

## CHOUTEAU GREENWAY BRAID

We are in the homeland of the Osage Nation, Missouri, Otoe, Iowa people, and Sac and Fox Nation.  
Born visitors upon a land many of us have only known, and call home.  
Where the Mississippi runs through, so bridges were built to ensure our connection.  
Just as the winds blow from the north, south, east, and west,  
we must now create and cross-new paths to celebrate our past, present, and what's to come.  
Allow movement to flow us into one another's histories. Hold in our hands, nature native to this space,  
the culture created within and throughout, interwoven with a spirit growing.  
*-Cheeraz Gorman*

"Where the Mississippi runs through, so bridges were built to ensure connection."

This project is all about connection – connecting people to nature, to one another and to future potentials. Inspired by the input and enthusiasm of community members who described St. Louis as a City of Neighborhoods, the Greenway should be more than just a trail – it should be a connector, a thread that stitches and ties, an ecological corridor, an economic generator, a "river" that brings energy, vitality and equity to the urban mosaic.

Toward this end, we propose not one thread, but three intertwined corridors that fold and braid to join and bind together the fabric of the City: Chouteau Greenway Braid. The first of these is "The Green Line," a soft ecological corridor featuring a restored Prairie meadow along its entire length, while supporting continuous bicycle and pedestrian experiences of nature, health and wellbeing. The second is "The Social Line," a more urban sequence of spaces woven through with culture, art, education, infrastructure and civic life. Here we propose an alignment that emphatically helps to bridge and repair the division north and south of Delmar, creating a 2-mile long Delmar Main Street as a strategy for investment in bike/pedestrian pathways, recreation, transit, open space, and economic development that is cognizant of both micro-market conditions and land ownership. The third line is the existing MetroLink corridor, in recognition of the crucial role that transit plays in bringing regional scale accessibility and mobility into the main Greenway Braid. As with the individual strands of a braid, these three lines work together to strengthen and enhance each other, resulting in a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

In addition, we propose over 6-miles of north-south Connectors that reach deeper into the city fabric to further connect neighborhoods to the central corridor and make critical links to the larger regional trail and park network. Three new bridges and a series of underpasses allow for safe and inspired crossings over and under the spaghetti of highways and rail lines that divide the central corridor. Together, this 22-mile braided system supports multiple journeys and experiences, working to stitch the city together, east to west, north to south, over and under.

A number of memorable places proposed along the Greenway Braid build off of existing resources and proximity to technology and innovation, arts and culture, education and health, natural resources and industrial heritage. "Forest Porch" and "Forest Lounge" create welcoming entries into Forest Park and provide a strong connection to Washington University and existing transit hubs. An abandoned rail trestle over Vandeventer is reused as a new "Arts Trestle", featuring an elevated greenway on top and artist and maker studios underneath. Four distinct development nodes introduce Plug-in Parks and Creative Commons to enliven Delmar as a new Main Street. A 26-acre "Railyards Park" includes an 800m long recreational track and art mural, an Overlook and Glade Garden, and a Prairie Channel that filters stormwater. A 12-acre downtown tract becomes a new "Performance Park" showcasing both ecological and social performance including large meadows, rain gardens, a terraced amphitheater for outdoor performances, and a skate park under the highway. Finally, a 360°-panoramic "Mississippi Overlook" hovers within the MacArthur Bridge structure, revealing dramatic new views to the River and Arch and highlighting an accessible connection across the Interstate and down to the existing Mississippi Greenway.

All in all, the project aspires to re-connect the neighborhoods and communities of St Louis, to bring new life and vitality to how people relate to nature, to one another and to civic life. Chouteau Greenway Braid is the tissue that binds, "interwoven with a spirit growing."