2016 REGIONAL PLAN UPDATE

Action Plans to Create an Exceptional River Ring Experience

Great Rivers Greenway

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FUTURE DOCUMENTS

The following list of documents are expected to be prepared as part of the various action plans described in this report. This list is subject to revision during the regional plan update's five year implementation period.

Public Engagement Standards	Map Standards
Interpretive Standards	Asset Inventory
Environmental Graphic	Level of Care Guidelines
Standards	Design Guidelines
School and Youth Curriculum	Diversity and Inclusion Plan
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Gravois Greenway (Grant's Trail)



Welcome & Acknowledgments

Welcome to the 2016 Great Rivers Greenway Regional Plan Update.

As your regional parks and trails district, we update our regional plan every five years to ensure that we deliver our mission through the voices of the people in the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County and St. Charles County. In 2010 — working with citizens, civic leaders and partners—we established five goals and 40 strategies to guide our work.

The 2016 effort was no exception—we listened to many groups and learned that people genuinely love the greenways. We heard from our stakeholders and partners that we must collaborate further to ensure the ongoing promotion and sustainability of the greenway system known as the River Ring.

We know that due to limited funds, we must make difficult decisions about which projects to construct next. This edition of the plan is based on the core goals established in 2010, but it goes further in defining implementation strategies and action plans to help guide the decision-making process.

We encourage you to learn more about us by reading this plan and by getting involved, but more importantly, we hope you use the greenways to live life outside!

Susan Trautman

Executive Director Great Rivers Greenway

Thank You

- **Thank you** for voting to invest in this legacy for future generations.
- **Thank you** for trusting us with your hard-earned tax dollars.
- **Thank you** for giving us crucial feedback.
- Thank you for voting a second time to invest in greenways.
- **Thank you** for taking a walk, for riding your bike, for going for a run, for breathing fresh air on the greenways.
- **Thank you** for volunteering, for pitching in, for reporting conditions, for asking questions, for sending pictures, for sharing stories.
- **Thank you** for thinking about how you can help us in the next five years.
- **Thank you** for making this amazing region a more vibrant place to live, work and play.

River des Peres Greenway, Carondelet Park

WELCOME

Getting to Know Great Rivers Greenway

Our Purpose

Great Rivers Greenway connects the St. Louis region with greenways so people can explore their rivers, parks and communities, making it a vibrant place to live, work and play.

There are 113 miles and counting for you to enjoy!

What is a Greenway?

Greenways are outdoor spaces that connect people and places. More than just a trail, each greenway is unique, with neighborhoods, businesses, parks and rivers to explore. You can take a walk, go for a run, ride a bike, or get some fresh air.

What is the River Ring?

The River Ring is the clear, bold vision that the residents of the St. Louis region voted for and invested in - a dynamic network of parks and open spaces linked together by greenways, connecting our communities so people can live life outside.

Greenways have many benefits:

Give you active ways	Create more places outside	Make it easy to lead
to get around town	to explore and enjoy	a healthy lifestyle
Connect communities	Conserve natural resources	Enhance our economy

Dardenne Greenway



St. Vincent Greenway, Ruth Porter Mall Park



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How We Are Governed

CITY AND COUNTY EXECUTIVES

The Great Rivers Greenway Board of Directors is comprised of members from St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles County and are appointed by the executive of the city or county they represent.

Francis Slay Mayor, City of St. Louis **Steven Stenger** St. Louis County Executive **Steven Ehlmann** St. Charles County Executive

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This Regional Plan Update is a culmination of a yearlong effort to address the opportunities and challenges Great Rivers Greenway anticipates in the next five years. The process formally kicked off with our annual Board of Directors retreat in August 2015, which shaped the action plans outlined in the pages that follow. Neal Perryman Board President St. Louis City

Glenn Powers Board Vice-President St. Louis County

James Hall Board Secretary St. Louis County

Jennifer George Board Treasurer St. Charles County Alberta Dillard St. Louis City

Bernard DuBray, Ph.D. St. Charles County

Robert Epstein St. Louis County

Monica Huddleston St. Louis County

Carol Klein St. Louis County

McGraw Milhaven St. Charles County

Michael Murray St. Louis City

Carol Stroker St. Louis County

IN MEMORIAM

Stephen Michael Murray

A founding member of the Great Rivers Greenway Board of Directors, Mike Murray represented the City of St. Louis since our inception in 2000, and had served as a past board president.

Mike was a tireless champion of parks, open spaces and bicycling. His service to our region also included the Forest Park Forever Advisory Board, the East-West Gateway Council of Governments, Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and the Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee. He was a passionate advocate for all cyclists and pedestrians and he helped to create a higher quality of life for the people of St. Louis through his volunteer efforts.

He loved to celebrate ribbon cuttings as milestones of progress for our organization. We look forward to many more ribbon cuttings because of Mike's vision and dedication. Dardenne Greenway, St. Charles Community College

Contra State

All A.

"We need to bring open space to the people, instead of expecting them to journey to find it."

GILBERT GROSVENOR

Our Ecosystem: How Great Rivers Greenway Works

In Appendix I, you can see all the strategies from the 2010 plan that we seek to execute to build, promote and sustain greenways throughout the region.

In order to do all of that, we are organized with staff members who are dedicated to these efforts. Additionally, we rely upon the cooperation and support of countless individuals, community organizations, public agencies, elected officials, corporations, institutions and nonprofit groups. From the very beginning, our success has been directly related to our many partnerships.

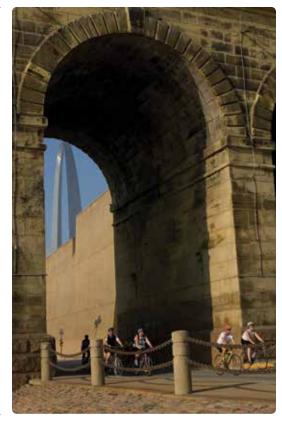
To visually illustrate how our staff, Board of Directors, partners and regional collaborations relate to each other, the tree diagram on the next page shows how our organization is structured, both internally and with the region as a whole.

At the core of this structure are our regional goals: community, conservation, economy, transportation and health. These are themes that you will see throughout this document. The tree's branches exemplify the way staff work on projects, engage people and take care of the greenways.

The base of this structure is our Board of Directors. We have a 12 member appointed board, which enables the Executive Director (and thereby the entire staff) to carry out the commitments and financial decisions necessary to build, promote and sustain the greenway network.

Furthermore, there are other influences that may or may not be in our control (e.g., the national economy can affect revenue or infrastructure policy changes).

Over the next three sections of this document, you will see how we are developing action plans centered around *Building, Promoting and Sustaining the River Ring,* the regional network of greenways. The plan lays out a framework for the next five years and will lead us to creating exceptional greenway experiences for residents for decades to come. St. Louis Riverfront (before renovations)





Organization Personnel: Great Rivers Greenway staff are tasked to build, promote and sustain the network of greenways. At times these are distinct activities, but more often they overlap and are closely related.

Organizational Core: Ultimately, our leadership is accountable to pursuing the five regional goals so that greenways make the St. Louis region a more vibrant place to live.

Resources and Support: Beginning with our Board of Directors, we have a critically strong base that provides support in variety of ways. Support comes from a wide range of people, from taxpayers and people using the greenways to elected officials and regional leaders.

External Influences: As factors that are usually beyond our control, these outside forces include timing, policy and broader economic conditions.

"Over the next five years, tax revenues will accomplish a lot, but we can do so much more if we leverage the citizens' investment."

- Susan Trautman. Executive Director. Great Rivers Greenwav

As shown on the next page, our organization collects \$21 million annually in sales tax revenue for greenways, which means that the next five years will garner approximately:

105MILLION DOLLARS

Projects large and small will make our region more vibrant, including seven major regional initiatives like the Trestle, North Riverfront, and connecting Gravois Greenway (Grant's Trail) to the River des Peres Greenway. The current to-do list includes:

Funding the River Ring Vision

The estimated total cost for the 62 projects that have been planned to improve quality of life and civic wellbeing comes to:

In order to make as many of the projects a reality for residents of the region to enjoy, we will seek alternative funding for the remaining:



