



MIDTOWN GREENWAY

Trail Expansion Planning Study



Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Committee
June 30, 2026





Study Purpose

The dual purposes of the Midtown Greenway Trail Expansion Planning Study were to develop a conceptual implementation plan for extending the Greenway that provides for a new transportation connection and recreational opportunity and to advance alignment concepts into project development.

Omnibus Transportation Finance Bill

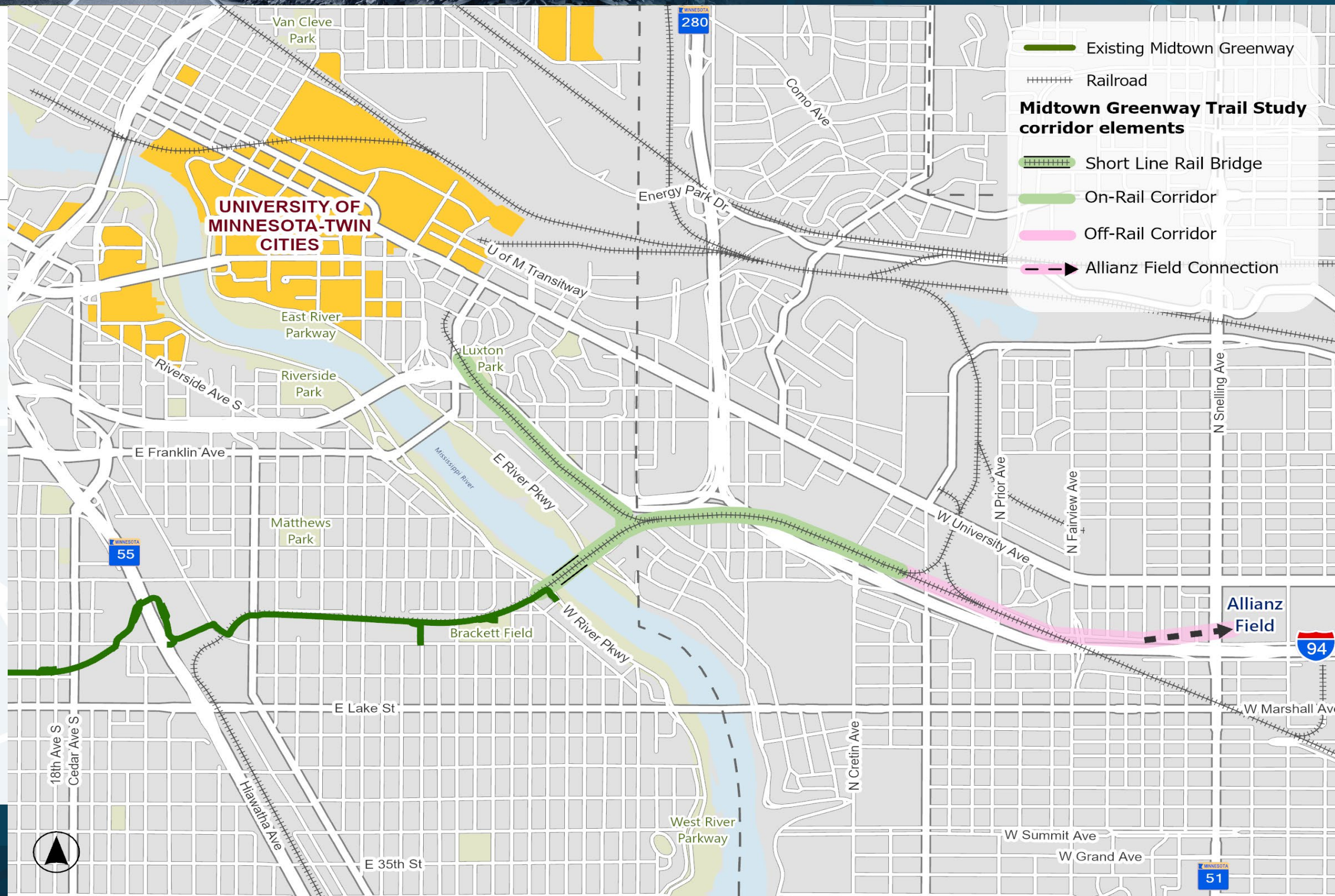
The 2023 State Legislature directed Met Council to:

- Plan a continuous and dedicated bicycle/pedestrian trail from the current eastern terminus of the Midtown Greenway, across the Mississippi River on the Short Line Rail Bridge and terminating at Allianz Field
- Include a trail connection to the edge of the University of Minnesota main campus terminating at 27th Avenue SE



