



Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of Public Works

Date: February 15, 2005
To: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair, Transportation & Public Works Committee

Referral to: Honorable Scott Benson, Chair, Intergovernmental Relations Committee

Subject: DNR Local Trail Connections Grant Program

Recommendation:

Authorize Public Works to pursue 2005 DNR Local Trail Connections Grant Program applications for the NE Diagonal Trail

Previous Directives:

- City Council authorized TEA-21 funding be pursued for the NE Diagonal Trail – 1999
- City Council directive to negotiate a purchase price for the Bloomington Avenue Parcels – December 2001
- City Council authorized TEA-21 funding be pursued for the 18th Avenue NE Trail – 2003

Prepared by: Donald Pflaum, Transportation Engineer, 612-673-2129

Approved by:

Klara A. Fabry, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Presenters: Donald Pflaum, Traffic and Parking Services

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget.
(If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)

Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget

Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget

Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase – Capital Only

Action requires use of contingency or reserves

Other financial impact (Explain): Future capital and operational costs may be incurred. The NE Diagonal will be maintained by the MPRB at an annual cost of \$44,352. The Midtown Greenway access ramp properties will need to be land-banked until project funding is identified. It will cost \$7,000 to maintain these parcels annually. The 18th Avenue NE project will be maintained at an annual cost of \$22,200. Maintenance responsibility for the 18th Avenue NE Trail has not yet been determined.

Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Background/History:

Three projects were considered for funding under the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Local Trail Connections Grant program. The NE Diagonal Trail, Midtown Greenway Bloomington Access Ramp, and 18th Avenue NE Trail projects are in need of additional funding and satisfy the Local Trail Connections Grant criteria. Funding for the needed 50% local match requirement has been identified for all three projects. However, due to timing issues and other considerations, Public Works recommends that only the NE Diagonal Trail be pursued for DNR Local Trail Connections Grant Program funding in 2005 for 2006 funding.

NE Diagonal Trail:

The NE Diagonal Trail is located along the abandoned BNSF rail corridor in NE Minneapolis. Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) acquired this land to accommodate a future busway, however this alignment is not included as part of the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Policy Plan 2030 Transitway System. There is enough space in the corridor for both a future busway and trail, however the trail must be relocated if the busway is constructed. The trail follows the HCRRA corridor right-of-way from Broadway Avenue to the county limits. The trail proceeds along Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority property to Walnut Street where a direct connection to the County Road B2 Trail will be made. In addition, this project includes an off-street trail along Stinson Boulevard from New Brighton Boulevard to Hennepin Avenue. On-street bicycle accommodations will be made to connect this trail with existing bicycle routes near the University of Minnesota campus. See Attachment #1.

The NE Diagonal Trail project is a regional partnership between the City of Minneapolis, the City of Roseville, the City of St. Anthony, Three Rivers Park District, and the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority. Approximately \$1,700,000 in TEA-21 federal funding has been already been secured to help complete the project. In addition, the City of Minneapolis has approved \$550,000 in 2005 funding for local match and design. The City of Roseville and Three Rivers Park District (on behalf of the City of St. Anthony) are also financially participating in accordance with a formula that prorates cities contributions based on the length of trail in their community. It is recommended that \$100,000 in DNR Local Trail Connection Program funding be pursued for this project.

Midtown Greenway Access Ramp Project:

In December of 2001 the Minneapolis City Council and Mayor authorized Minneapolis Public Works staff to negotiate a purchase price for two vacant parcels at Bloomington Avenue to allow for an additional access ramp to the Midtown Greenway at Bloomington Avenue. Public Works was not successful in acquiring these parcels due to the lack of funding. A nearby ramp at 13th Avenue South was constructed as part of the Midtown Greenway (Phase 2) project. There are also plans to construct a ramp at 11th Avenue at the former CEPRO grain elevator site, which is now owned by Hennepin County.

A ramp at Bloomington Avenue would provide better access for bicyclists between the Midtown Greenway and Bloomington Avenue. Bloomington Avenue is identified as a proposed bicycle route on the December 2001 City Council, Mayor, and MPRB approved Minneapolis Bikeways Master Plan. A ramp at this location would help make better connections to the Lake/Bloomington business node and to new residential development in the area. Unlike the 13th Avenue ramp, the Bloomington Avenue ramp could be constructed to meet ADA standards. Acquiring the needed parcels now would be cheaper than in the future. The owner has expressed interest in developing the parcels in accordance with their present zoning and not acquiring the parcels could be perceived as a lost opportunity. See Attachment 2 for a site map.

