



MIDTOWN GREENWAY

Trail Expansion Planning Study



Transportation Committee

January 26, 2025

Background



Study Purpose

The purpose of the Midtown Greenway Trail Expansion Planning Study is 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

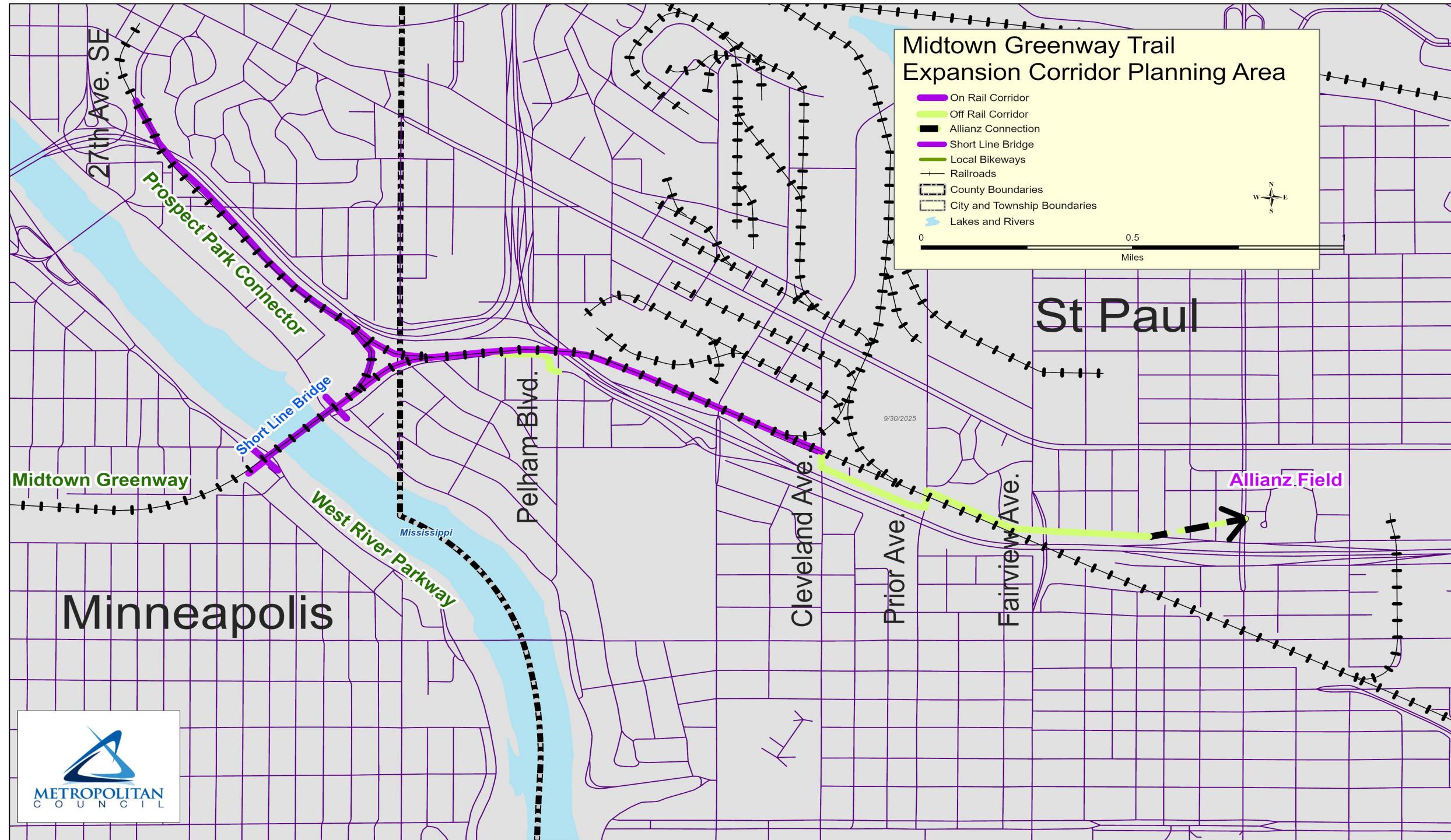
In 2023, the Minnesota State Legislature directed Met Council to:

- 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 Planning Corridor

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Study Work Plan

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Carried out in three phases:

Phase I: Pre-Planning

- Reviews of local and regional plans
- Existing conditions review
- Development of a study corridor base map

Phase II: Planning and Conceptual Design*

1. Planning-level trail concepts for CPKC rail corridor and adjacent/parallel alternative alignments (as defined in state statute)
2. Phasing analysis of trail segments to determine appropriate construction phasing and interim alignments
3. Analysis of design concepts for Short Line Bridge and independent trail crossing of the Mississippi River

* Coordination with the Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railroad is an ongoing and essential element of this study phase.