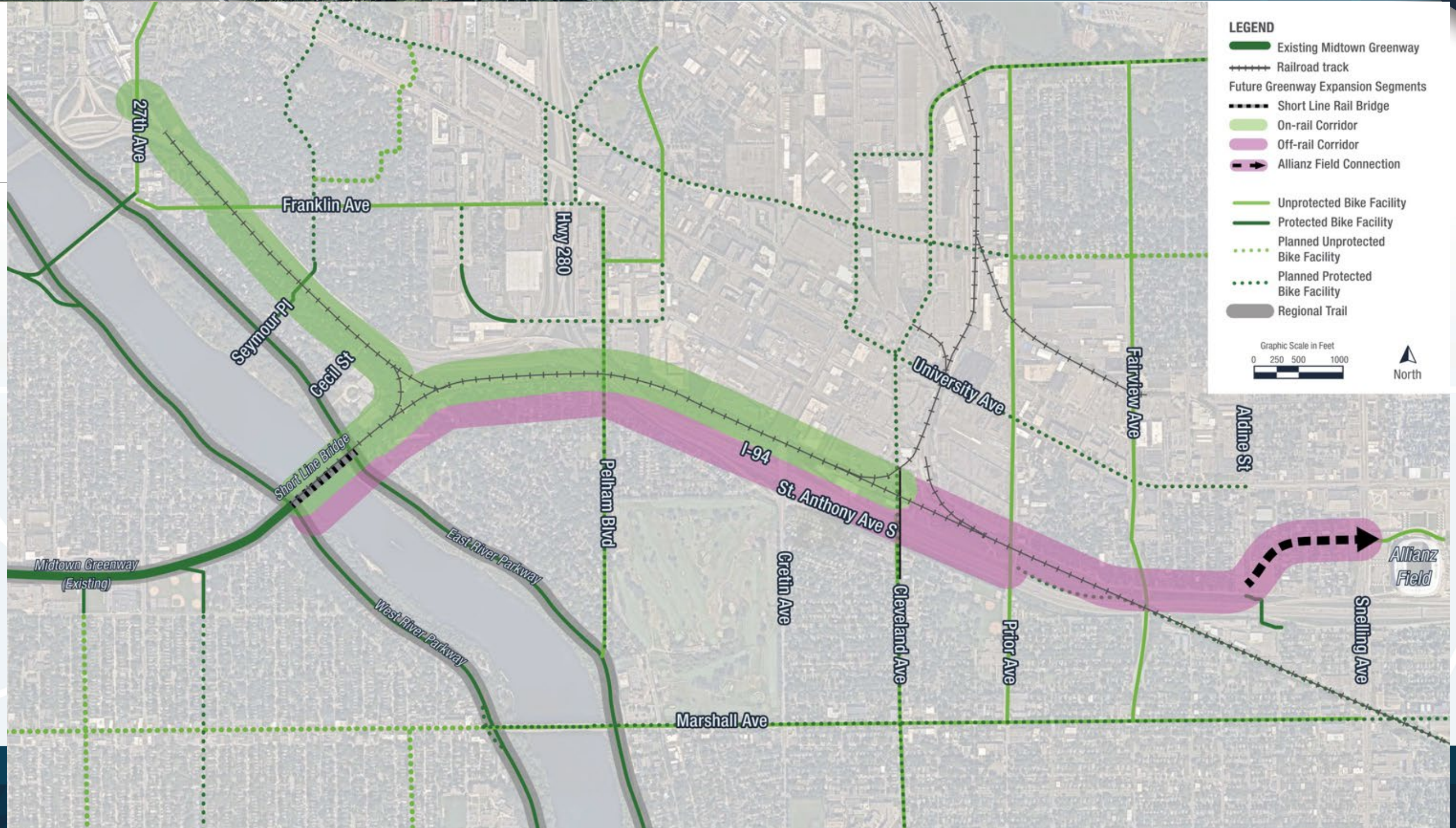
Study Corridor Orientation Map

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



Study Planning Corridor Map

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



Study Engagement

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



At the beginning of the study, an agency Technical Work Group was established to provide resources and advise the study team on technical and process considerations.

The group consists of staff from

- Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
- Minneapolis Transportation Planning & Programming
- Saint Paul Public Works/Parks & Recreation/Planning & Economic Development
- MnDOT Metro District/Rethink I-94 Project
- Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority/Transportation Planning
- Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority/Transportation Planning
- Metropolitan Council (Metropolitan Trans. Planning/Regional Parks & Trails)



Study Engagement (2)



During the course of this study the following organizations and government agencies were consulted:

- Longfellow Community Council Board
- Seward Neighborhood Council Board
- Prospect Park Neighborhood Council Board
- Union Park District Council
- Desnoyer Neighborhood Improvement Association
- Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee
- St. Paul Transportation Committee
- Hennepin County Active Transportation Committee
- Active Living Ramsey Communities
- American Indian Advisory Council
- Midtown Greenway Coalition
- Sierra Club of Minnesota
- Friends of the Mississippi River
- National Park Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Coast Guard



Study Engagement (3)

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



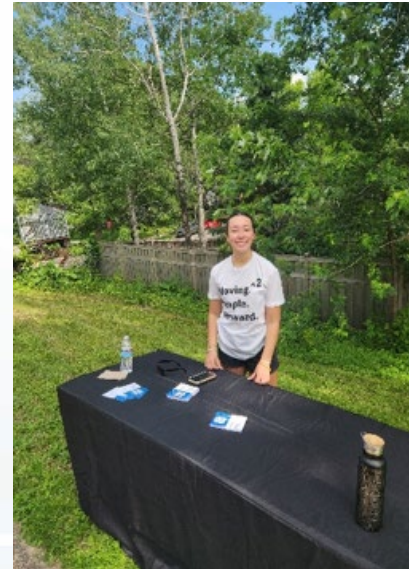
Pop-up Events and Project Web Site

Three study project pop-up events were held in spring/summer of 2025:

- Lake Monster Brewery May 8, 2025
- Midtown Greenway Trail June 19, 2025
- Mobility Mingle at State Capitol

July 22, 2025

Study web page was established to inform public stakeholders and request feedback on preliminary corridor alignment alternatives.



MIDTOWN
GREENWAY TRAIL
EXPANSION
PLANNING STUDY

LEARN MORE ABOUT
THE STUDY



SCAN ME

Or visit
<https://tinyurl.com/MidtownGreenwayExpansion>

Corridor Alignment Alternatives

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



The Study included three conceptual alignments for evaluation:

Alignment Alternative 1, Short Line Bridge/On-Rail Corridor:

Uses Short Line Bridge and follows along and within CPKC right of way (ROW) where minimal standard track offsets (25 feet) can be achieved.

Alignment Alternative 2*, New River Bridge/Partial Use of Rail Corridor:

Assumes new Mississippi River trail bridge and follows along and within CPKC ROW wherever 50-foot track center offsets can be achieved.

Alignment Alternative 3**, New River Bridge/Off-Rail Corridor:

Assumes new Mississippi River trail bridge with trail alignment entirely outside of CPKC ROW and independent of railroad approval.