Although there are good arguments for acquiring the needed parcels it is important to note the challenges and costs associated with their acquisition. Currently there is no funding for the ramps, which would cost an estimated \$250,000 to construct. Although the neighborhood has identified \$97,000 in NRP funding to acquire the parcels, it estimated that total acquisition will

cost approximately \$200,000. Furthermore these parcels would need to be land-banked indefinitely at an estimated cost of \$7,000 per year, which will result in a Public Works maintenance reduction somewhere else in the system. A new staircase built in 2004 along the south side of the Midtown Greenway at Bloomington Avenue has helped improve connections into the corridor and current access at 13th Avenue is only three blocks away. There is also some debate as to how the ramps will be constructed if construction funding is identified. There are challenges surrounding the proposed Midtown Greenway Coalition amphitheatre concept, which could result in the relocation/demolition of two homes. A traditional switchback ramp can be constructed within the two subject parcels without relocating/demolishing the two nearby homes.

Public Works does not recommend pursuing DNR Local Trail Connections Grant funding at this time for this project. Until funding for the ramps is identified and there are additional resources made available for the operation and maintenance of the subject properties, it is not wise for Public Works to land-bank the parcels indefinitely. Furthermore the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee ranked all potential new projects for 2010 and this project was ranked 10th amongst 30 candidate projects. Due to limited resources only the top projects can be pursued.

18th Avenue NE Trail:

This trail provides connections between the NE Diagonal Trail and the Upper River Trails. This \$4,500,000 project is contingent on federal funding, which will be pursued in the 2005 Metropolitan Council Regional TEA-21 solicitation for 2009 funding. There is currently \$550,000 programmed in the City of Minneapolis 5-Year capital budget to help match the federal contribution and complete project design. Several NE Minneapolis neighborhoods have also set aside significant NRP funding to complete this project.

This is an excellent candidate for DNR Local Trail Connections Grant funding, however the project is slated for 2009 and the 2005 DNR solicitation is for 2006 funding. It is recommended that this project be submitted in 2008 for 2009 funding.

Recommendation:

Authorize staff to prepare DNR Local Trail Connections Grant Program funding for the NE Diagonal Trail project.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Map of NE Diagonal Trail

Attachment 2: Map of Midtown Greenway Access Ramp

Attachment 3: Map of 18th Avenue NE Trail

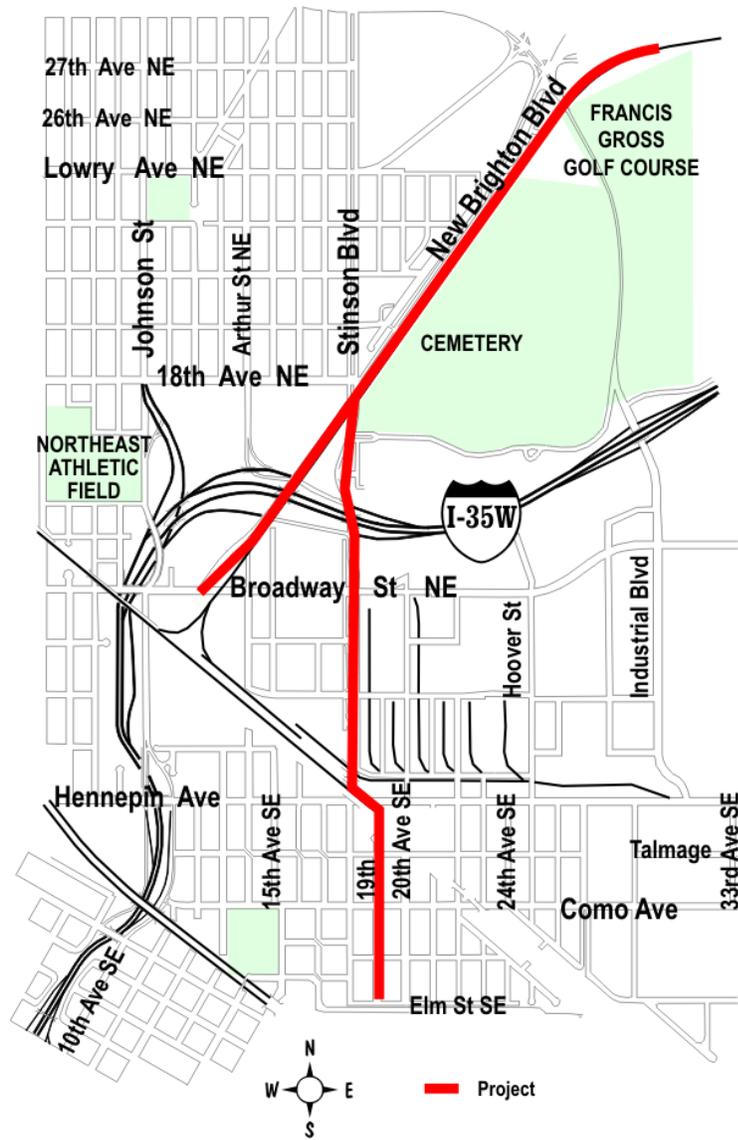
Attachment 4: Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee 2010 project priorities (February 2005)