Phase III: Summarization and Conclusion

The summarization and conclusion phase will deliver

- Project Implementation Plan that will include
 - Detailed steps to complete design
 - Land purchase or easement requirements
 - Potential government roles
 - Phasing plan and timeline
 - Conceptual estimates for capital and maintenance costs
 - Potential funding sources
- Final Study Report that summarizes the study process and highlights significant conclusions and next steps for project development



Study Timeline

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Phase I: Pre-planning – Nov 2024 thru April 2025

Phase II: Planning & Conceptual Design – Apr 2025 thru Dec 2025

Phase III: Summarization and Conclusion – Nov 2025 to Q1 2026

← Coordination and Engagement throughout →

Study Engagement

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Technical Work Group

Purpose: provide resources and advise the study team on technical and process considerations.

The group consists of staff from

- Minneapolis Park and 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. Services/Regional Park)



Study Engagement (2)



Consulted several government entities and community groups:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Coast Guard
- National Park Service
- Friends of the Mississippi River
- Midtown Greenway Coalition
- Sierra Club of Minnesota
- Longfellow Neighborhood Council Board
- Seward Neighborhood Community Development Committee
- Prospect Park Neighborhood Council Board & Trans. Committee
- Union Park Neighborhood District Council
- American Indian Advisory Council
- Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Saint Paul Transportation Committee
- Hennepin County Active Transportation Committee

Preliminary Alignment Concepts

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Three conceptual alignments are being analyzed, including

Concept 1, Short Line Bridge/On-Rail Corridor: Uses Short Line Bridge and follows along and within CPKC right of way (ROW) where standard track-to-trail separation (25 feet min.) can be achieved.

Concept 2*, New River Bridge + Prospect Park Connector: Assumes new Mississippi River trail-only bridge and follows along and within CPKC ROW wherever 50-feet track-to-trail separation can be achieved.

Concept 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 Concept 1

**Contingency to Concepts 1 and 2

Mississippi River Crossing Concepts

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Coordination with CPKC Railway



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 offsets 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-feet track-to-trail separation requirement would limit available right-of-way to a few segments in Minneapolis