*Contingency to Alt. 1

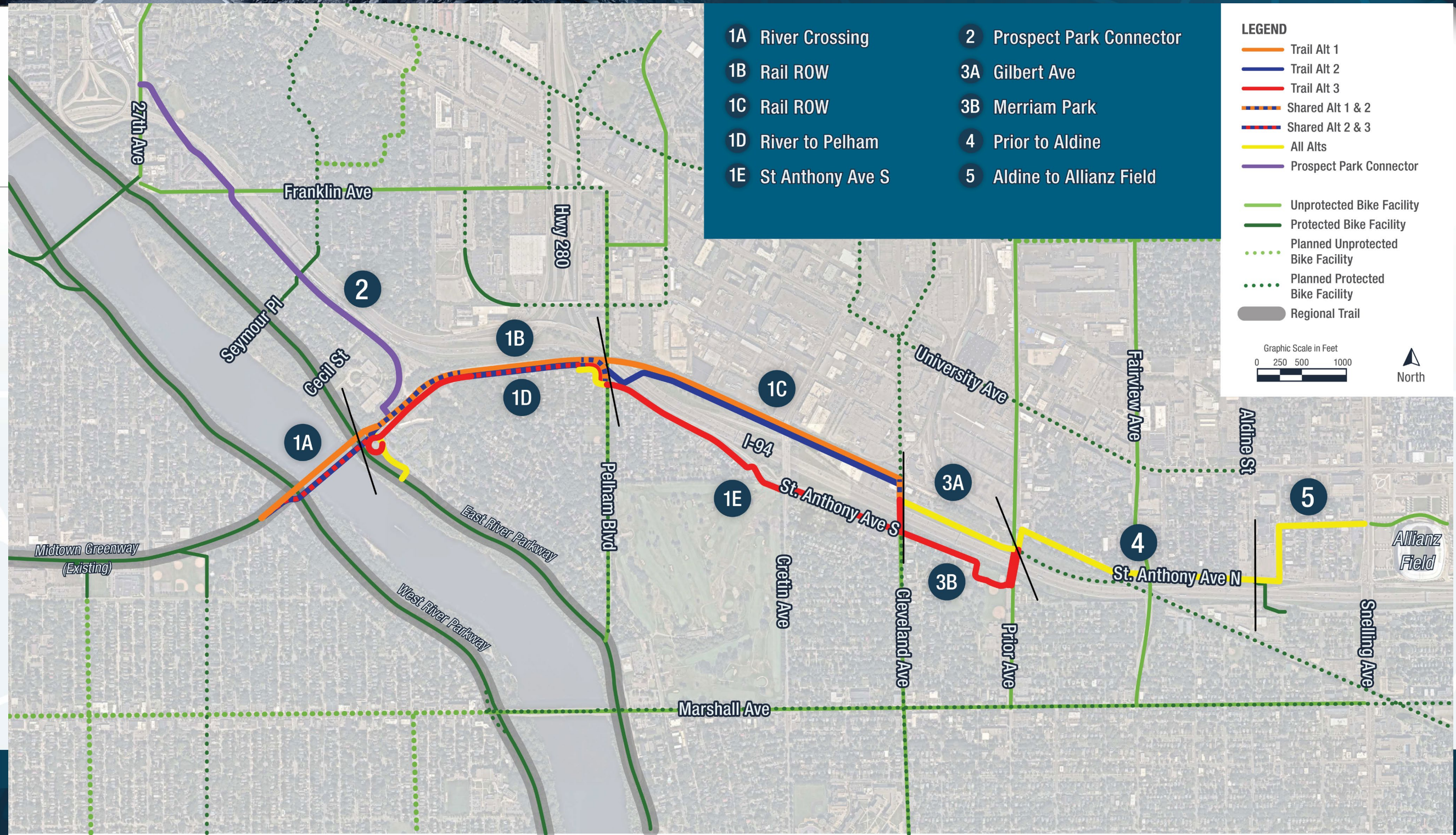
**Contingency to Alt's 1 and 2



METROPOLITAN
COUNCIL

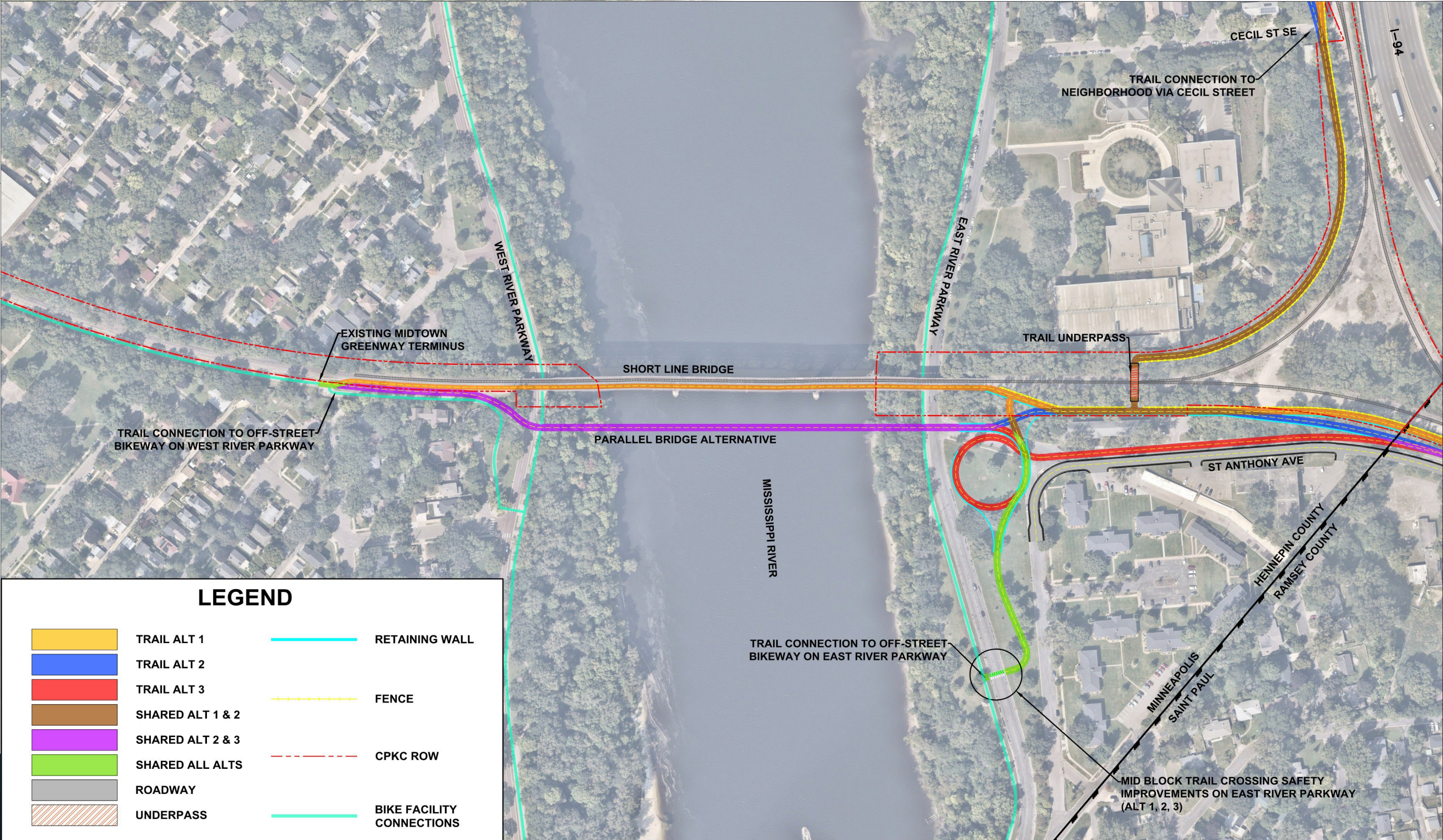
Full Corridor Trail Alignment Alternatives