C: Robb Urquhart – NE Diagonal Public Works project manager

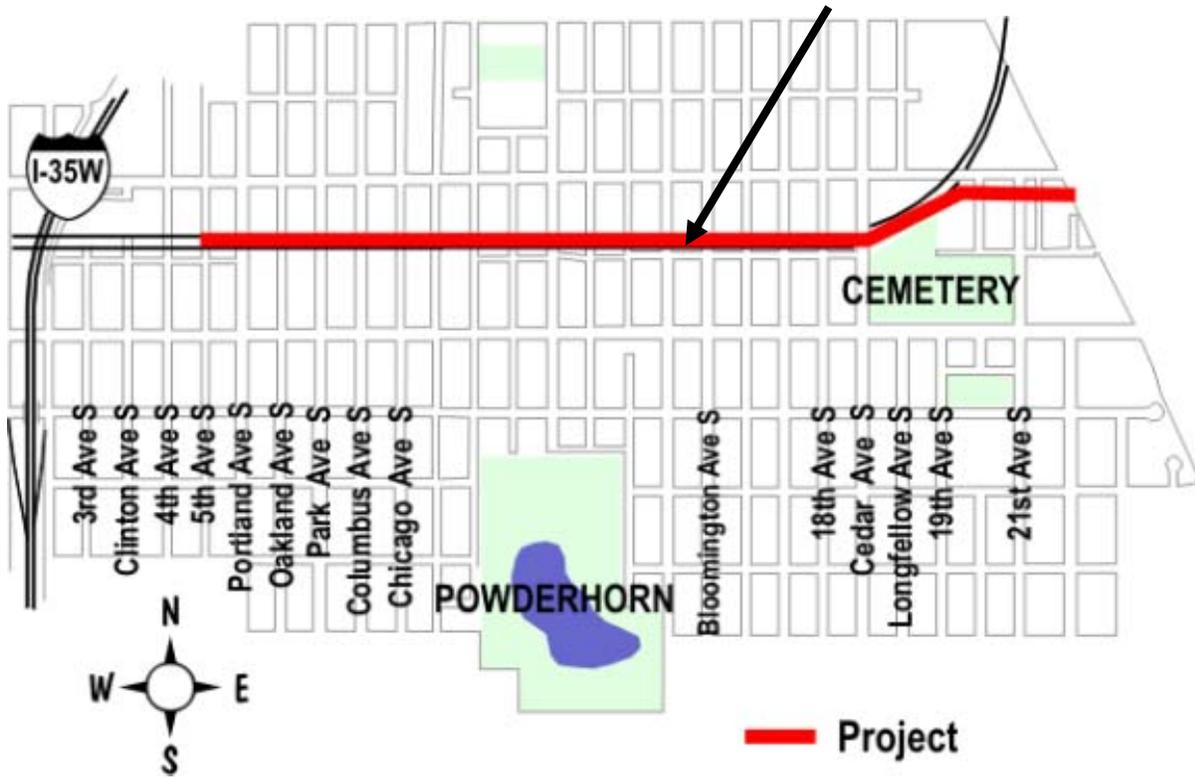
Tim Springer – Director Midtown Greenway Coalition

Gaynell Schandel – Grants and Special Projects

Attachment 1 – NE Diagonal Trail:

