



## Legislation Text

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**Date:** March 16, 2017

**To:** Members of the Planning Commission

**From:** Scott Tempel, City Planner

Presentation and Discussion on Mill Towns Trail

**Action Requested:**

The Planning Commission is requested to host a presentation on the Mill Towns Trail

**Summary Report:**

Peggy Prowe of the Mill Towns State Trail Joint Powers Board (MTSTJPB) will give a presentation on the Mill Towns Trail and hold a discussion with the Planning Commission.

**Background:**

A group of trail enthusiasts from Dundas, Faribault, and Northfield came together in 1990 with the goal of establishing a bike/hike trail joining the Cannon River communities together. The trail will connect with the Sakatah Singing Hills Trail in Faribault (40 miles) and the Cannon Valley Trail (20 Miles) in Cannon Falls. The vision of a trail that spans from Mankato to Red Wing is a long-range planning goal for the MnDNR and has been a priority of the PRAB and City Council since it was authorized in 2000. Attached to this report are two background reports on the trail project and vision.

Significant progress has been made in making the trail connection through Northfield, including acquisition of land and construction of trail on the west side of the Cannon River in town. The original plan for the connection through town was to go directly through downtown on 4<sup>th</sup> Street (attached Original Downtown Route map). On December 2, 2015, the Mill Towns State Trail Joint Powers Board (MTSTJPB) supported the attached corridor designation for the Mill Towns State Trails route through Northfield.

Through updated discussions with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR), the route through town does not meet the updated standards to receive “State Trail” designation. Stemming from these discussions, the MTSTJPB Route Committee recommended a new route through Northfield that would meet the MnDNR criteria to receive “State Trail” designation. On December 2, 2015, the MTSTJPB unanimously approved the recommendation to the City of Northfield to modify the Mill Towns State Trail through Northfield as described in the attached figures. The PRAB reviewed the Joint Powers Board recommendation at its December 21, 2015 meeting and recommended approval of the change to City Council.

**Timeline:**

Since being legislatively approved in 2000, the Mill Towns State Trail has been a moving target. Faribault will likely be completing their connections in the next two years, and Cannon Falls is ready to connect. Ideally, Northfield completing their section of the trail will be a catalyst and send the message to the MnDNR to move

the land acquisition between Faribault and Dundas, and Northfield and Cannon Falls up in priority. The completion of the Mill Towns Trail is still in the long-term planning stages, but developing a phased plan locally will likely expedite the process.