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



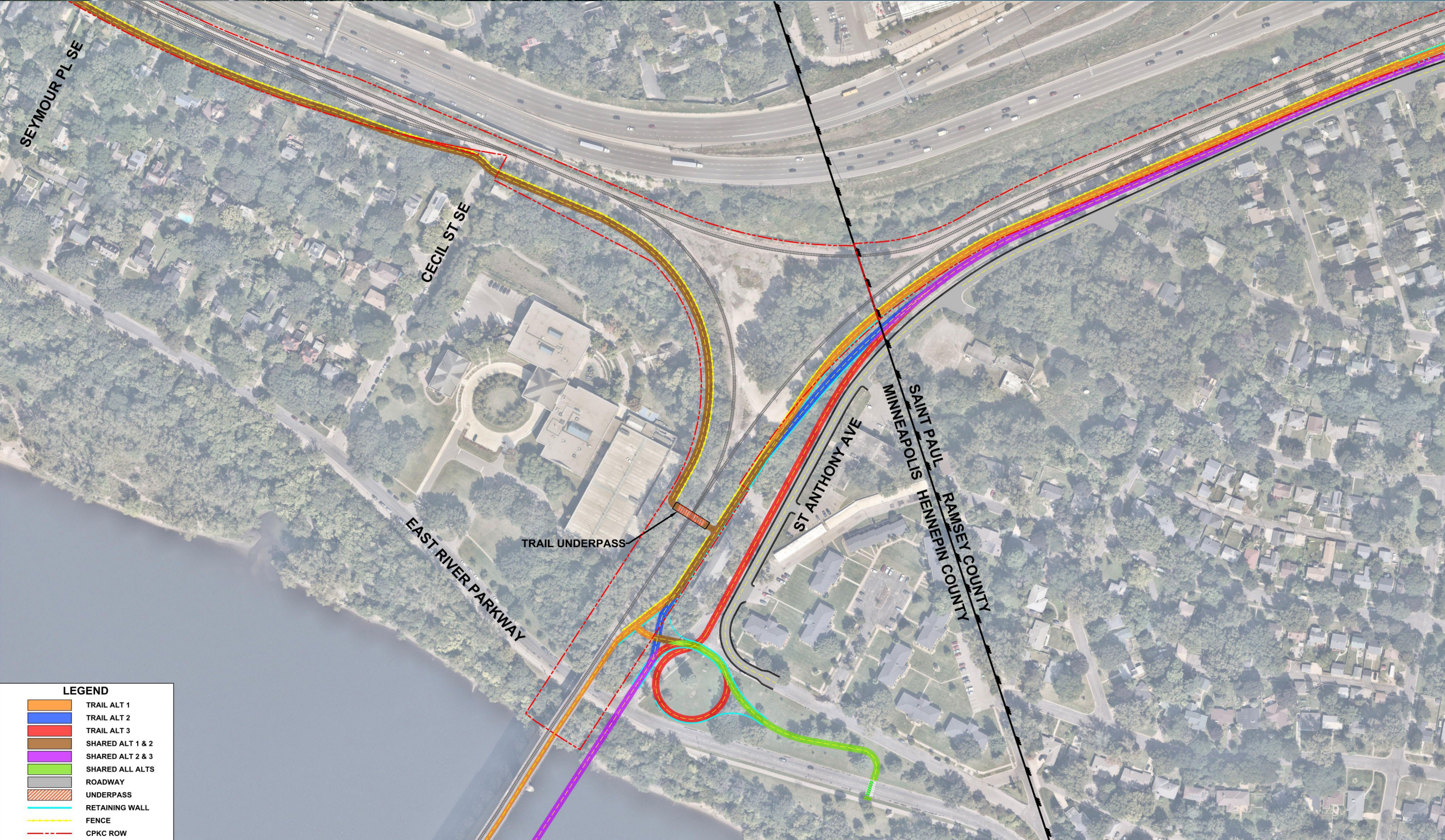
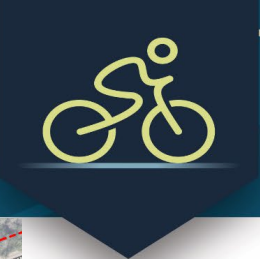
Mississippi River Trail Crossing Concepts

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



Prospect Park Connector South Segment Concept

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project

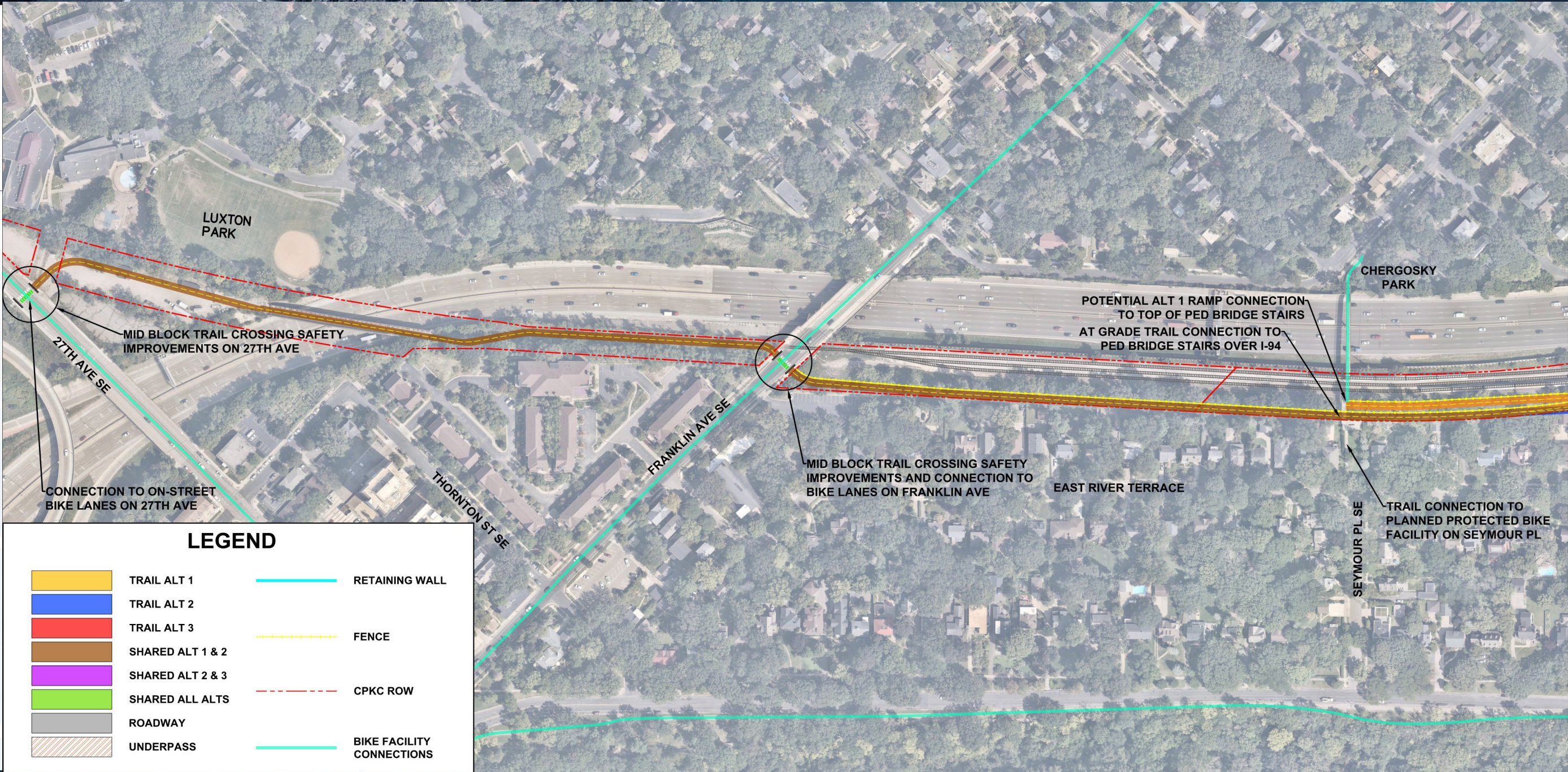


LEGEND

- TRAIL ALT 1
- TRAIL ALT 2
- TRAIL ALT 3
- SHARED ALT 1 & 2
- SHARED ALT 2 & 3
- SHARED ALL ALTS
- ROADWAY
- UNDERPASS
- RETAINING WALL
- FENCE
- CPKC ROW