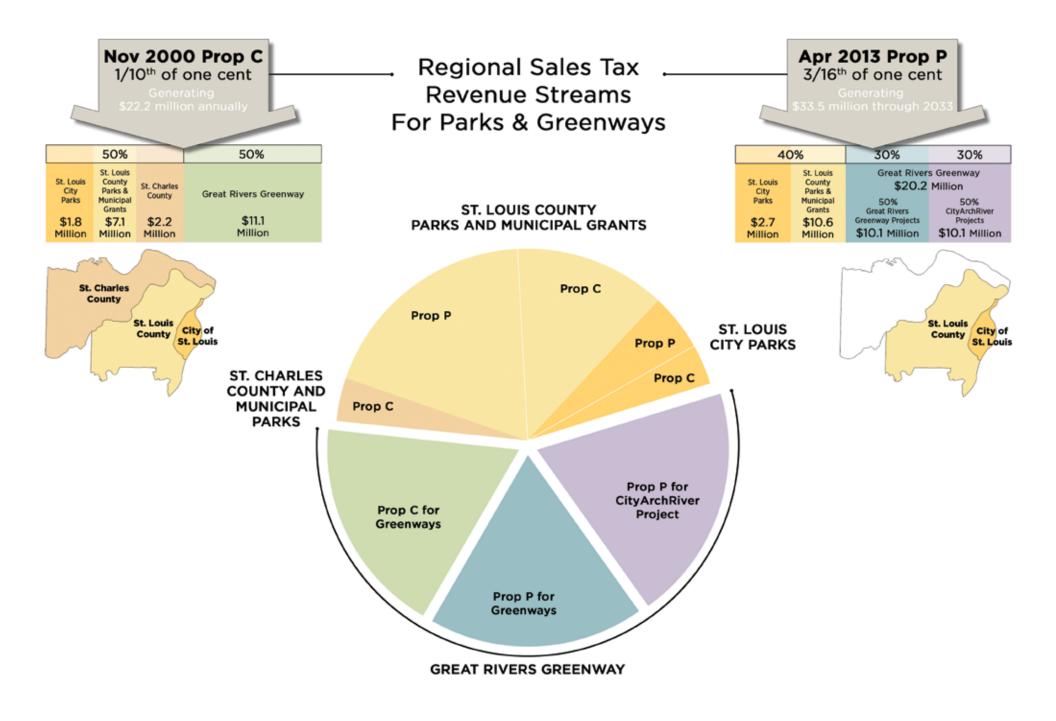
MILLION DOLLARS

PROJEC

The next page is a snapshot of our region's sales tax revenue for parks and greenways, including the CityArchRiver project.

As the graph shows, we have increased revenue, thanks to the generous support of the voters who passed Proposition P: The Safe and Accessible Arch and Public Parks Initiative in April 2013. Our annual budget to Build, Promote and Sustain the River Ring now sits at \$21 million annually.

Throughout this plan, you'll see ways we recommend supplementing sales tax revenue with private investment, grants, local matches and volunteerism to increase impact.



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STEWARDING THE TAXPAYERS' INVESTMENT IN PROPOSITION P

Our Role in the CityArchRiver Project

The CityArchRiver Project will make St. Louis' beloved Gateway Arch easier and safer for everyone to experience by connecting, invigorating and expanding the park's grounds and museums. The project connects the Gateway Arch grounds with downtown and the riverfront. Through the creation of new spaces for events and public education, expanded museum space, additional park acreage and bicycle trails, children's play areas, performance venues and a lively, invigorated riverfront, locals and tourists alike will find new opportunities to learn, linger and enjoy one of the world's most recognized icons.

This \$380 million public-private partnership is a model for collaboration worldwide. Never before has a local community elected to invest in supporting a National Park to ensure a better experience for everyone. Rendering of the new and improved Kiener Plaza



STEWARDING THE TAXPAYERS' INVESTMENT IN PROPOSITION P

Our Role in the CityArchRiver Project

Rendering of the park over the highway



Great Rivers Greenway is the proud steward of the taxpayers' investment in this project through Proposition P, passed in April 2013. We serve as a major partner on the project, overseeing the public funds but also actively collaborating on construction, planning for operations and maintenance, and contributing to programming, events and communications.

Our contributions to CityArchRiver follow three major principles:

1) ENSURE GOOD GOVERNANCE OF PUBLIC FUNDS.

- a. Our Board of Directors **approves every disbursement of Proposition P funding** to the project partners through a resolution.
- b. We worked with project partners to be strategic about the project's ability to directly **impact our local economy**.
 - i. The construction work was divided into twelve different components to allow local contractors more opportunities to bid on the work, and to allow smaller firms to take on projects that fit their skills and expertise.
 - ii. Pre-bid meetings were hosted and promoted for each project, where contractors were given an in-depth presentation and tour, offered resources to coach them through the varying bidding processes, and were able to network with each other to create **teams of local experts to bid on projects**.
- c. On the Riverfront and Kiener Plaza construction projects, we hired a consultant to track **minority participation**, reporting progress regularly.
- d. We created a **Citizen Advisory Committee** to gain valuable insight and feedback throughout the process, as well as establish champions and ambassadors for the project to the region at large.

STEWARDING THE TAXPAYERS' INVESTMENT IN PROPOSITION P

Our Role in the CityArchRiver Project

LEVERAGE OUR EXPERTISE TO ENSURE PROJECT QUALITY & CONSISTENCY.

- a. Our staff helps manage the projects and process, first in design, engineering and construction, then in programming, events, operations and maintenance.
- b. Our staff serves on the alliance partnership (which consistes of Great Rivers Greenway, CityArchRiver Foundation, National Park Service, Bi-State Development, Jefferson National Parks Association and the City of St. Louis) and its committees to collaborate on all aspects of the project, from a business plan to groundbreaking events to a detailed operations and maintenance estimate.
- c. We directly managed several project components to ensure consistency across the site, such as the soil needed for the grounds and the site amenities (bike racks, drinking fountains, etc.).

3) LEAD ON THE DEVELOPMENT & ACTIVATION OF THE ST. LOUIS RIVERFRONT

- a. As the backbone of the River Ring, this section of the Mississippi Greenway is an important part of the CityArchRiver Project. We raised the elevation of Leonor K. Sullivan Boulevard by several feet and added separated bike and walking paths and river overlooks. In doing so, 1.5 miles of the riverfront, from Chouteau Avenue to the existing Biddle Street Trailhead, will flood 60% less each year, making it significantly more accessible and usable for events throughout the year.
- b. Our Special Events Manager works closely with project partners to promote this new venue for our community and facilitate activity on the riverfront. With more frequent activities, such as festivals, fitness events, sidewalk vendors, and a community concert series, these efforts will make the riverfront a vibrant and dynamic destination for residents and tourists.



The lunchtime "Walk to the Wharf" series in summer 2015 shows off the new riverfront.



STEWARDING THE TAXPAYERS' INVESTMENT IN PROPOSITION P

Our Role in the CityArchRiver Project

As the project continues to develop, we will remain responsible stewards of the funds and collaborative partners in promoting and caring for the site. We're always exploring new ways to ensure that the taxpayers' investment is sustained for years to come.

To ensure the CityArchRiver project continues to transform the economic vitality of St. Louis, we have initiated the North Riverfront Redevelopment Plan, in conjunction with the St. Louis Development Corporation and other partners. Covering an area along the river from the Eads Bridge north to the Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge, the overall goal is to promote economic revitalization by transforming vacant property into public parks and recreation while encouraging private enterprise.

CityArchRiver is a public-private partnership that includes the partners listed below:





CityArchRiver Foundation



JEFFERSON NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION



Old Courthouse, Luther Ely Smith Square, Jefferson National Expansion Memorial



Cutting the ribbon on the central riverfront portion of the Mississippi Greenway

INTRODUCTION

Creating an Exceptional River Ring Experience

Regional Plan History

2004 Vision for St. Louis: The River Ring

The residents of the St. Louis region voted for and invested in a clear, bold vision a dynamic network of parks and open spaces linked together by greenways, connecting our communities so people can live life outside.

Development of the network of greenways is guided by the 2004 citizen-driven "Building the River Ring" plan, which lays out a vision for more than 600-miles of greenways that will connect communities, bike-friendly streets, transit, and the region's rivers and parks, spanning our district.

The network of greenways strengthens the social, economic and environmental well-being of our region. The vision calls for community members to proudly invest in, care for and champion this legacy for years to come.

2010 Plan Update: Build, Promote & Sustain

In 2010, we updated the regional plan, not only to follow our policy but also to recognize evolving community expectations and available resources. This plan to "Build, Promote and Sustain the River Ring" incorporated an extensive public and stakeholder engagement process to revise our goals and establish 40 strategies to continue guiding long-term development and stewardship of the greenway network.

Great Rivers Greenway was established to improve the quality of life in the region while creating an enduring legacy that will be shared with future generations. Over time, the development of the River Ring aims to deliver five major benefits to the region and function as measurable outcomes—or goals—as follows:

Greenways connect communities and

neighborhoods. St. Louis residents seek a more connected region — where real and perceived barriers between communities and neighborhoods are mended and connections strengthened. Improved connectivity leads to greater civic cooperation, increased safety, neighborhood stability and a more engaged and active community.

Greenways preserve open space and connect people to nature. The diverse natural resources in the St. Louis region are nationally significant and abundant, but not easily accessible. By facilitating appropriate, low-impact connections between people and nature, greenways can foster an improved sense of stewardship for the natural environment across the region.

Greenways improve economic vitality, regionally and locally.

Quality open space brings increases in property value and investment opportunities as well as more people visiting and moving to our region. Implementing River Ring projects will improve local economic conditions while creating a more prosperous St. Louis region over time. Fee Fee Greenway, Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park



"They help make the community more of a community.

You see and meet your neighbors and everyone on the greenway is friendly and happy to share the road. It makes your neighborhood more human, because you know the faces (and the dogs) of the area."

Quotes throughout this plan come from citizens who took our anonymous survey in early 2016.

