

# THE LINEAR PARK

BEERLINE TRAIL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT



## OVERVIEW

The Beerline Trail Neighborhood Development Project is a multi-year, highly collaborative initiative focused on the creation of a catalytic, multi-use recreational and economic green space where the historic “Beerline” railway once ran. The trail development and linear park project has the political, financial and organizational backing of the Greater Milwaukee Committee, LISC Milwaukee, MKE<->LAX, the City of Milwaukee, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, and the Guiding Lenses resident group.

**Serving 2,500 Harambee and Riverwest community members annually, and 4,000 recreational visitors from across the city and beyond.**

The trail has received approximately \$2.9M in creative placemaking funding and support since 2013. This project follows creative placemaking practices that include bringing artists, developers, community residents, and businesses together to reimagine the Beerline Trail Linear Park space and its surrounding assets. This catalytic project affects the social and economic fabric of our targeted communities, Harambee and Riverwest, and builds on other revitalization efforts focused on anti-displacement and affordable housing, business development, health and wellness, and community wealth building.

## MISSION

To sustain and enrich the lives of people in Harambee and Riverwest by promoting health, well-being, and prosperity through increased circulation of resources, voices, ideas, labor, and creativity

Residents of Harambee and Riverwest often feel culturally separate from each other, due to geographic boundaries as well as economic and racial differences. In collaborating to develop our “Lifeways Plan” for the linear park, a key value has been to create an inviting place along the Beerline Trail for cultural and economic exchange that stimulate experiences of connection for neighbors given real and perceived differences. By giving residents and artists control over how the area develops, we create a sustainable model of self-improvement. Increasing social cohesion and access to resources improves job opportunities, personal and business finances, healthy living opportunities and the leverage needed for residents to improve their own community.

Building partnerships among various entities and connecting these entities to the community is our way of accumulating resources and creating accountability. The Beerline Trail Neighborhood Development Project is committed to the community, and an Equitable Implementation Plan was created to ensure the next phases of trail development serve the needs of the community. The Equitable Implementation Plan is a road map that will guide and drive our collective work over the duration of the project.

The Beerline Trail Neighborhood Development Project brings together numerous partners, organizations, and residents to create meaningful improvements in the quality of life for residents in the area, combining efforts across traditionally separate fields such as arts and culture, personal and public health, transportation, economic development, and social justice.

## PARTNERSHIP

Riverworks, in collaboration with the City of Milwaukee, Greater Milwaukee Committee, MKE<->LAX and LISC, along with local advisors Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, WVBIC and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation lead the Beerline Trail linear park development. Creating and sustaining key partnerships has been one of the biggest wins in trail development. In addition to the core leaders and advisors, the leadership team has built relationships with various Wisconsin state, county, and city officials, artist groups such as Copyright Magazine, Jazelle's Art Studios, and True Skool, residents, businesses and others all in pursuit of pushing this effort forward.

We've also been successful in building relationships with other trail stewards in cities across this country by conducting site visits, in-person and virtual meetings. It will be these partnerships that help to sustain this work and see the development to completion.

*“The Beerline Trail exemplifies the City of Milwaukee’s commitment to reimagining and repurposing formerly underutilized spaces to bring new investment and energy to our neighborhoods.”*

*-Mayor Tom Barrett  
City of Milwaukee*



## COMMUNITY

We work directly with the community to gather input and feedback from residents to ensure the Harambee and Riverwest neighborhoods benefit from development of the linear park. Residents from the neighborhood vetted designers from around the country to create a design for a linear park along the Beerline Trail. Walter Hood of Hood Design Studios was selected to develop the Lifeways Plan for the Beerline Trail Linear Park. The Guiding Lenses group, made up of Harambee and Riverwest residents, artists, business owners, and other stakeholders, participated in several community visioning sessions imagining what this park could and should be. The result was a park designed for community gatherings, bikes, lounging, gardening, performances, and any other activity the community can think up.







## ARTIST INVOLVEMENT

To complement the linear park design from Walter Hood, implementation of the plan will require extensive detailed work from local artists. We will use our partnerships with surrounding organizations and community members to engage artists across the spectrum in the process of bringing this plan to life.

It is important that artists working on this project will reflect the cultural makeup of each community. Our goal is to partner with local artists who live in or have deep connections to the neighborhoods served by the linear park. Artists are contracted as vendors and also serve in leadership positions on the Beerline Trail Leadership Committee helping to advise, direct and interpret implementation of the Lifeways Plan and surrounding developments.

## PROGRAMMING

Programming allows us to connect with residents and for residents to connect with one another while engaging in relevant, creative, and local art and health activities in a safe space. Creating a public community gathering place for the Harambee and Riverwest neighborhoods is a large part of the overall vision for the Beerline Trail and the future Beerline Trail Linear Park. In the future we envision residents creating and leading programming on the trail, continuing to make this a sustainable and community-lead effort. From partnering with True Skool and Groundworks to create trail furniture out of pallets to installing rain barrels, hosting movie nights and community art shows, the committee's work showcases the endless activities that can and will take place on the trail. This multi-use, public green space has the potential to be so many things for so many people. The possibilities are endless.

## CONTACT

As we enter the next stage of Beerline Trail development, we look forward to continued partnerships, investment, and impact. For more information about the trail and how to get involved, contact Rosalynn Wolfe at [rosalynnw@riverworksmke.org](mailto:rosalynnw@riverworksmke.org) or 414-906-9650.