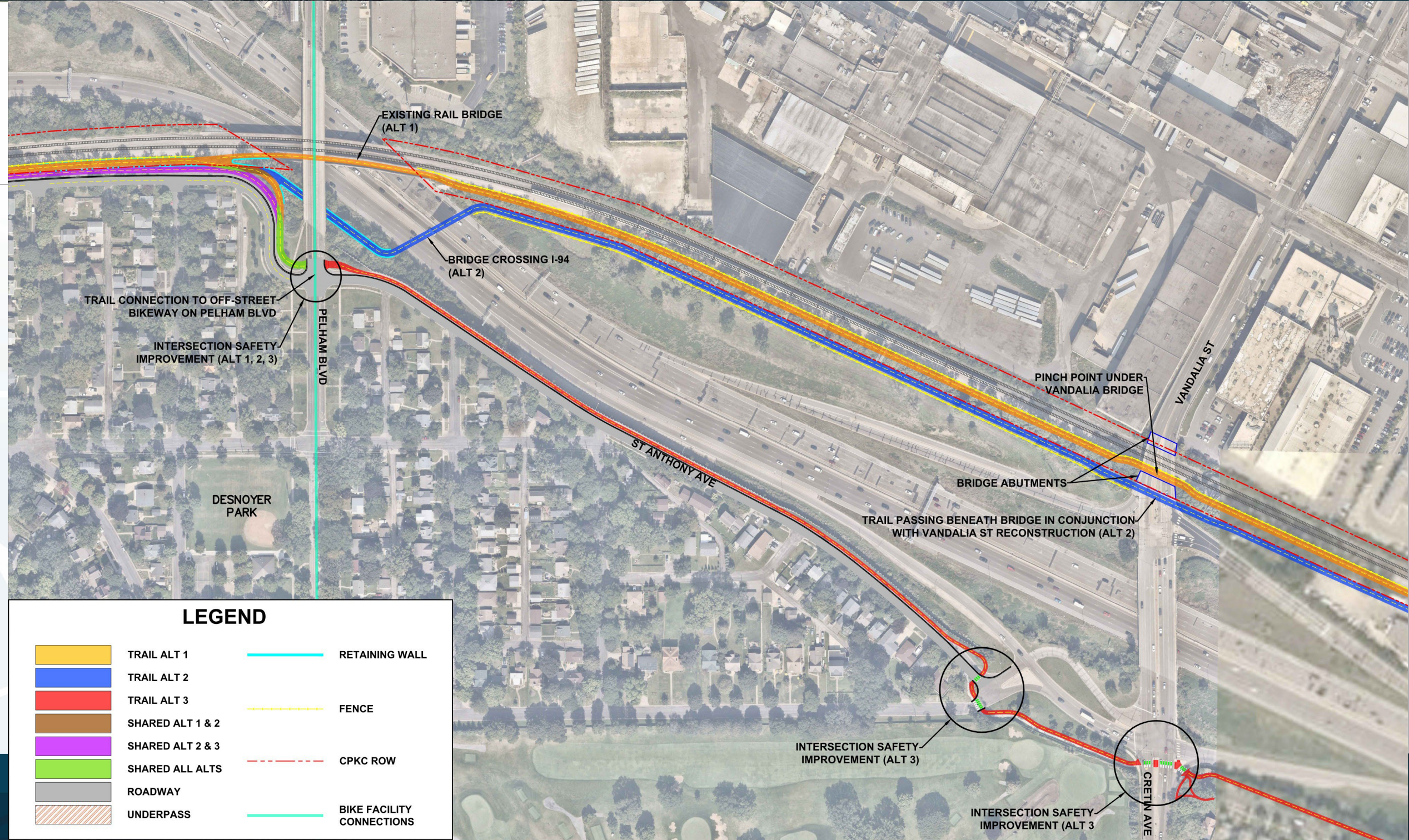
Prospect Park Connector North Segment Concept

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



Pelham to Cretin/Vandalia Align. Concepts

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



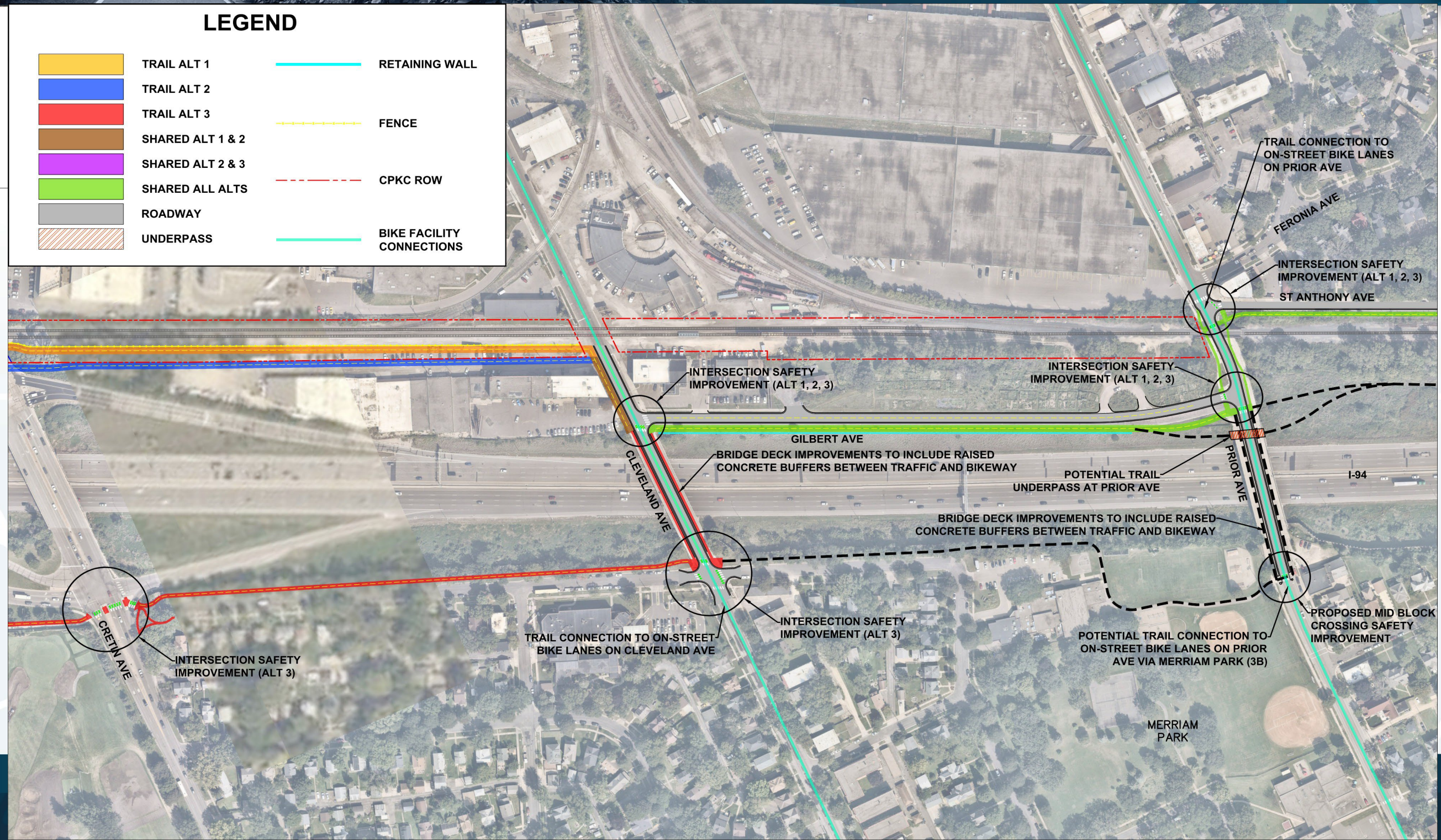
Cretin Ave to Prior Ave Alignment Concepts