Greenways provide alternative

transportation choices. Developing and supporting transportation options, including public transit, walking and bicycling, responds to residents' growing demand for alternatives to cars. Connecting neighborhoods to jobs, schools and places to play gives residents healthy, clean and efficient ways to get around.

Greenways promote good health.

Active lifestyles typically lead to improved physical and mental health, increased longevity and happiness. Residents of all ages, abilities and demographics want to live a more healthy lifestyle with less pollution and better access to recreation, community gardens and local food.

Whereas the key takeaway from the 2004 Regional Plan delineated the 600 mile planned "River Ring" greenway network and emphasized getting projects built, the 2010 update recognized that we must go beyond simply *building* greenways; now it's time to think holistically about the entire lifecycle of a greenway, and what it takes, with partners and citizens, to *promote* and *sustain* them.

Leveraging These Plans

Together, these first two plans built upon each other and provided an ambitious vision for a regional greenway network, a legacy for future generations to enjoy—similar to legacies that previous generations created for St. Louis—Forest Park or the Gateway Arch.

The 2004 plan created a framework, and the 2010 plan filled it in. As we reviewed them in preparation for this plan update, we recognized a couple of key principles:

The goals stand strong.

The ideas and strategies still ring true – we are shaping our efforts around them and have no need to change course.

This plan should be more specific.

Past plans are conceptual and ambitious. Now that the organization has steered in this direction, it's time to implement.

The 2016 plan is an implementation plan to fulfill the vision of our citizens.

Busch Greenway



How We Developed Our Action Plans: Stakeholder & Community Engagement

Input from the community is always important. This time around, we focused on three strategies for engaging the St. Louis community in our plan update:

1

STRATEGY: Engage stakeholders through open houses and speaking opportunities to both update planning efforts and ask critical questions to shape our efforts going forward.

WHY: Everything we do is in partnership. We want to move the region forward together. It's crucial to make sure our partners, such as municipalities and educational institutions, are aligned with our strategies and that the outcomes benefit all of us.

HOW: We held an open house event at the Forest Park Visitor's Center on January 14, 2016 for partners of all kinds, including a presentation from our director level staff, display boards, handouts and a discussion facilitated by consultant Vern Remiger. We sent a recap to all and incorporated that feedback into this plan. We also took the show on the road, speaking to Open Space

Council, Metro Park Directors and St. Louis Area City Managers to ensure that many different audiences had a chance to hear about and give feedback on the plan.

RESULTS: Our discussions with stakeholders were based on the following questions:

Build

- How can we leverage a prioritization process for the greatest regional impact?
- How can we all partner more effectively on building the River Ring for the greatest regional impact?

The **Build** discussion included balancing the drive to establish more miles of greenways with the quality of and enhancement of greenways. Some attendees felt we should be doing high-impact, highly visible greenways full of amenities. Others preferred more trail-like greenways to enhance connectivity faster. We also talked through the need for planning coordination to be happening more consistently and earlier, with regional entities like Missouri Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Sewer District, and municipalities.

Promote

- How can we support you in promoting the greenways and their benefits to your communities and organizations?
- How can we collaborate to champion our greenways, parks and rivers as major regional assets?

The **Promote** discussion talked through future opportunities to partner with schools and create curriculum or create a mobile application, and the ongoing need to define what a greenway is and explain the benefits to our community. We talked through how the network of greenways can be part of a collective brand strategy for marketing our region externally.

Sustain

- How would volunteer opportunities be a benefit to your organization's greenway activities?
- How can we all better communicate operational issues among each other and to greenway users?

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Dardenne Greenway



The Sustain discussion included validating the need for level of care guidelines, including having partners and volunteers learn by attending cleanups and workshops. The group also supported an "adopt a greenway" program, discussing how that not only helps to take care of the greenways but also offers an opportunity for education and partnerships. As for reporting conditions, the

group discussed various technology available to report problems, how Great Rivers Greenway could serve as a clearinghouse for requests and how best to route issues.

Partner feedback was invaluable in shaping this plan, and how we continue conversations as our efforts unfold. The theme that emerged was collaborating to ensure an exceptional experience for all. Thank you to all who took the time to give feedback!

#2

STRATEGY: Engage residents of the region. focusing on those who use the greenways, through open houses, physical and digital surveys and speaking opportunities to both update on plan efforts and gain critical feedback to shape our efforts to ensure an exceptional experience.

WHY: Greenways are for our citizens – it's important to know what's working, what's not, and how we can best serve everyone.

HOW: We held two open house events, one at the Bridgeton Trails Branch Library on February 17, 2016 and another at the Missouri History Museum on February 23, 2016. We created an introduction video and gave a short presentation, with staff available at informational and display boards to answer questions and discuss ideas. The surveys were present at events and online for more than five weeks and promoted through media, signage on the greenways, emails and partners, collecting 968 responses total. The survey results are mentioned throughout the action plans and available in full detail in Appendix V.

#3

STRATEGY: Engage both partners and citizens in specific projects from the plan as they are implemented.

WHY: Some of our action plans will be specific, and they need precise input and participation from experts on topics that may not appeal to everyone. We want to coordinate a variety of feedback to ultimately ensure a seamless visitor experience on the greenways.

HOW: As we move forward with projects like our Level of Care Guidelines. Interpretive Standards, Community Engagement Standards, and Project Prioritization Process, we'll continue to involve partners. stakeholders and/or citizen groups to ensure we are on the right track.

"I use the greenways directly from my subdivision. I love the accessibility and feel it is part of my home and neighborhood. We call it 'Our Park'."

"We enjoy walking our dog on greenways and finding new ones to explore!"

- 2016 survev



How We Will Implement Our Action Plans: Regional Collaboration

We believe many hands make light work, and partnerships increase impact. Our citizens and our region benefit when we work together. Additionally, we are a regional district by design and serve residents at the neighborhood, municipal, county and regional level. Working at different scales means that we collaborate on all kinds of projects to ultimately make St. Louis a better place to live for current and future generations.

- As a collaborator in the community, we bring people together, from citizens to government agencies and nonprofits to private companies and everyone in between. This strengthens our greenway projects.
- The greenways are planned, brought to life and cared for in partnership with the 100+ municipalities and institutions. They connect communities so your experience is great no matter where you explore. These projects transcend traditional boundaries and unite us based on watersheds rather than zip codes or city limits.
- We leverage federal grants and private funding to maximize the taxpayers' investment.

Currently, there are a number of regional initiatives across St. Louis that offer potential opportunities for collaboration and have helped to inform this plan:

Equity The events of August 2014 in Ferguson reverberated across the St. Louis region but also across the United States and around the world. The **Ferguson Commission's report: Forward Through Ferguson: A Path Toward Racial Equity** sheds light on what many residents of our region face in their daily lives. In addition, Washington University and St. Louis University produced **"For the Sake of All"**, exploring the unequal distribution of health in the St. Louis region. They found that it is related to factors like education, income, the quality and composition of neighborhoods and access to community resources like healthy foods and safe public spaces.



Great Rivers Greenway 2016 Regional Plan

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St. Vincent Greenway, Ruth Porter Mall Park



"It's great when Great Rivers Greenway partners with local groups to add to a community. It's

important to not just take over, but instead work with the groups, citizens, and neighbors who have been invested in these places for a long time."

- 2016 survey

Continuing this dialogue and working together with existing and new partners in new ways is critical in advancing the entire St. Louis region. We simply cannot continue with the status quo if we are going to be a 21st century region that provides good schools, high quality neighborhoods, healthy food options and safe, accessible parks and greenways.

Transportation Working with agencies such as Bi-State Development Agency, East-West Gateway Council of Governments, Missouri Department of Transportation and county and local transportation agencies, we have been in involved in various transportation studies and projects. From the Gateway Bike Plan and the Bike Share Feasibility Study to MetroLink expansion or the Loop Trolley or roadway projects, we coordinate greenway plans as part of the comprehensive transportation system to help all types of residents get to their destinations.

Parks and Open Space Many municipalities and counties in our district have their own park and recreation plans. The State of Missouri through the Missouri State Parks issues a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan that guides the development and funding of outdoor recreation within our state. We coordinate efforts as the greenways are planned and built, encouraging local connections to the main greenway system and leveraging resources to improve the experience for residents. Working in partnership makes it easier for more residents to explore the greenways and connect to other gems across our region.

Sustainability and Resiliency Plans From the City of St. Louis Sustainability Plan to St. Louis County's Strategic Plan or the region's OneSTL plan and numerous municipal and neighborhood projects, more and more efforts are underway to ensure that decisions made today do not negatively impact future generations. Greenways are important to these plans because they serve as natural filters for stormwater control, absorb floodwater and provide transportation options that reduce carbon emissions while improving residents' quality of life.

Other Greenway and Trail Projects

While we are focused on the 16 active greenways (part of the overall list of 45 you helped us identify in the original master plan), we encourage and support efforts by municipalities and other partners to examine greenway and open space opportunities throughout our district's 1,200 square miles. We provide technical expertise to these efforts, as time and resources allow, particularly in areas where there is a need for more open space and greenways in underserved areas.