### RIVERWORKS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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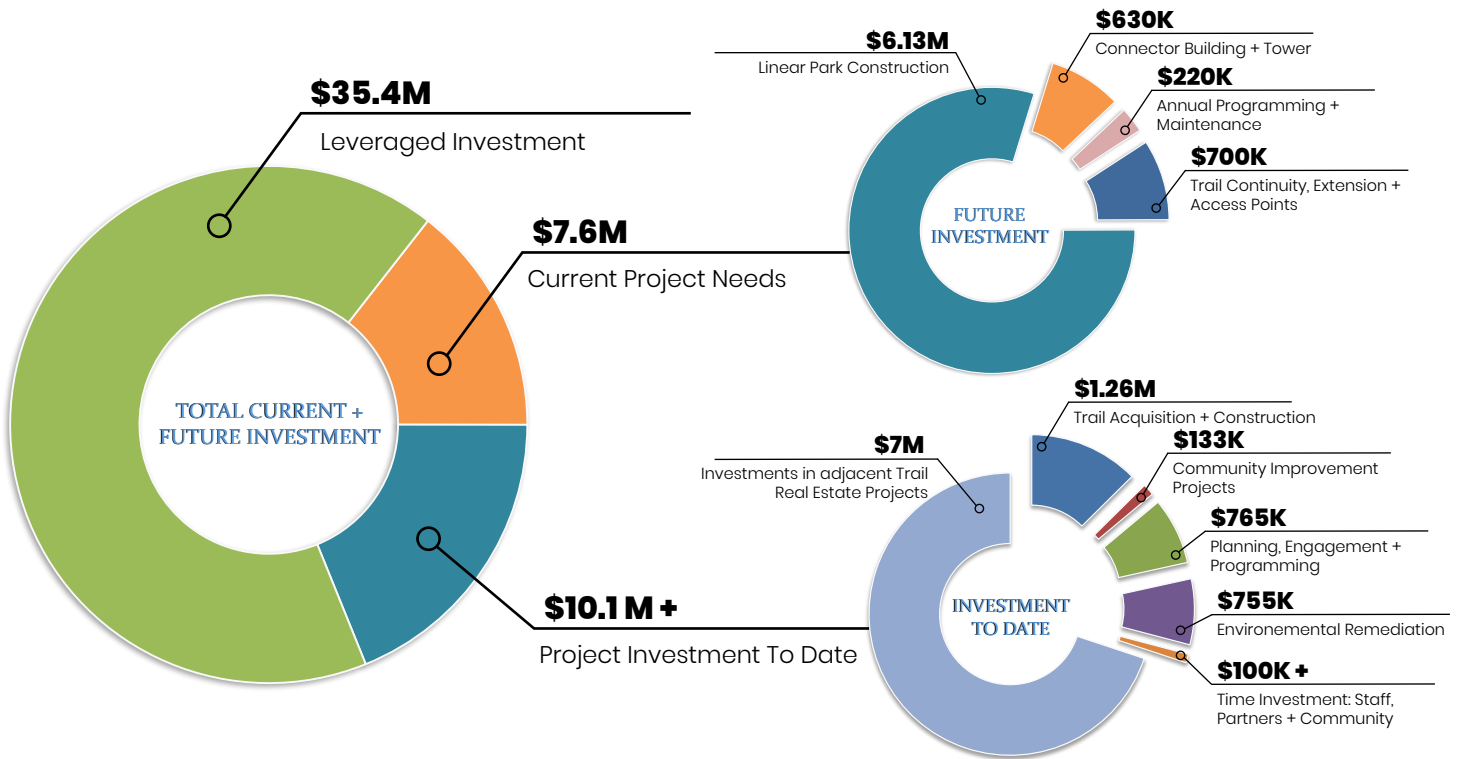
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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

[www.riverworksmke.org/beerline](http://www.riverworksmke.org/beerline)  
[www.gmc.org/beerline-trail-new](http://www.gmc.org/beerline-trail-new)  
[www.city.milwaukee.gov/Beerline-B-Trail](http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/Beerline-B-Trail)

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# FUND DEVELOPMENT



## EXTENSION

The northern extension of the Beerline Trail is an opportunity to unite the diverse neighborhoods of Rufus King, Lincoln Park, Garden Homes, Arlington Heights, Harambee, Grover Heights, and Riverwest with a direct public trail connection. The Beerline Trail Leadership Committee believes building a direct underpass will benefit thousands of residents of these neighborhoods for decades to come and is an investment in neighborhoods which have experienced disinvestment and been traditionally denied equal access to trails.

When working for the future of Milwaukee we must consider decisions based on what is best for the long-term health and benefit of the community. The building of Milwaukee's I-43 Interstate contributed to the segregation of our City, physically and socially cleaving the neighborhoods it passed through. The pending DOT investment in this freeway reconstruction project presents an opportunity to help alleviate this division and the legacy of previous decision-making processes that did not take into account the voices of the communities most directly impacted.

## PRIORITIES

The Beerline Trail Linear Park development has four key priority areas:

- Trail Extensions & Access Improvements,
- Design & Buildout of the Linear Park,
- Trail Programming & Maintenance,
- Guide Equitable Development & Entrepreneurship.

Each priority area allows us to execute our stated goals for the trail to create access and increase connection, create a community green space, foster a sense of stewardship to the trail among residents, and to support the economic development of the area. We will continue to partner with residents, artists, business owners and other stakeholders to guide the implementation process.