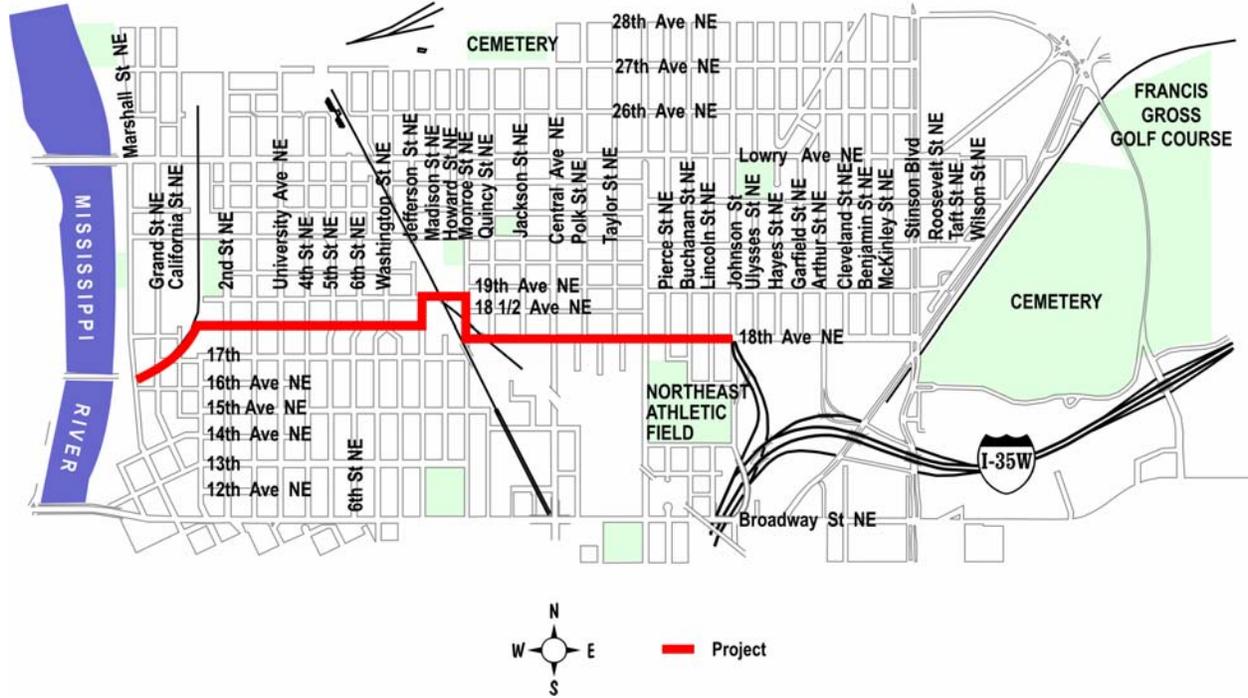


Attachment 2 – Midtown Greenway Bloomington Access Ramp location:



Attachment 3 – 18th Avenue NE Trail:

18th Avenue NE Bikeway



Attachment 4 – Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC)
2010 project priorities (Feb 2005):

Potential Projects and BAC scores:

- Upper Mississippi Trails (Phase 1) (32 pts)
- Stinson Trail/Completion of Grand Rounds (31 pts)
- Hennepin Avenue bicycle lane at Washington/Hennepin Avenue bridge transition (30 pts)
- BNSF bridge over the Mississippi River (29 pts)
- LRT Trail signage, lighting, and striping (27 pts)
- Marquette/2nd Avenue bicycle lane extensions (Washington to 1st Avenue) (26 pts)
- Additional funding for 18th Ave NE Trail (25 pts)
- Park/Portland Extension (46th Street to Minnehaha Pkwy) (25 pts)
- Marshall Street bicycle lanes (24 pts)
- Additional Midtown Greenway access ramps (24 pts)
- Diamond Lake Road/54th Street South bicycle lanes (24 pts)
- Bryant Ave South bicycle lanes (21 pts)
- Minnehaha bicycle lanes (26th Street South to Franklin) (20 pts)
- 15th Ave South bicycle lane (Nicollet Ave to Park Ave) (18 pts)
- 1st Ave S/ Blaisdell Ave S bicycle lanes (17 pts)
- Bloomington Ave South bicycle lanes (17 pts)
- Riverside bicycle lanes (16 pts)
- 1st Street South bicycle lane (Downtown) (16 pts)
- Hennepin Ave NE/1st Ave NE bicycle lanes (16 pts)
- Ryan Lake Trail (16 pts)
- North/South Commuter Route for NE Minneapolis (16 pts)
- RR Crossing improvements (16 pts)
- Crosstown bicycle lane projects (16 pts)
- Complete Signed Routes (34th Ave N, Dupont Ave N, etc.) (14 pts)
- Chicago Avenue bicycle lanes (58th Street to Minnehaha Parkway) (14 pts)
- 13th Avenue South (2nd Street to West River Parkway) (12 pts)
- Franklin Ave/Riverside area (12 pts)
- 24th Street South bicycle lanes (9pts)
- Commuter Trail kiosks (7 pts)