Creating an Exceptional River Ring Experience

2016 Plan Update: Exceptional Experiences

This current update, developed with help from consultants Scot Hunsaker and Vern Remiger, to the regional plan is intended to implement the aspirations of the River Ring in a pragmatic way, it transitions from a vision plan to an action plan.

The goal is to ensure a high quality experience for everyone, now — and for years to come.

Our district includes 1,200 square miles, more than a hundred municipalities and countless parks and open spaces, rivers and creeks, cultures and communities.

The greenways serve them all.

We're committed to the long-term, equitable well-being of the St. Louis region—our people, our environment and our economy. The network of greenways strengthens the health of all three.

When our communities connect and grow together, the whole region thrives.

Furthermore, the 2016 plan acknowledges other regional factors that may offer opportunities for cooperation and formal partnerships. Organizations across the region are addressing issues of equity, diversity, economic development and sustainability we are, as always, open to exploring partnerships when our mission aligns with other regional initiatives.

The plan is organized around three themes, which also reflects the way we operate.

Building the River Ring

Action plans that are related to planning, designing and constructing greenway projects.

Promoting the River Ring

Action plans to help our community learn about and use the greenways.

Sustaining the River Ring

Action plans to ensure the long-term fiscal health of the organization and environmental health of the network of greenways.

HOW TO READ OUR ACTION PLANS

Actions plans for building, promoting and sustaining the River Ring begin on page 27. In those three sections we present each action plan under the following headings:

WHAT lays out our strategy for that action.

WHY explains the reasoning behind the strategy.

HOW lists the tactics we'll implement.

WHEN shows a timeline of steps and significant milestones.

WHO lists staff and resources needed.

WHO ELSE explains how you can take an active role. Everything we do is in partnership with other organizations, partner and residents of the region — including you.



"The greenway connecting Shaw Park to Olive Blvd. passes a Schnucks and a senior housing community. That stretch is heavily used by seniors, many with walkers, as they visit the grocery store. Some are accompanied by caretakers who support and encourage them. I think this is a wonderful use of the greenway. The wide, flat walkway is much safer than a typical sidewalk, encouraging activity and independence among these seniors." — 2016 survey "I use greenways weekly if not daily. The larger and better our network of greenways becomes, the better for the region." – 2016 survey ACTION PLANS PART 1:

Building The River Ring

Building the River Ring Action Plans Introduction

Introduction

Looking back over the past 16 years, the region has a lot to be proud of in developing the River Ring—113 miles and counting of greenways that connect more than 38,000 acres of public lands and 40 communities.

By creating exceptional experiences for residents and visitors to explore local parks, a nearby creek, inspiring bluff views or the riverfront under the Gateway Arch, there are a wide variety of ways to enjoy greenways.

We must continue creating great places for people to experience. Looking at the entire St. Louis region and the residents we serve, we are evolving how we evaluate which projects move forward and when, how we work together with partners throughout the lifecycle of a greenway from inception to daily maintenance, and how we as staff work to make more great experiences for residents throughout the region.

Decisions about where to focus efforts will be critical. We will make informed decisions, based on metrics and experience, and track our impact over time to move the St. Louis region forward.

Strategies

The four strategies in this section build upon one another, as we refine our process to ensure that we deliver the best possible experience for everyone.

- **A. Measure River Ring Goals:** Identify River Ring goals for each greenway and establish measurable outcomes to illustrate progress.
- **B. Prioritize Capital Projects:** Assess future projects' potential for connectivity, equity, value, partnerships and goals to set annual priorities and budgets for capital projects.

C. Prepare Greenway Phasing Plans:

Identify the corridor segments and projects that should be undertaken in each greenway in the next five years.

D. Organize Internal Project Teams:

Incorporate all available tools, staff resources and community feedback to maintain high standards for greenway projects and user experience.

Build Team

- Board of Directors Planning Committee
- Executive Director
- Director of Planning and Projects
- Administrative Assistant
- Project Managers
- Project Planners
- GIS Database Manager

Gravois Greenway (Grant's Trail)



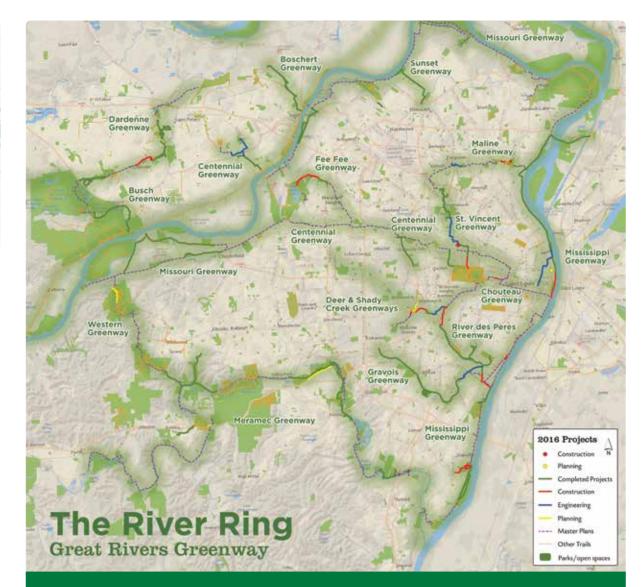


The planned 45-greenway River Ring network.

There are 16 greenways actively being developed. Projects will continue to be built within these corridors before expanding to others in the planned River Ring network of 45 greenways.

Active greenways include:

- Boschert Greenway
- Busch Greenway
- Centennial Greenway
- Chouteau Greenway
- Dardenne Greenway
- Deer & Shady Creek Greenway
- Fee Fee Greenway
- Gravois Greenway
- Maline Greenway
- Meramec Greenway
- Mississippi Greenway
- Missouri Greenway
- River des Peres Greenway
- St. Vincent Greenway
- Sunset Greenway
- Western Greenway



These are the current projects in our district. For details, future plans, and large, interactive maps, visit www.GreatRiversGreenway.org.





BUILDING THE RIVER RING

Action Plan A: Measure River Ring Goals

WHAT: Identify River Ring goals for each greenway and establish measurable outcomes to illustrate progress.

WHY: We have ambitious goals for how the River Ring network of greenways will provide benefits to residents all around the region. However, it is difficult to measure progress toward achieving these goals. These tools will inform the decision-making process on selecting future greenway projects and will guide the building process according to the opportunities and goals for that project.

HOW:

- Work with partners to gather and analyze data and enter information into Geographic Information System (GIS) overlays for the 16 active greenways. Staff will compile and sort data related to the five River Ring goals.
- Create a graphic summary using maps and charts to show which regional plan strategies should become a priority for each greenway based on need.
- **Highlight two or three** River Ring goals in each greenway that best represent significant opportunities to enhance value and users' experience.
- Evaluate metrics or measurements that would demonstrate progress toward achieving the River Ring goals.
- **Ensure staff follows a process** to regularly track the metrics and measurements as projects progress.

River Ring Goals as identified in the 2010 regional plan through an extensive public engagement process:

- Connect communities and neighborhoods.
- Preserve open space and connect people to nature.
- Improve economic vitality, regionally and locally.
- Provide alternative transportation choices.
- Promote good health.

Action Plan A: Measure River Ring Goals

WHEN:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Evaluation of River Ring Goals for Each Active Greenway					
for Each Active Greenway		• River Ring maps	depicting regional goals		
		• Greenway maps	depicting project goals and	opportunities	
Define Metrics for Evaluating					
Progress toward Goals		O Demonstr	ated metrics (miles of trails		
		constructe	ed, trees planted, etc.)		
Review Status and Update Annually					

WHO:

Staff Lead:	Supervisor:	Staff Support:	Resources Needed:
Project Manager/	Director of Planning and	GIS Database Manager,	Staff time
Greenway Planner	Projects	Project Managers	

WHO ELSE: Collaborating with universities, other planning departments, the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, St. Charles County, Missouri Department of Transportation, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Missouri Department of Conservation and other research institutes to search and gather data will be critical to avoid duplicate efforts. While primarily a planning tool, these maps will become part of the story of a greenway and be used to engage residents, interested agencies, property owners and government partners on the River Ring goals most important to that particular greenway.





BUILDING THE RIVER RING

Action Plan B: Prioritize Greenway Projects

WHAT: Assess future projects' potential for connectivity, equity, value, partnerships and goals to set annual priorities and budgets for projects.

WHY: Although our revenues are strong, we are faced with growing expectations for more greenways with high quality amenities at the same time that many projects are more complex and more expensive. As we collect and refine more data, we will need to enhance the way we prioritize projects and budgets over time. Criteria to evaluate greenway projects will vary according to community needs, unique conditions, and available resources and partnerships vary across the region. We will use both quantitative (statistics, research) and qualitative (context, partners) factors to establish priorities for active greenways.

