

## Frequently Asked Questions - Midtown Greenway Regional Trail Plan

### **Who is responsible for the Midtown Greenway?**

Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) or the City of Minneapolis, depending on the trail segment, are the underlying landowners of the Midtown Greenway. The City of Minneapolis is the owner of the trail and responsible for maintaining it from 31<sup>st</sup>/Chowen to the Mississippi River (City Council Resolution 2000R-511) as outlined in the 2000 Bikeways Project Final Report. There are also a few properties owned by MPRB that exist next to the Midtown Greenway (ex: Lake of the Isles, Dean Parkway, The Mall, Soo Line Garden, CEPRO Site, Brackett Park, and West River Parkway within Mississippi Gorge Regional Park).

Operations, maintenance, and communications associated with the Midtown Greenway are primarily performed by the following agencies and organizations: HCRRA and the City of Minneapolis. The Midtown Greenway Coalition and the Lake Street Council are also active in the Greenway.

### **Why is MPRB getting involved as an agency partner for the Midtown Greenway?**

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) has not been involved formally in the Midtown Greenway since its inception. But recently, the owners and operators of the Greenway as well as community members and organizations have requested MPRB's involvement to access regional trail status and funding. As a step to getting regional status and funding, the Metropolitan Council established the Midtown Greenway as a regional trail search corridor in the 2020 Amendment to the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan update. This action was supported by MPRB Commissioners and agency partners. In order to bring the trail into the regional system, the Metropolitan Council requires that a long-range plan be developed and approved by MPRB Commissioners and the Metropolitan Council. Since the City of Minneapolis and HCRRA will continue to be the primary owners and operators of the trail, a Cooperative Agreement between those two agencies and MPRB will also need to be approved by each agency's respective boards and councils in order to advance the plan forward for Metropolitan Council approval.

MPRB Commissioners have put guidelines in place to focus MPRB's engagement role in developing the long-range plan and to protect the MPRB's commitment to current state funding requests to finish the Grand Rounds and other important regional projects; see [Resolution 2023-127 for](#) more details.

### **Why is MPRB involved in the regional trail planning for the Midtown Greenway?**

In order to unlock regional park system funding as a regional trail, MPRB must be involved because it is the only eligible [regional park implementing agency](#) for regional parks and trails within the City of Minneapolis. MPRB is one of ten regional park implementing agencies for the Metropolitan Council supported [regional park system](#).

### **What does becoming a regional trail mean for the Midtown Greenway?**

If a long-range plan is completed and approved by the MPRB Board of Commissioners and the Metropolitan Council, the Midtown Greenway would be given regional trail status and would be eligible for [regional park system funding](#) for capital and noncapital projects.

Additionally, as part of the regional park system, the Midtown Greenway will be incorporated into the Metropolitan Council's [Annual Use Estimates](#), [Visitor Study](#), and potentially other [Council research](#).

### **What does the MPRB trail planning process include for the Midtown Greenway?**

This trail planning process will result in a written and graphic document that fulfills regional plan requirements outlined by the Metropolitan Council in the Regional Parks Policy Plan. It will also include a Cooperative Agreement between the City of Minneapolis, HCRRRA, and MPRB focused on ownership and operations of the Midtown Greenway if it receives designation as a regional trail.

The plan document will build on the design, community engagement, analysis, recommendations and completed projects by other agencies, organizations, and the community since the inception of the Midtown Greenway. The regional plan will also include MPRB adopted park plans for applicable locations being incorporated into the regional trail boundary. MPRB plans to release a draft plan for public comment in the summer of 2024. Following guidelines outlined in [Resolution 2023-127](#), MPRB community engagement for the draft plan document will be focused on the lower cost capital amenities on which MPRB will spend regional capital funding, such as wayfinding, portable restrooms, drinking fountains, picnic tables, and community gardens. Funding and engagement for any higher cost capital expenditures like lighting, permanent restrooms, pavement repaving, and trail expansions will have to be covered in other ways such as by current agency owners/operators or other interested parties.

For more details on the project, review the project's community engagement plan under the Key Documents section of the [project page](#).

### **What is the timeline for the MPRB Midtown Greenway Regional Trail project?**

#### Fall-Winter 2022

- Vision and discovery
- Community engagement
- Synthesizing previous documents and plans

#### Fall 2023-Summer 2024

- Draft regional trail plan document
- Draft Cooperative Agreement between City of Minneapolis, HCRRRA, and MPRB
- Cooperative Agreement approval by all agencies
- Release draft plan for public comment period

#### Fall/Winter 2024

- [MPRB Commissioner](#) review and consideration for adoption
- [Metropolitan Council](#) review and consideration for approval

#### Summer 2025

- Initiate regional park counts for the trail

### **What is the status of extending the trail across the Mississippi River (Short Line Bridge)?**

In the future, the Short Line Bridge may become a potential addition to the Midtown Greenway Regional Trail. At this time, operations and ownership of this segment will not be included in the regional trail plan. The Metropolitan Council is undergoing a [feasibility study](#) for the Short Line Bridge to see what it would take to connect the Midtown Greenway with the other side of the Mississippi River. Information from the feasibility study will inform future function, ownership, and operations of the bridge.

### **How do the City of Minneapolis and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board determine who is the owner and operator of trails within Minneapolis?**

The [Bikeways Project Final Report](#), published in October 2000, was a collaboration between MPRB and the City and part of a project that considered the role and responsibility of both agencies for several types of public infrastructure within the city. The Report established a Joint Planning Process (Process) for new trails and also roles and responsibilities for the development, operations, and maintenance of on-street and off-street trails and bikeways in the City of Minneapolis. The Report considered all potential scenarios including the participation of other government partners especially in cases where neither the City nor the MPRB would own the land under the bikeway. The Report documented the responsible parties for all segments of the Midtown Greenway ranging from segments that were already built to those that were in the planning phase at the time. MPRB was not identified as a responsible party for any of the segments. The Report identifies the Trail Owner, Jurisdiction (Property) Ownership, and Maintenance Responsibility, and serves as an overall joint powers agreement for all of the existing, under construction, and planned trails in 2000. For the Midtown Greenway the City of Minneapolis is identified in the role of Trail Owner and Maintenance Responsibility for all segments in the Report. This 2000 Report has not been superseded and therefore is currently the governing policy document for the Greenway.

### **How does the Soo Line Garden fit into the regional trail plan?**

Soo Line Garden is one of a few park areas owned by MPRB that will be included in the proposed regional trail boundary. In 2024, MPRB will be undergoing a process to remediate the soils and develop a concept plan for this location. The detailed planning for this area is in progress and will be updated in the regional trail plan following additional community engagement. The MPRB Board of Commissioners will need to approve a concept plan for the site that will be amended into the Midtown Greenway Regional Trail Plan once adopted. Following a funding allocation, the garden will be reconstructed by MPRB in line with park design standards, community input, and approved plan for the site. Learn more about what's currently happening at the garden on the [project page](#).