Midtown Greenway Regional Trail Plan

MPRB Board of Commissioners Study Item
March 15, 2023
Midtown Greenway Regional Trail Planning Update

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
1.1: Stairs: Increase safety/visibility of stairs
   ➔ Provide strategies to increase the safety and visibility at ‘hot spot’ stair entrances (such as Bloomington).

1.2: Bridges: Improve safety under bridges
   ➔ Install rip rap and/or fencing under bridges to discourage loitering.

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.

1.4: 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).

1.5: 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.

1.6: Trash: Expanded refuse collection areas
   ➔ Expand refuse collection areas – more trash and recycling receptacles.

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.

RECOMMENDATION COST PRIORITY
1.1: Staircases $$$ ⬤⬤⬤
1.2: Bridges $$ ⬤⬤⬤
1.3: Lighting $$$ ⬤⬤⬤
1.4: Vegetation $$$ ⬤⬤⬤
1.5: Entrances $$ ⬤⬤○
1.6: Trash $$ ⬤⬤⬤
1.7: Activate 29th $$ ⬤⬤⬤
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/Community 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.

For everyone’s enjoyment, we ask that you follow these guidelines:
- Pets must be on a leash and under control. Please pick up and dispose of pet waste.
- Unauthorized motor vehicles are not permitted.
- Vagrancy, smoking, and alcoholization are prohibited.
- Camping, camping fires, and grills are not permitted.
- Please put all trash in trash receptacles.
- NEVER throw trash on any part of the trail.
- Please do not drive on guardians.

THANK YOU
3/ SYSTEM-LEVEL CHANGES

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.

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.

Current Management Spread Across Many Jurisdictions & Entities

A More Unified Management Approach with Regional Trail Designation

RECOMMENDATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATION</th>
<th>COST</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1: Regional Trail Designation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>• • •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2: Dedicated Security Staff</td>
<td>$$$</td>
<td>• • •</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3: Dedicated Social Services</td>
<td>$$$</td>
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LEGEND

Non Profit Organization / MPRB
unified with HCRRA

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT
(HCRRA Tree Trust)

STAIRS/RAMP - HCRRA
(SOME STAIRS ALSO MAINTAINED BY THE CITY)

TRAIL - CITY OF MPLS
BANNERS - NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS
BLUELIGHT - CITY OF MPLS
PED LIGHT - CITY OF MPLS
LIGHT W/ CAMERA - CITY OF MPLS
TRAIL WATCH BIKE PATROL - MIDTOWN GREENWAY
ADOPT A GREENWAY - MIDTOWN GREENWAY COALITION

City of Minneapolis
Midtown Greenway Coalition
Neighborhood Groups

DF/ DAMON FARBER
TRAIL - NON PROFIT
BANNERS - NON PROFIT
BLUELIGHT - NON PROFIT
LEGEND
PED LIGHT - NON PROFIT
LIGHT W/ CAMERA - NON PROFIT
TRAIL WATCH BIKE PATROL - NON PROFIT
ADOPT A GREENWAY - NON PROFIT
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.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AGENCY PARTNERS

#### 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATION</th>
<th>COST</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.1: Cameras</strong></td>
<td>$$</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.2: Safe needle collection</strong></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.3: Blue phones</strong></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Establish a Regional Trail Boundary – Master Plan Outcome
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>Current Operator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Call Boxes (own, install, manage, monitor)</td>
<td>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)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Services</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access Control (fences)</td>
<td>Mostly HCRRA (in trench), Wooden privacy fence on northside around Dean Pkwy (City)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needle deposit box</td>
<td>City Health Dept on Street ROW adjacent but not on greenway. There are none on HCRRA property. Just on City ROW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security cameras</td>
<td>City (City IT maintains with PW funding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach to people experiencing homelessness</td>
<td>County and 3rd party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol</td>
<td>Henn Co Security + MPD + HCSO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail watch bike patrol</td>
<td>Midtown Greenway Coalition volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>HCRRA and City and private entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti removal</td>
<td>HCRRA and City and private entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash and recycling cans and pick up</td>
<td>HCRRA does trash cans. City has notes that they do litter pick up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encampment management</td>
<td>HCRRA (when necessary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litter pick up</td>
<td>HCRRA does trash cans. City has notes that they do litter pick up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt-a-greenway program</td>
<td>Greenway Coalition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Public art**

- Murals: HCRRA grants a permit
- Sculptures: HCRRA permits -- others program
- Temporary installations and pop-up: Agreement with community partners (4 sisters, urban ventures), MPRB
- Urban tree canopy: HCRRA
- Erosion Control: HCRRA
- Urban ag: HCRRA permit to community partner
- Ornamental plantings: HCRRA
- Adjacent area/trench mowing: HCRRA
- Trail sweeping: HCRRA
- Trail + edge mowing: City
- Trail + edge plowing: City

**Operations**

- 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: City
- 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: City
- Cross streets (at grade or above grade): City unless County Rd

**Signage and wayfinding**

- 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: Permit holder
- Permits: HCRRA
- Security: Permit holder
- Organizing: Permit holder
- Funding/fundraising: Permit holder
- Lighting: Permit holder
- Capital costs: City
- Operation: City
- Repair/replace: City
- Customer Service: Permit holder
- 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)
Capital and Operational Considerations

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)
• 400x8000=$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 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)
### Proposed MPRB Roles

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

**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?
Master Plan Requirements

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
8. Trail Section Maps including:
   • Existing and Capitol Improvement Recommendations
   • Partner agency improvement initiatives
   • Supporting photos of concerns/noncompliance