HOW:

- **River Ring goals** will measure how well the project meets the established goals of community, conservation, economy, transportation and health (see Action Plan A).
- Connectivity means assessing how well the project connects to existing greenways, provides access to regional destinations, connects to communities or homes or extends part of an existing greenway.
- Equity means looking at how well the project helps us spread our resources across the region (between our district's three counties and two revenue streams) and how well it impacts underserved and economically challenged populations.
- **Value** is where we will assess how costeffective the project is or if there is a critical window of opportunity to make it more efficient or have higher impact.
- **Partnerships** are always important and provide many benefits including community engagement, sense of ownership, pride and logistical help. We will determine how well the project leverages other resources, provides programming opportunities or contributes to goals of a partner organization.

Action Plan B: Prioritize Capital Projects

WHEN:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Summarize Prioritization Status for Each Greenway					
Update Status for Each Greenway		Annual Update O	Annual Update O	Annual Update O	Annual Update O
Prioritize Capital Projects					
	Annual River Ring C Projects Budget Map	Annual River Ring C Projects Budget Map	Annual River Ring O Projects Budget Map	Annual River Ring O Projects Budget Map	Annual River Ring O Projects Budget Map
	Greenway Annual C Capital Budgets	Greenway Annual C Capital Budgets	Greenway Annual C Capital Budgets	Greenway Annual O Capital Budgets	Greenway Annual O Capital Budgets

WHO:

Staff Lead:	Supervisor:	Staff Support:	Resources Needed:
Director of Planning and	Executive	Project Managers,	Staff time
Projects	Director	Director of Finance	



WHO ELSE: Input from our partners is essential to smart prioritization. A variety of external factors often have an impact on which greenway projects are selected as high priorities. Municipal projects, public support, external funding sources and timing of related developments sometimes have the potential to change the speed, cost or complexity of projects.



BUILDING THE RIVER RING

Action Plan C: Prepare Greenway Phasing Plans

WHAT: Identify and prioritize all possible projects in each greenway for the next five years.

WHY: We often make progress along a greenway in steps over time; prioritizing the projects within each greenway will help guide our budget process and determine eligibility for alternative funding. Understanding that specific projects within each greenway are unique and reflect their local community, conditions and partners, each greenway will take its own path towards implementation. These phasing plans will provide guidance, remaining flexible to be updated as situations and conditions change.

HOW:

Create an implementation plan using a standard template along with supporting documents for each greenway.

The plans should summarize the status, progress and priorities for each of the active greenways with narratives, diagrams and maps and include the following information:

Greenway Goals

Incorporate the River Ring goals for each greenway along with descriptions from greenway master plans or other internal documents or external partners' plans.

Greenway Strategies

Select the highest priority Build, Promote and Sustain strategy for each greenway (of the 40 greenway strategies outlined in the 2010 plan) and determine which are realistically achievable over the next five years.

Greenway Implementation Priorities

Define greenway segments based on implementation status and priority for completion. Where possible, estimate costs for all incomplete phases. For segments that are likely to move forward in the next five years, indicate priority, estimated cost and timeline for development.

Potential Leverage

Identify potential sources of funding or in-kind contributions that could increase impact or project feasibility.

Action Plan C: Prepare Greenway Phasing Plans

WHEN:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Preliminary Phasing Plan (all active greenways)	(Preliminary Plan (for 1	6 active greenways)		
Detailed Greenway Phasing Plans (4 greenways per year)		4 Phasing Plans O			
Greenway Phasing Plan Updates (for completed plans)			Annual Update O	Annual Update O	Annual Update O

WHO:

Staff Lead:	Supervisor:	Staff Support:	Resources Needed:
Director of Planning and Projects	Executive Director	Project Managers	Staff time

WHO ELSE: Public engagement is an essential piece of every greenway master plan. As plans move toward implementation, or as alignments face new opportunities or challenges, we will continue to seek input from stakeholders, partners and the community. Updates and changes will be documented to always maintain an accurate and timely plan for each greenway.



BUILDING THE RIVER RING

Action Plan D: Organize Internal Project Teams

WHAT: Incorporate all available tools, staff resources and community feedback to work more efficiently.

WHY: To draw upon the strengths and skillsets within our organization and think holistically about projects, a team approach is best. While our staff already interacts as a team, formally organizing dedicated project teams that include staff from all departments (build, promote and sustain) working together on a daily basis, and collaborating with partners, citizens and vendors, will increase impact.

HOW:

- **Include build team staff** to focus on planning, design and construction.
- **Include promote team staff** to focus on communications, outreach, programs, events and promotion.
- **Include sustain team staff** to focus on best management practices, sustainable design, operations and maintenance.
- **Develop a template** that would be used for each of the active projects. Update the form continually as decisions are made, milestones are reached and residents are engaged.
- **Incorporate project tools** such as design guidelines, level of care standards, and public engagement resources to ensure consistent and comprehensive project implementation.
- Coordinate between the build, promote and sustain teams at all stages of project development: planning, design, engineering, construction and post-construction. This will then set up the right tools for work to continue on programs, events, operations and maintenance.

Action Plan D: Organize Internal Project Teams

WHEN:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Organize Templates for internal					
Project Teaming Structure		Organizat			
		O Build, Pror	note and Sustain Role Descr	iptions	
Coordinate Internal Roles and Teams on Existing Projects					
Implement Formal Teaming					
Structure on Future Projects					

WHO:

Staff Lead:	Supervisor:	Staff Support:	Resources Needed:
Project Managers, Greenway Planners	Director of Planning and Projects	GIS Database Manager, Promote Staff, Sustain Staff	Staff time

WHO ELSE: While this is more of an internal process, project partners, stakeholders and the community will be engaged throughout the process.

"I use a wheelchair and walk my dog at Cliff Cave Park 2-4 times a week. I am very excited about the upcoming improvements." – 2016 survey

ACTION PLANS PART 2:

Promoting the River Ring

11-21-1

T. VINCENT

Promoting the River Ring Action Plans Introduction

Introduction

While we've been building greenways for 16 years, promoting them is still a fairly new endeavor. Many people know and love the greenway near them, but they might not know its name, or that it's part of a larger network. The greenways will be successful in benefitting our personal and civic well-being when people know and use them.

This is more than just advertising – our action plans explore the many ways to establish "greenway" as a household name, to have them on the "tip of people's tongues" when describing why they love living here.

We want St. Louisans to feel good about their investment and maintain a transparent and credible reputation. We'll work to translate the complexity of the social, economic and environmental impacts on our region both locally and nationally, collaborating with many others to help tell those stories.

Strategies

A. Encourage Collaborative Promotion: Assemble and share communication tools so people can promote the greenways

so people can promote the greenways both independently and collaboratively.

B. Enhance Community Engagement:

Assemble a toolkit of best practices for public engagement and recruit champions to engage their communities about greenway projects.

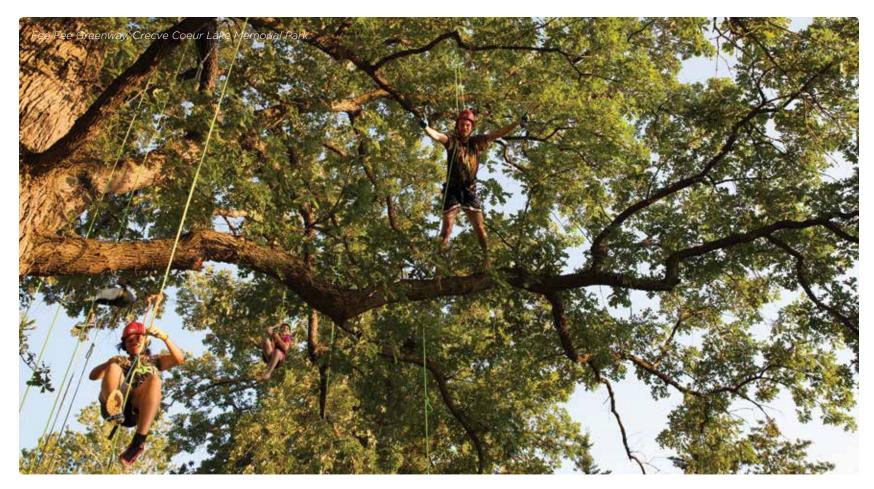
C. Promote the Personal Benefits of Greenways:

Raise greenway awareness by promoting personal benefits.

D. Promoting the Regional Benefits of the River Ring: Promote our regional civic well-being through the benefits of the greenway network.

Promote Team

- Board of Directors Public Relations Committee
- Executive Director
- Director of Communication and Outreach
- Administrative Assistant
- Communications Manager
- Communications Coordinator
- Community Program Manager
- Outreach Coordinator
- CityArchRiver Special Events Manager



"Create a sense of place and connect people from different backgrounds by creating shared experience, these are both important to me and to the region." — 2016 survey





PROMOTING THE RIVER RING

Action Plan A: Encourage Collaborative Promotion

WHAT: Assemble and share communication tools so people can promote the greenways both independently and collaboratively.

WHY: We want greenways to be part of the "what makes our region amazing" conversation. Municipalities can help by promoting their greenways to their businesses and residents. Universities can encourage their students, faculty and staff to explore their new home. When the Missouri Division of Tourism does a campaign for visitors, we want to offer up greenways as an enticing attraction for all seasons. Bike shop staff and real estate agents alike should be knowledgeable about the network.

