/ plow + sander	\$60,000
Toolcat	\$60,000
	\$170,000
Equipment maintenance and depreciation (.15 equipment cost)	\$25,500
Total Equipment Depreciation	\$25,500
Total Up Front Cost (Equipment Buy)	\$170,000
Total Yearly Cost (Staff + Equipment Dep/Maint): \$303,000	
Plus asphalt	\$378,000

**MPRB Estimates: \$378,000**  
annual operations for plow,  
mow, and asphalt  
maintenance

**Operations Department has requested the following for level of service:**

Score: 4

General Descriptive Term: Good

Conditions:

- Trail is generally smooth with no (very limited) aggregate mix exposed
- Trail is flat and has no major undulations
- Minor cracks exist but there is limited or no major 1" or greater gap

**MPRB current 'lifecycle' maintenance intervention schedule for a 12' wide trail:**

- Seal Coating- Every 8 years (\$15k per mile)
- Crack Sealing- Every 5 Years (\$7.5k per mile)
- Patching- Every 5 Years (\$20k per mile)
- Remove/Replace- Every 30 Years (\$150k per mile)

MPRB estimates \$75,000k per year lifecycle cycle cost for 6 miles of trails. This doesn't include plowing, mowing or daily maintenance

*Current: Every 6 years there is capital investment in the trail resurfacing by the City of Minneapolis.*

**Scenario 1:** MPRB takes on plowing only.

*Safety of staff and costs*

**Scenario 2:** MPRB take on plowing and mowing only.

*Safety of staff and costs*

**Scenario 3:** MPRB does not play a role in operations but starting in 2029 contributes capital improvements.

*Met Council capital funding policy aligns*

**Scenario 4:** All operations covered by MPRB.

*HCRRA would remain underlying landowner and permitter. There are other HCRRA owned trails in our system fall under similar scenarios (portions of Diagonal, Kenilworth, and Cedar Lake Trails)*

**Scenario 5:** MPRB ownership and operations long-term.

*Staff support for this vs partial management for full control of space*

**Scenario 6:** MPRB does not move forward with master plan.

*Regional search corridor would remain so conversation can be revisited at a later date*

**Guiding question: How does regional trail status benefit residents/users and MPRB?**

# Decision Points

1. Decide on which scenario to move forward
2. Consider not playing a role in daily operations
3. Consider capital only
  - a) Work into Regional Park CIP through Equity Metrics
  - b) Limit capital to Met Council allocation (estimated \$70K/year)
  - c) Visionary master plan could be implemented over time with this approach
  - d) Request to partners to bring capital funding to create a baseline LOS
4. Consider not master planning
  - a) Keep regional search corridor in Met Council plan for future consideration if ownership changes
  - b) Develop agreement with HCRRA where MPRB could assume ownership and full operations if HCRRA decides to sell/dispose of Greenway or portion of Greenway (after regional transit corridor development)

*Time consideration: Regional Park counts will need to be conducted this summer in order to bring the Greenway into the system, so guidance this month is important.*

**Questions?**

1. Introduction
2. Boundaries and Easements: *Context map*
3. Service Area and Visitation
  - *Primary Service Area Map*
  - *Visitation Projections Table*
4. Demographics
5. Natural Resources and MLCCS
6. Capital Expenses: *Preliminary Construction Estimate Spreadsheet*
7. Operations & Maintenance Expenses & Staffing: *Operations Plan and Maintenance/Expenses Spreadsheet*
8. Trail Section Maps including:
  - *Existing and Capitol Improvement Recommendations*
  - *Partner agency improvement initiatives*
  - *Supporting photos of concerns/noncompliance*