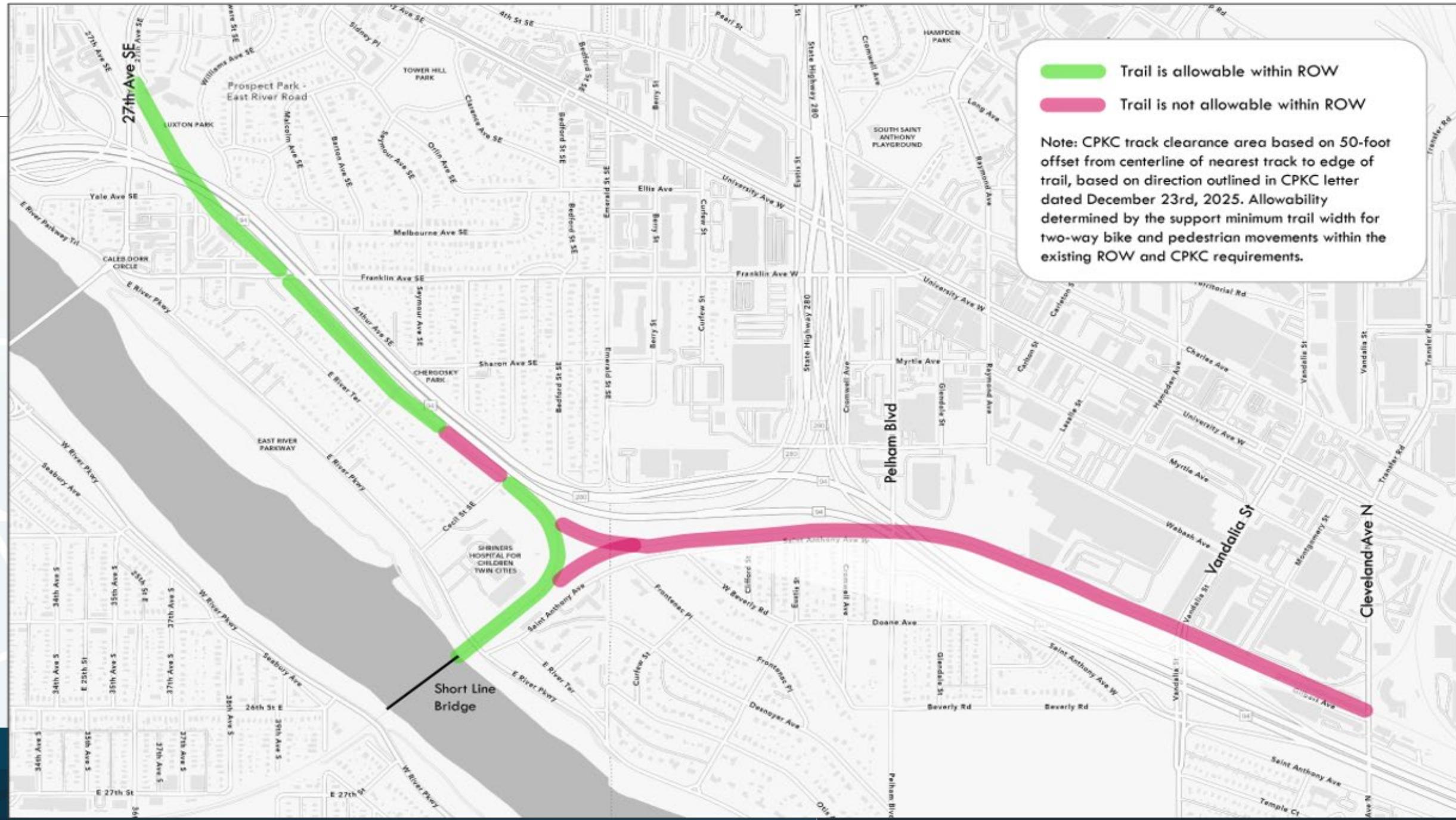
Coordination with CPKC Railway (2)

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Alternative 2 trail segments allowable within CPKC ROW



Implementation Cost (preliminary)

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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	Not applicable
3. Trail, structures & amenities	\$18M	\$20M	\$16M
4. Design/engineering and misc. admin. cost	\$13M - \$15M	\$15M - \$23M	\$12M - \$19M
5. Total estimated project development	\$63M - \$69M	\$74M - \$113M	\$58M - \$96M
Potential Added 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 Potential public acquisition of rail corridor right-of-way between E 46th St in Minneapolis and Cleveland Ave in St Paul.

² Determined based on comparable factors from rail corridor acquisitions in the Twin Cities and around the nation; the study did not include a real estate appraisal which ultimately would be the starting point for a negotiated purchase agreement.



Implementation Timeline (prelim.)

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Project Process Phase	CONCEPT ALTERNATIVE 1	CONCEPT ALTERNATIVE 2	CONCEPT ALTERNATIVE 3
1. Joint Powers Agreement	1-2 years	1-2 years	1-2 years
2. Negotiate CPKC ROW purchase agreement or easements	2-4 years Buy out 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. Design	1 year	1-2 years	1-2 years
5. Negotiate private property easements	1 year	1 year	Not applicable
6. Construct trail (non-bridge) segments	4-6 years (assumes phasing of projects)	4-6 years	4-6 years
7. Bridge rehab or new construction	1-2 years	2-3 years	2-3 years
8. Total estimated timeline	11-18 years	12-19 years	10-16 years



Next Steps

- Finalize community engagement on preliminary alignment concepts
- Develop project implementation plan that includes a project phasing plan and the required coordination/decisions among government entities prior to environmental review and throughout project implementation
- Write study report that summarizes findings and conclusions to carry forward for continued trail design and project development



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