- Assemble and share brand standards, message platforms and details about greenways.
- Create and share a library of photos and videos of each greenway.
- **Evolve our technology** like websites, mobile apps, and social media with ever-changing trends to continue to engage the community.
- Track and publish research-based metrics about the impact of the greenways.
- Present and establish relationships with influencers and key audiences.

- Manage the transition with our partners to our new signs and develop an environmental graphic plan for items like painted bridges and murals.
- **Develop and implement** an interpretive plan with partner input and community survey results to guide education efforts, ranging from signs and maps to walking tours and events.

Action Plan A: Encourage Collaborative Promotion

WHEN:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Develop Communication					
Standards and Products	O Brand Standa	O Graphic As	Statistic and Impact Stu sets, Photo and Video Lik nd Environmental Graphic	rary, Content Library	
Reach New Partner Target		: : :	: : :	: : :	: : :
Audience					
Evolve Communication			: : :		
roducts and Distribution				O Statistic a	nd Impact Studies
ncrease in Web and Social					
1edia Traffic	10% increase O	10% increase	10% increase	0 10% increase	0 10% increase
ransition to New					
Vayfinding Signs					50% of Greenway
/HO·		: : : !	: : :	: : :	' : : :

VVHO:

Staff Lead:	Supervisor:	Staff Support:	Resources Needed:
Communications Manager	Director of Communications and Outreach	Communications Coordinator, Greenway Count Intern	Professional consultants, staff time, partner and community input on standards, software

WHO ELSE: The more people that are helping to spread the word, the better. Whether you're telling a neighbor or launching a regional tourism campaign, we appreciate your collaboration to promote the network of greenways! If you have an idea for a campaign or just want to tap into the tools we're creating, get in touch.





PROMOTING THE RIVER RING

Action Plan B: Enhance Community Engagement

WHAT: Establish a toolkit of best practices for public engagement and recruit champions to engage their communities about greenway projects.

WHY: Creating best practices to engage our community will help us get the right feedback to deliver the best possible experience. Putting what we and our partners have learned over 16 years into a toolkit of best practices will help streamline the process with new partners and help the community know what to expect from a greenway project. Developing champions will give us the channels to get updates to people and gather input from people throughout the planning, design, engineering, construction of greenways, and on the programs, events, operations and maintenance once they are built.

- Work with vendors, partners and the community throughout the process to ensure that our plans are adaptable to the many communities we work in, while maintaining excellence in our engagements.
- Use the results of the community survey to be mindful of the variety of ways people communicate. For example, when we're having an open house or a survey, we'll balance the way we promote according to the different ways people get news, learn about new topics or share information in their neighborhood.
- Balance how we engage the community. We always want to be in touch with the neighbors directly near greenways, but we also want to talk to residents across the district, since the greenways are regional assets open to everyone.

Action Plan B: Enhance Community Engagement

WHEN:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Develop Community					
Develop Community Engagement Standards					
		Community Engagemen			
	•	Group of Identified Chan	npions		
Greenway Champions		: : :	: : :	: : :	
	50% of	Built and Planned Gree	nways Have Champions	b	
			100%	of Built and Planned Gre	enways Have Champions

WHO:

Staff Lead:	Supervisor:	Staff Support:	Resources Needed:
Community Program Manager	Director of Communications & Outreach	Communications Manager, Communications Coordinator	Professional consultants, staff time, materials for ambassador program, partner input and community survey results

WHO ELSE: Be on the lookout for communications about greenways and help us identify the right ways to get the word out. When we're building a greenway near you, help us get the word out. If you run a neighborhood newsletter or have a great community space for an open house, let us know. If you're interested in being a champion, we'd love to have your help!





PROMOTING THE RIVER RING

Action Plan C: Promote Personal Benefits of Greenways

WHAT: Raise greenway awareness by promoting direct benefits.

WHY: We learned from you (through our survey) that people are most excited about greenways because they can get out in nature, have fun and be active. It's important to meet people where they are, so we'll focus our outreach, events, programs and campaigns on inviting people to get to know the greenways and their direct, immediate benefits.

- Send out a survey focused on awareness and sentiment to set a baseline.
- **Recruit, train and manage** a team of volunteer ambassadors to have a table, speak or share information at our visitor's center, so we can reach more people.
- **Collaborate with the partners** in the CityArchRiver alliance to promote events and programs that invite people to the newly-renovated Gateway Arch grounds, riverfront and beyond.

- **Continue to partner** to determine how to share resources and responsibilities for programs and events that let people:
- Learn about greenways
- Be active on greenways
- Care for the greenways
- **Launch "Life Outside"**, a large-scale annual festival to introduce people to everything they can do on the greenways, celebrating the ways to participate and be active in our region.

- Attract activities to the greenways:
 - Engage the local community to see what would interest them.
 - Work with municipalities to understand rules and processes about permits and schedules, so we can help event and program managers bring the greenways to life.
 - Reach out to encourage the use of these spaces for pre-existing activities like classes, festivals, exercise programs, meetings or picnics.
 - Promote all activities on greenways.

Action Plan C: Promote Personal Benefits of Greenways

WHEN:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Produce and Distribute Regular					
Updates and Annual Report		Outreach Materials (maps, brochures, etc.)		
leasure Increase in Awareness		+15% Increase	+15% Increase 🔾	+15% Increase 🛇	+15% Increase
Measure Increase in Regional		+15% Increase	+15% Increase	+15% Increase	+15% Increase
Press Coverage		+15% Increase ㅇ	+15% Increase ㅇ	+15% Increase ㅇ	+15% Increase 🔾
ingage Volunteer Outreach					
Ambassadors	En	gage 10-20 Ambassadors O	+10% Increase O	+10% Increase ㅇ	+10% Increase ㅇ
Greenway Activities	• • •				
		50% of Greenways Have at L			ast 12 Activities/Year ㅇ
/HO·	O Life Outsio	de 🖸 +25% Attenda	nce O+25% Attenda	ance O+25% Attendar	nce O+25% Attend

VVHO:

Staff Lead:	Supervisor:	Staff Support:	Resources Needed:
Communications Manager, Community Program Manager, Outreach Coordinator, CityArchRiver Special Events Manager	Director of Communications & Outreach	Communications Coordinator, Sustain staff members	Consultants, materials, event and program costs, booth fees, staff time, advertising, software, survey tools, partner co-promotion, community input

WHO ELSE: Connect with us to learn about upcoming programs and events, chances to give feedback or opportunities to volunteer. Let us know if you have a meeting or event where we could have a booth or a table, a group to speak to or an event or program that would make a good partnership. If you or someone you know is already enjoying the greenways for exercise, fun and fresh air, please send us those stories, we would love to hear details, see photos or video and share with others.





PROMOTING THE RIVER RING

Action Plan D: Promote Regional Benefits of the River Ring

WHAT: Promote our regional civic well-being through the benefits of the greenway network.

WHY: We learned from you (through our survey) that people don't know as much about the environmental or economic impact of the greenways. As awareness builds, greenways connect and metrics are tracked, we will promote how the network of greenways strengthens the health of our people, environment and economy. When our communities connect, the whole region thrives.

- **Measure and publish our impact** on the natural resources of the region, such as habitat restoration and watershed management.
- Track progress on economic development factors like reasons why businesses relocate here, why people move or visit, real estate values near greenways, jobs and industries created and more.
- Research health and wellness data in our region and its relationship to the network of greenways.

- Find examples of how our communities are more connected because of the network of greenways.
- **Promote the benefits** of the greenways and the success of Great Rivers Greenway through stories and case studies, both locally and nationally with owned (website, social media), earned (press coverage, awards) and paid (advertisements) types of media.
- **Celebrate openings**, anniversaries or special occasions on the greenways at a regional level.
- Coordinate with partners to integrate greenways and their benefits into school, scout or other youth curriculum that can be adopted by schools, programs and other groups region-wide.
- Collaborate with the partners in the CityArchRiver alliance to raise the profile of the project's impact on the region.

Action Plan D: Promote Regional Benefits of the River Ring

WHEN:

		2016	5			2017				2018				2019				2020	
Launch Campaigns																			
Measure Regional Coverage																			
										+15%	Increas	e 🔷		+15%	ncrease	Ò		+15%	Increase (
														÷	÷				
Measure National Coverage									-										
														+15%	ncrease	• 🔶		+15%	Increase 🤇
Measure Web and Social					:	÷				÷	÷			÷	÷				
Media Traffic		:	:		:				:				:	:	:				:
		10%	increase	• •		10% i	ncrease	e 💙	:	10%	increas	e 🔷		10%	increase	è O		10%	increase 🤇
	:	:	-		-		1		:	1			1		1		1	:	1

WHO:

Staff Lead:	Supervisor:	Staff Support:	Resources Needed:
Communications Manager	Director of Communications & Outreach	Communications Coordinator, Sustain staff	Consultants, staff time, advertising, software, survey tools, partner co- promotion, community input

WHO ELSE: Connect with us to learn about upcoming focus groups or surveys. If you are doing research in any of these areas, please let us know! If you have examples of how the River Ring has benefitted you, your neighborhood or our region overall, we would love to hear details, see photos or video and share with others.