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



LEGEND

	TRAIL ALT 1		RETAINING WALL
	TRAIL ALT 2		FENCE
	TRAIL ALT 3		CPKC ROW
	SHARED ALT 1 & 2		BIKE FACILITY CONNECTIONS
	SHARED ALT 2 & 3		
	SHARED ALL ALTS		
	ROADWAY		
	UNDERPASS		



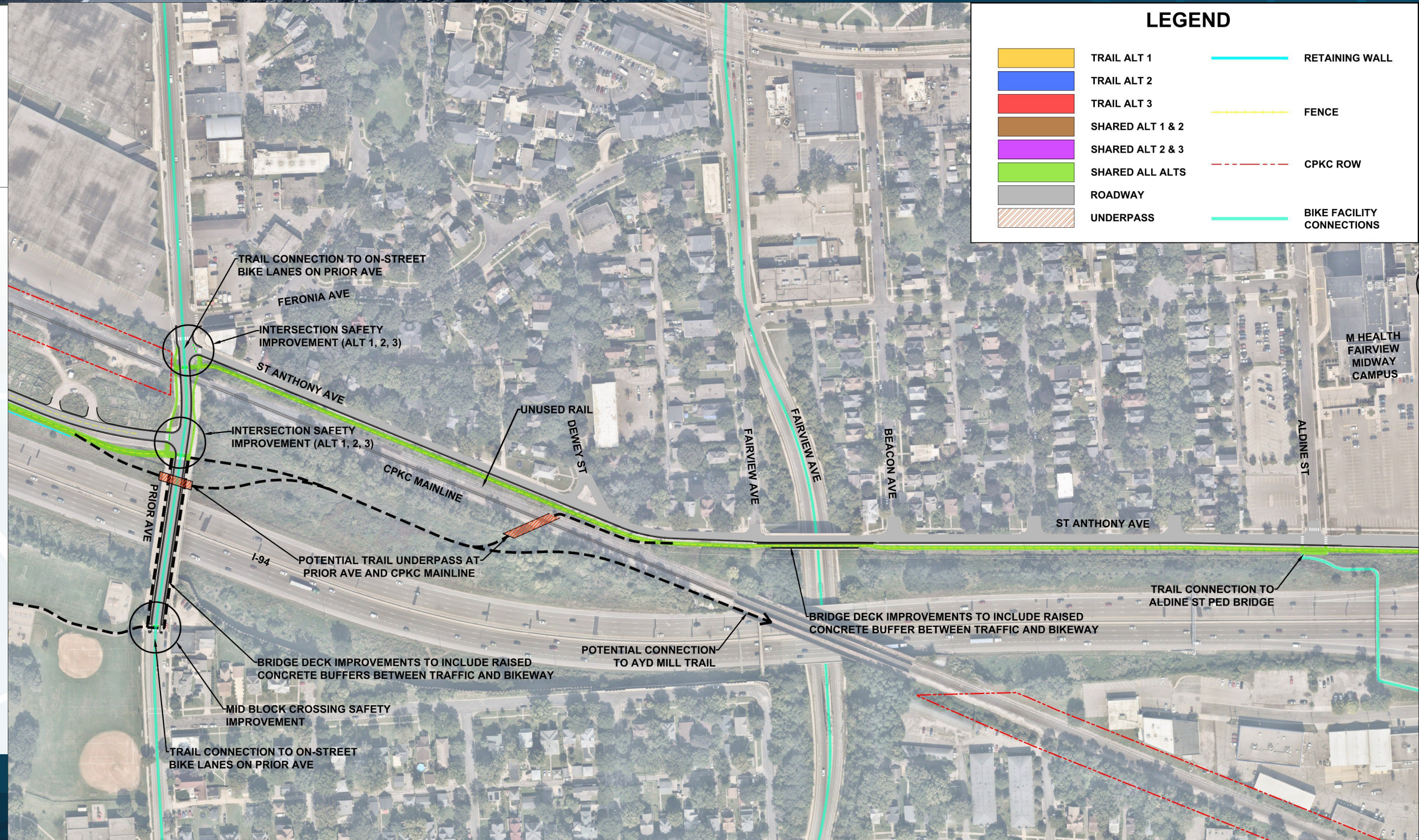
Prior Ave to Aldine Street Alignment Concepts

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



LEGEND

	TRAIL ALT 1		RETAINING WALL
	TRAIL ALT 2		FENCE
	TRAIL ALT 3		CPKC ROW
	SHARED ALT 1 & 2		BIKE FACILITY CONNECTIONS
	SHARED ALT 2 & 3		
	SHARED ALL ALTS		
	ROADWAY		
	UNDERPASS		



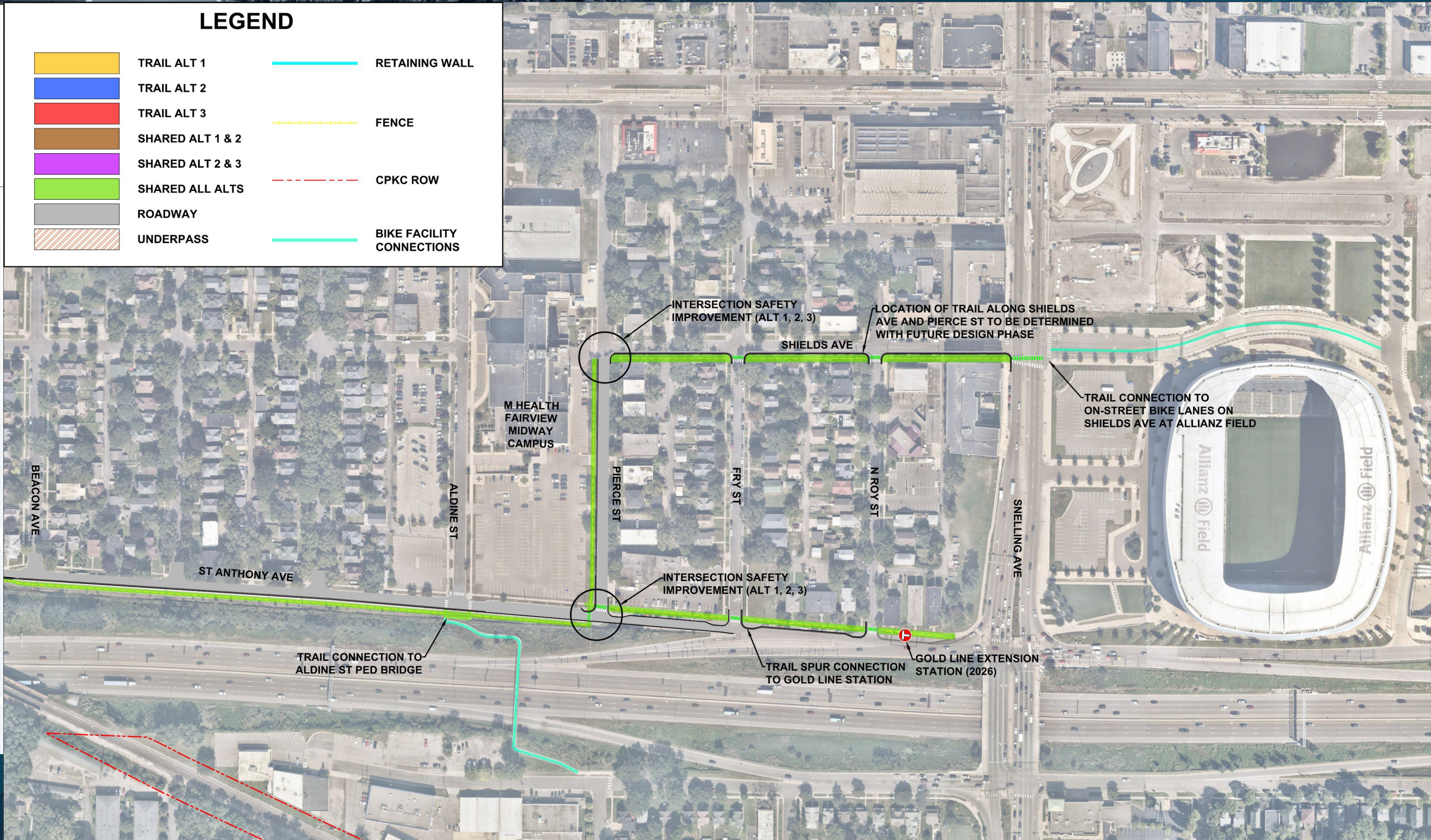
Aldine St to Snelling Ave Alignment Concept