"I live for the Mississippi Greenway (Riverfront Trail)!

I ride it twice a week and would love to help maintain it through an adopt-a-greenway program. I've ridden close to 5,000 miles on it over the past three years—couldn't live well without it for exercise & stress relief." — 2016 survey

ACTION PLANS PART 3:

Sustaining the River Ring

Sustaining the River Ring Action Plans Introduction

Introduction

Our organization as a whole works to enhance the quality of and access to nature, balancing building with ensuring an exceptional experience on existing greenways.

With partners, we must first collect good data on the physical and ecological condition of our property to establish priorities. We'll then collaborate with operation and conservation partners (and citizen volunteers) to complete projects that enhance the environment and your experience. We will also champion the sustainability of our organization through alternative revenue sources and best practices. The sustain action plans focus on developing plans for the long-term support of Great Rivers Greenway and our projects.

We want future generations of St. Louisians to inherit a complete greenway system that is used, beloved and strongly supported.

Strategies

A. Integrate Conservation Management: Strengthen the organization's comprehensive conservation program through partnerships and coordinated design, build and operation efforts.

B. Engage Volunteers with Greenways: Develop the purpose, scope and strategy of the volunteer program and implement it over the next five years.

C. Develop a Consistent Operating

Plan: Improve user experience, collect operations data and develop an operations program with education and training for partners.

D. Reflect Action Items in the Financial Plan: Use the processes and tools developed through the regional plan effort to inform our five-year capital plan.

E. Establish the Great Rivers Greenway Foundation: Develop a public-private partnership that provides additional resources and funding to support the greenway system and its transformative regional projects..

Sustain Team

- Board of Directors Conservation and Community Committee
- Board of Directors Budget and Finance Committee
- Executive Director
- Director of Conservation and Community
- Director of Finance and Administration
- Administrative Assistant
- Conservation Program Manager
- Greenway Operations Manager
- Greenway Operations Supervisor
- Finance and Administration Manager
- Seasonal Crew



"Our rivers are what really distinguish our area from other towns and are a great underdeveloped asset." — 2016 survey



SUSTAINING THE RIVER RING

Action Plan A: Integrate Conservation Management

WHAT: Strengthen the organization's comprehensive conservation program through partnerships and coordinated design, build and operation efforts.

WHY: We have been contributing to the environmental health of the region since our inception; integrating watershed health into the entire organization increases our impact. Taking the time to think through overall conservation planning will be important to prioritizing our projects in the next five years.

- **Identify short- and long-term** conservation projects within established greenways.
- Integrate conservation strategies and best practices into the build process through Design Standards and Level of Care guidelines.
- Collaborate with partner agencies
 regarding large scale habitat
 restoration and water quality projects.
 Projects include ecosystem restoration
 and watershed planning.
- Establish a conservation training program to help educate staff, vendors, partners and municipalities on conservation methods and design.
- **Complete an ecological assessment** of all the property we own.
- Create habitat restoration plans to provide needed improvements for animals and pollinators within targeted greenways.

Action Plan A: Integrate Conservation Management

WHEN:

		2016			2	2017			2	2018				2019			20	20	
Identify Conservation Priorities																			
	* * *		*	🔶 Initi	ial Con	iservat	ion Prio	orities	Estab	lished									
Integrate Conservation Into Level of Care Guidelines																			
Level of Care Guidennes	*		OLeve	el of C	are Gu	lideline	es Com	plete											
Conduct Two Partner Trainings & Conservation Projects Annually	Con	npleted	d Events	0	Comp	oleted	Events	0	Com	pletec	l Events	0	Com	pletec	l Events (Comple	eted Ev	ents
Complete Design Standards	•	:	*		:														
			*					O Des	sign St	tandai	rds								
Complete Inventory of Great																			
Rivers Greenway Property																Com	pletec	Invent	orv (

WHO:

Staff Lead:	Supervisor:	Staff Support:	Resources Needed:
Conservation Program Manager,	Director of Conservation and	Greenway Operations	Level of care and design standards consultants
Greenway Operations Manager	Community	Supervisor, Seasonal Crew	

WHO ELSE: Collaboration is key to conservation results in your region. We work with other agencies and nonprofits to meet regional water quality and animal and plant habitat goals. Our partners provide scientific expertise as well as additional resources to make our investment in projects go further. You can help, too; the removal of invasive species, planting of native plants and handling storm water are the heart of our conservation practices on greenways and all can be done at home.



SUSTAINING THE RIVER RING

Action Plan B: Engage Volunteers With Greenways

WHAT: Develop the purpose, scope and strategy of the volunteer program and implement it over the next five years.

WHY: Building an active community to support the greenways is critical to the long-term success of the River Ring. Volunteers not only provide much needed maintenance support, but giving back also creates ownership of and pride in the greenways.

- **Develop a framework** for a volunteer program that addresses the needs of the River Ring. Opportunities include promoting the greenways and helping with watershed education, as well as doing cleanups and plantings to care for the greenways themselves.
- **Partner with organizations** with volunteer capacity to work on greenways.

- **Recruit volunteers directly** to engage with the organization.
- Maintain an inventory of volunteer projects and opportunities, both with partners and our own projects. Projects include trash pickup, native plant installation and graffiti removal throughout the network.
- **Plan and execute** volunteer opportunities with partners and independently as needed.

Action Plan B: Engage Volunteers with Greenways

WHEN:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Build and Maintain Volunteer					
Opportunities Inventory	50% of Partner Comm	unities Identify Needs 🔶		100% of Pa	artner Needs Identified O
Hold 6 Partner-Led					
Volunteer Events	Completed Events 🔷	Completed Events 🔷	Completed Events 🔷	Completed Events 🔷	Completed Events 🔾
Plan and Lead Great Rivers					
Greenway Volunteer Events	2016: 2 Events •	2017: 3 Events 🔿	2018: 3 Events 🔿	2019: 6 Events •	2020: 6 Events 🔿

WHO:

Staff Lead:	Supervisor:	Staff Support:	Resources Needed:
Conservation Manager	Director of Conservation and Community	Greenway Operations Supervisor, Operations Manager	Level of care and design standards consultants

WHO ELSE: Greenways offer many ways for people to give back to their community while spending time outside. We have great opportunities for corporate, school and other groups to complete service projects together. Individuals also can volunteer on a one-time or ongoing basis. Activities include picking up trash, removing invasive plants, planting native plants, as well as indoor work such as working in our visitor's center or serving as ambassadors at events.



SUSTAINING THE RIVER RING

Action Plan C: Develop a Consistent Operating Plan

WHAT: Collect operations data and develop an operations program with education and resources for partners.

WHY: The most important thing is people on the greenways having a consistent and positive experience. Working with our operating partners to gather data and create a consistent process for operating and taking care of the greenways helps ensure we can deliver an exceptional experience wherever you are exploring.

- **Develop level of care guidelines** to guide us and our partners to maintain the greenways in a consistent manner.
- Develop design standards to establish a consistent set of best practices to inform the planning and execution of greenway projects.
- Engage partners to assist in developing a document explaining the right level of care of the greenways.
- Engage partners in frequent dialogue regarding maintenance and condition concerns from citizens.
- Offer partner workshops to educate partners on how best to care for the greenways.

- Develop policies and procedures for capital repair and replacement this means major incidents like flooding or tornadoes.
- Develop an inventory of all assets in greenways, such as benches, bike racks, restrooms, signs and many more so that fixing or replacing items is easy.

Action Plan C: Develop a Consistent Operating Plan

WHEN:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Develop Asset Inventory					
		O Update Annually	O Update Annually	OUpdate Annually	OUpdate Annually
Hold Partner Summit	O Meet Annually	O Meet Annually	O Meet Annually	O Meet Annually	O Meet Annually
Develop Level of Care Guidelines					
Complete Capital Repair and Replacement Plan					
Develop Design Standards					

WHO:

Staff Lead:	Supervisor:	Staff Support:	Resources Needed:
Operations Manager	Director of Conservation and Community	Operations Manager, Operations Supervisor	Consultants

WHO ELSE: Our partners and users are crucial to keeping the greenway is good working order. Our greenways are located in cities and counties throughout the region. You can help by making sure issues such as damage, graffiti or unsafe conditions are reported so they can be addressed as quickly as possible.



SUSTAINING THE RIVER RING

Thanne Oreenway, reiguson

Action Plan D: Reflect Action Items in the Financial Plan

WHAT: Use processes and tools developed through the regional plan effort to inform our five-year capital plan and secure additional resources.

WHY: We take pride in being a responsible steward of taxpayer funds, and we want to allocate resources appropriately to all action plans to ensure maximum benefit to the citizens of the region.

- Integrate the Build, Promote and Sustain action plans into a collaborative budget and capital planning process for creating our capital plan.
- **Continue annual meetings** with St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles County to discuss capital projects that get the best outcome for the region.
- Coordinate projects with
 municipalities, transportation
 departments, and other partners to
 leverage and maximize project impact.
- Seek grants from federal, state and local government programs and costsharing opportunities from local municipal partners to maximize the benefit to the region.

Action Plan D: Reflect Action Items in the Financial Plan

WHEN:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Integration of Action Plans into Financial Plan Process					
Financial Plan Process					
Hold Annual Partner Meetings In Each Jurisdiction	O June	O June	O June	O June	O June
Twice Yearly Review of Funding Opportunities	O Review	• Review • Review	O Review O Review	• Review • Review	O Review O Review

WHO:

Staff Lead:	Supervisor:	Staff Support:	Resources Needed:
Director of Finance &	Executive	Leadership Team	Staff time
Administration	Director		Board of Directors Input

WHO ELSE: If you are part of a project or organization with similar resources, let's collaborate! Follow our communication for opportunities to weigh in when grant proposals ask for community feedback.





SUSTAINING THE RIVER RING

Action Plan E: Establish the Great Rivers Greenway Foundation

WHAT: Develop a public-private partnership that provides additional resources and funding to support the greenway system and its transformative regional projects.

WHY: Our goal is to create a lasting and exceptional greenway experience while developing projects that strengthen the St. Louis region. Tax dollars provide for many projects that expand greenways and take care of our watersheds. Raising private funds allows us to make a bigger impact without focusing all of the sales tax revenues onto the major projects, such as the Trestle, North Riverfront Open Space and Development Plan, or connections on critical greenways connections that have major costs like bridges. Private funds can also provide enhancements that are above normal greenway budgets.

- Working with the founding Great Rivers Greenway Foundation Board, recruit passionate individuals and civic leaders to help develop a fundraising capital plan.
- **Hire staff** to support the Great Rivers Greenway Foundation.
- **Identify and seek** private foundation grant opportunities that are in line with our organization's projects.
- **Establish a Greenway Friends** program in conjunction with the volunteer action plans identified on page 54.
- Ensure our organization's events support and enhance the foundation's opportunities and activities.
- Support special events focused on fundraising and development efforts.

Action Plan E: Establish the Great Rivers Greenway Foundation

WHEN:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Establish Board of Directors for					
the Foundation					
Complete Fundraising Capital					
Plan		 Fundraising Capital Plan Staffing Plan 			
Hire Development Support Staff					
Establish Annual Fundraising					
and Friends Goals		Secure 1000 Friends C	2000 Friends O	3000 Friends ㅇ	4000 Friends O

WHO:

Staff Lead:	Supervisor:	Staff Support:	Resources Needed:
Executive Director Director of Conservation and Community	Greenway Foundation Board	Leadership Team Executive Assistant	Volunteer Board Members Staff Time

WHO ELSE: Over the coming years, there will be opportunities for everyone to support the greenways by joining a Greenway Friends program, volunteering or donating as part of the foundation's efforts. The success of this effort will depend on the community's participation and dedication!

"I love the greenways and try to get out on them at least twice a week. Being able to get out in a little bit of nature after work keeps me sane throughout the hectic week. I am able to use the trails without driving anywhere and it is one of the main reasons I will not be looking to move anytime soon, I am spoiled by the easy access." – 2016 survey

Meramec Greenway, Rock Hollow

Meramec Greenway

Rock Hollow Trail



CONCLUSION

Moving Forward





Moving Forward The River Ring Action Plans

River Ring Vision

The residents of the St. Louis region voted for and invested in a clear, bold vision — a dynamic network of parks and open spaces linked together by greenways, connecting our communities so people can live life outside. The network of greenways strengthens the social, economic and environmental well-being of our region. Community members proudly invest in, care for and champion greenways now and for years to come.

This vision will not be measured simply by a more complete map. The River Ring will be a living, breathing legacy for our region, where active lifestyles are an integral part of our culture. Exploring, enjoying and taking care of the network of greenways is a proud duty of our citizens, and people recognize the benefits we all gain from our investment.

It's up to all of to bring this reality to life.

Move Forward With Us

This plan focuses on implementation. In each action plan, you saw ideas in the "Who Else?" section about how partners, citizens and everyone in between can get involved. Whether it's serving on an advisory committee, reading our newsletters, volunteering to clean up a greenway or aligning a major planning effort, we invite you to be creative about how we can work together.

Ultimately, the vision described on the left is not our organization's charge—it is the vision for this region, from the people and for the people. It will become a reality because of the collaboration and innovation that's possible in every nook and cranny of the St. Louis area.

Move forward with us.

Thank You

- **Thank you** for voting to invest in this legacy for future generations.
- **Thank you** for trusting us with your hard-earned tax dollars.
- Thank you for giving us crucial feedback.
- Thank you for voting a second time to invest in greenways.
- **Thank you** for taking a walk, for riding your bike, for going for a run, for breathing fresh air on the greenways.
- **Thank you** for volunteering, for pitching in, for reporting conditions, for asking questions, for sending pictures, for sharing stories.
- **Thank you** for thinking about how you can help us in the next five years.
- **Thank you** for making this amazing region a more vibrant place to live, work and play.

Summary of 13 Action Plans

For all 13 action plans, a summary of the overall strategy & explanation of why each is important to the vision for the St. Louis region:

Building the River Ring Action Plans

A. Measure River Ring Goals

Identify River Ring goals for each greenway and establish measurable outcomes to illustrate progress.

These tools will inform the decision-making process on selecting future greenway projects and guide the process of building the greenway.

B. Prioritize Greenway Projects

Assess future projects' potential for connectivity, equity, value, partnerships and goals to set annual priorities and budgets for capital projects.

Although our revenues are strong, we are faced with growing expectations for more greenways with high quality amenities at the same time that projects are becoming more complex and more expensive.

C. Prepare Greenway Phasing Plans

Identify and prioritize all possible projects in each greenway for the next five years.

We often make progress along a greenway in steps over time—prioritizing the projects within each greenway will help guide our budget process and determine eligibility for alternate funding.

D. Organize Internal Project Teams

Incorporate all available tools, staff resources and community feedback to work more efficiently.

To draw upon the strengths and skillsets within our organization and think holistically about projects, a team approach is best. While our staff already function as a team, formally organizing dedicated project teams that include staff from all departments working together on a daily basis, collaborating with partners, citizens and vendors, will increase impact.

Promoting the River Ring Action Plans

A. Encourage Collaborative Promotion

Assemble and share communication tools so people can promote the greenways both independently and collaboratively.

We want greenways to be part of the "what makes our region amazing" conversation. From municipalities to universities to the Missouri Department of Tourism to bike shop staff and real estate agents, the more people helping to spread the word about greenways, the better.

B. Enhance Community Engagement

Establish a toolkit of best practices for public engagement and recruit champions to engage their communities about greenway projects.

Creating best practices to engage our community will help us get the right feedback to deliver the best possible experience. Finding champions will give us the channels to get updates to and input from people throughout the planning, design, engineering, construction of greenways, plus on the programs, events, operations and maintenance once they are built.

C. Promote Personal Benefits of Greenways

Raise greenway awareness by promoting personal benefits.

We learned from you that people are most excited about greenways because they can get out in nature, have fun and be active. It's important to meet people where they are, so we'll focus our outreach, events, programs and campaigns on inviting people to get to know the greenways and their direct, immediate benefits.

D. Promote Regional Benefits of the River Ring Promote our regional civic well-being through the benefits of the greenway network.

As awareness builds, greenways connect and metrics are tracked, we will promote how the network of greenways strengthens the health of our people, environment and economy. When our communities connect, the whole region thrives.

Sustaining the River Ring Action Plans

A. Integrate Conservation Management

Strengthen the organization's comprehensive conservation program through more coordinated design, build and operation efforts.

We have been contributing to the environmental health of the region since our inception; integrating watershed health into the entire organization increases our impact.

B. Engage Volunteers with Greenways

Develop purpose, scope and strategy of the volunteer program and implement over the next five years.

Building an active community to support the greenways is critical to the long-term success. Volunteers not only provide much needed maintenance support, but giving back creates ownership of and pride in the greenways.

C. Develop a Consistent Operating Plan

Collect operations data and develop an operations program with education and resources for partners.

The most important thing is people on the greenways having a consistent and positive experience.

D. Reflect Action Items in Financial Plan

Use the processes and tools developed through the regional plan effort to inform our five-year capital plan and secure additional resources.

We take pride in being a responsible steward of taxpayer funds and want to allocate resources appropriately to ensure maximum benefits to the citizens of the region.

E. Establish the Great Rivers Greenway Foundation

Develop a public-private partnership that provides additional resources and funding to support the greenway system and transformative regional projects.

Tax dollars provide for many projects that expand greenways and take care of our watersheds. Raising private funds allows us to make a bigger impact, including enhancements and major projects.



Great Rivers Greenway

MISSION:

Great Rivers Greenway makes the St. Louis region a more vibrant place to live, work and play by developing a network of greenways to connect people to their rivers, parks and communities.

VISION:

The residents of the St. Louis region voted for and invested in a clear, bold vision – a dynamic network of parks and open spaces linked together by greenways, connecting our communities so people can live life outside.

The network of greenways strengthens the social, economic and environmental well-being of our region. Community members proudly invest in, care for and champion greenways for years to come.

Great Rivers Greenway

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