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



LEGEND

	TRAIL ALT 1		RETAINING WALL
	TRAIL ALT 2		FENCE
	TRAIL ALT 3		CPKC ROW
	SHARED ALT 1 & 2		BIKE FACILITY CONNECTIONS
	SHARED ALT 2 & 3		
	SHARED ALL ALTS		
	ROADWAY		
	UNDERPASS		



Coordination with CPKC Railway

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



There has been ongoing coordination with Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railway (CPKC) throughout this study.

- On behalf of the study team, Met Council submitted a proposal letter to the railroad with preliminary trail layouts in early October for review and comment
- CPKC responded to conceptual proposal in December; key takeaways included:
 1. Construction of trail on the existing Short Line Bridge will not be permitted. Reasons for not granting access include:
 - Safety: bridge is too narrow to provide sufficient separation between rail operations/trail users
 - Liability: potential for accidents and injuries on the bridge, even with tall and robust fence
 - Future capacity: need to preserve ability to expand capacity to serve future business development
 2. Track-to-trail separations of at least 50 feet will be required (no exceptions) for potential trail alignments within CPKC right-of-way.
 - Alignment Concept 2 may be possible by obtaining easements from CPKC
 - However, the 50-foot track-to-trail separation requirement would limit available right-of-way to a few segments in Minneapolis

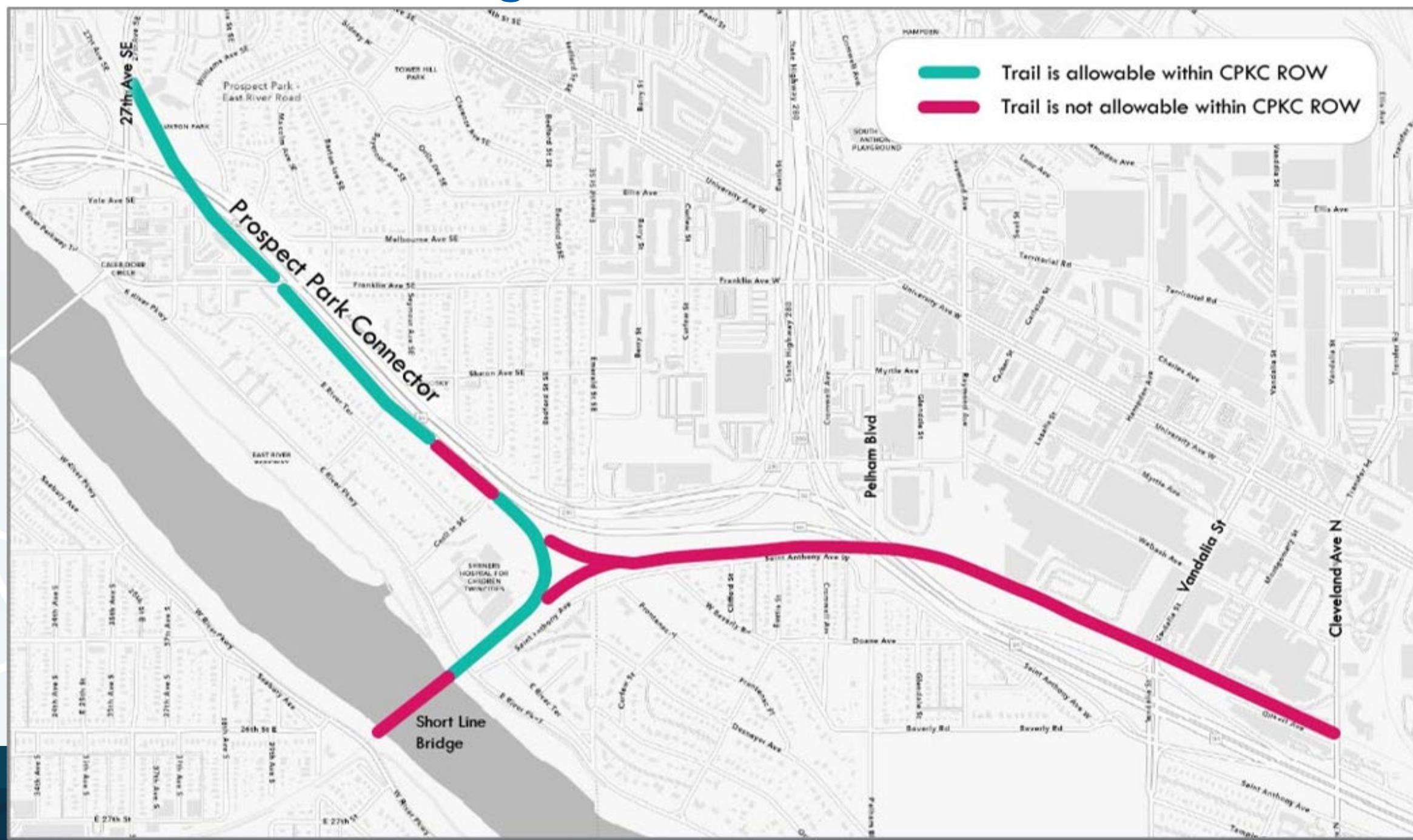


Coordination with CPKC Railway (2)

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



Alternative 2 trail segments allowable within CPKC ROW



Implementation Cost Estimate

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



Project Cost Components	CONCEPT ALTERNATIVE 1	CONCEPT ALTERNATIVE 2	CONCEPT ALTERNATIVE 3
1. River bridge rehab or new construction	\$30M - \$34M	\$30M - \$61M	\$30M - \$61M
2. Other bridge rehab or new construction	\$2M	\$9M	\$0
3. Trail, structures & amenities	\$18M	\$20M	\$16M
4. Design/engineering and misc. admin. cost	\$13M - \$15M	\$15M - \$23M	\$12M - \$19M
5. Total project development/construction cost	\$63M - \$69M	\$74M - \$113M	\$58M - \$96M
Potential Additional Costs			
6. ROW acquisition ¹ or easements	Very High Cost ²	\$1M - \$2M	\$0
7. Mainline track underpass east of Prior Ave (Optional)	\$9M	\$9M	\$9M
8. Cost risk (lower risk means less susceptible to changes in construction cost)	Very High RR bridge & corridor unknowns	Medium RR corridor unknowns	Low No rail-related issues

¹ Due to current railroad position that prohibits use of the rail corridor and bridge facilities for trail construction (as included for alternative 1), assumes potential public acquisition of property rights through negotiated outcomes, up to and including purchase of the rail corridor.

² Determined based on comparable factors from rail corridor acquisitions in the Twin Cities and around the nation. Purchase price typically based on appraised real estate value multiplied by a corridor factor greater than 1 to reflect the inherent value of the existing, pre-assembled corridor.



Implementation Timeline

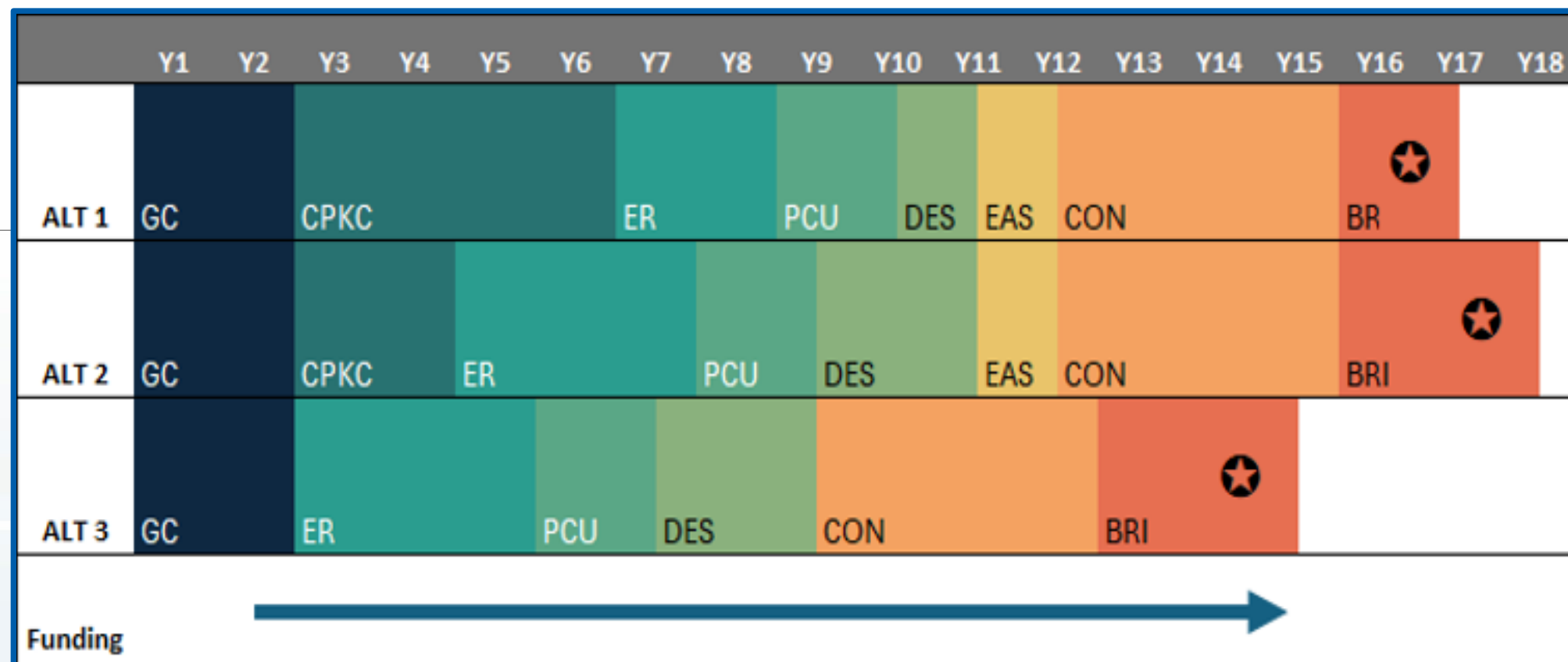
MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



Project Process Phase	Concept Alternative 1	Concept Alternative 2	Concept Alternative 3
1. Government coordination/ agreements	1-2 years	1-2 years	1-2 years
2. Negotiate CPKC ROW purchase agreement or easements	2-4 years Acquire ROW from CPKC and negotiate agreement with operating railroad	1-2 years Negotiate easements for Prospect Park spur and connection to new bridge	Not applicable
3. Environmental review	1-2 years	2-3 years	2-3 years
4. Plan development, updates &/or amendments	1-2 years	1-2 years	1-2 years
5. Design	1 year	1-2 years	1-2 years
6. Negotiate private property easements	1 year	1 year	Not applicable
7. Construct trail (non-bridge) segments	2-3 years (assumes phasing of projects)	2-3 years	2-3 years
8. Bridge rehab or new construction	1-2 years	2-3 years	2-3 years
9. Total estimated timeline	10-17 years	11–18 years	9–15 years

Implementation Timeline (2)

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



Key	
Government Coordination	GC
CPKC Negotiation	CPKC
Environmental Review	ER
Plan Creation/Updates	PCU
Design	DES
Private Easement Negotiation	EAS
Segment Construction	CON
River Bridge Construction/Rehab	BRI
Project Completion	★



METROPOLITAN
COUNCIL

Conclusions and Next Steps

MIDTOWN GREENWAY
Trail Expansion Planning Project



Study Conclusions

1. All three corridor alignment alternatives deemed technically feasible but have unique and significant challenges for implementation.
2. Construction of a trail on the existing Short Line Bridge will not be allowed by the current railroad owner.
3. Corridor Alternative 1 (trail constructed on Short Line Bridge) may be possible through negotiated easements with a future railroad owner or through negotiated outcomes up to and including purchase of the rail corridor from the current railroad owner.
4. The Study acknowledges the possibility that the current rail corridor owner could change for unanticipated reasons and/or the remaining rail-dependent businesses west of the Mississippi River could unexpectedly choose to move their operations or dissolve entirely, which could remove the need for rail freight service west of the river.
5. Each potential partnering government entity will need to assess the potential cost and risk of their anticipated level of participation across all corridor alternatives.
6. The Study recommends that all alternatives (in their present form or as modified during preliminary engineering) should be carried into the environmental review process to ultimately select the most appropriate “preferred alternative.”





Key Steps for Implementation

- Determine intergovernmental agency approach
 - Form an Implementation Work Group
 - Determine lead and secondary government roles
- Negotiate with CPKC railroad for corridor acquisition (Alt. 1) or permanent easements (Alt. 2)
- Begin Environmental Review process to evaluate three corridor alignment alternatives
- Continue public outreach and engagement during design process
- Complete preliminary and final engineering/design
- Update or amend local bicycle and regional park and trail plans, as needed



Colin Kelly, AICP

Planning Analyst

Met Council Regional Parks and Trails

Steve Elmer, AICP

Planning Analyst

Met Council Transportation Planning

