

# Targeted Improvements Task Force Proposal: Improving Awareness of Nearby Connections to Hank Aaron State Trail

**Issue:** Of the various connections to the Hank Aaron State Trail (HAST); there are two Milwaukee connections that are especially adjacent to nearby homes and neighborhoods: The connection at 32<sup>nd</sup> & Canal (Merrill Park Neighborhood); and the connection at 37<sup>th</sup> & Pierce (Silver City Neighborhood). However, several residents who live within half a mile of these connections are unaware of the trail's existence (based on various qualitative and anecdotal evidence). While the state DNR is planning to install new signage along the HAST itself, this signage would be limited to the trail boundaries.

**Goal:** Increase awareness of the HAST to Milwaukee citizens who reside within six blocks of the trail connections.

**Proposal:** Create and install additional HAST connection signs:

- Merrill Park: Beginning at the south side of Wisconsin Avenue & 32<sup>nd</sup>, citizens may readily access the HAST by traveling approximately six blocks south. Signs placed on both sides of 32<sup>nd</sup> and Wisconsin (in which drivers, cyclists and pedestrians learn they may turn right/left to access the trail) would be a good start. Here are other intersections with four-way stops in which signs could be readily attached to existing stop signs:
  - 32<sup>nd</sup> & Clybourn
  - 32<sup>nd</sup> & Michigan
  - 32<sup>nd</sup> & St. Paul
- Silver City: Though 37<sup>th</sup> Street runs from Lincoln to Pierce, the street only runs in a straight line from Pierce to Greenfield. Signs placed on both sides of 37<sup>th</sup> & Greenfield (in which drivers, cyclists and pedestrians learn they may turn right/left to access the trail) would be a good start. Here are other intersections with four-way stops in which signs could be readily attached to existing stop signs:
  - 37<sup>th</sup> & National
  - 37<sup>th</sup> & Scott

## Other notes:

- **Sign templates available:** Angela Vickio of the DNR has stated she could also share sign templates for continuity with signage on the trail.
- **Working with DOT on I-94 bridge:** A mural project or similar on the I-94 bridge at 32<sup>nd</sup> and Canal (similar to the Valley Passage bridge in Three Bridges Park) could also be a great way to increase awareness of the trail. The city should work with DOT officials during and after the I-94 expansion to explore options.
- **Bike Boulevards:** There is a DPW project to utilize Washington & Scott Streets as Bike Boulevards, with Scott Street's designation currently ending at Layton. If Scott Street were to be designated as a Bike Boulevard thru 37<sup>th</sup> Street, this could allow a safer, smoother connection to HAST. 37<sup>th</sup> Street should also be evaluated as another potential Bike Boulevard (with special attention paid to increasing safety at the "crooked intersection" at Greenfield Ave.)
- **Endorsements and Potential Partnerships:**
  - Ms. Sharlen Moore, the Neighborhood Leader of Merrill Park Neighbors.
  - Ms. Angélica Sánchez, Branch Director of Urban Ecology Center-Menomonee Valley.
  - Lindsey St. Arnold Bell, Executive Director of Near West Side Partners.
  - Corey Zetts, Executive Director of Menomonee Valley Partners.
- **Additional Notes on Community Partners:**
  - Near West Side Partners has previously worked with west side communities to print signs. Ms. Arnold Bell says that NWSP could be willing to help fund for this project as well.
  - According to Ms. Zetts, Menomonee Valley Partners considers enhancing the trail connection at 32<sup>nd</sup> street to be a priority. MVP recently applied for a \$275,000 grant to re-design 32<sup>nd</sup> Street and 25<sup>th</sup> Street through the USDOT's Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program, with support from WisDOT and the City of Milwaukee. Though MVP did not receive funding for this project, they plan to resubmit their grant application in 2024. Until then, Ms. Zetts believes this piecemeal approach could be beneficial.
  - We hope this project will spur conversation towards other enhancements, e.g., exploring the potential for making 32<sup>nd</sup> Street a bike boulevard.

**VISUALS:**

HAST trail entrance, looking from 32<sup>nd</sup> & Mt. Vernon. Note that it is difficult to locate the trail's existence, even one block away:



Wisconsin & 32nd, looking east (could a directional HAST sign be added?):



32<sup>nd</sup> & Clybourn, looking south:



32<sup>nd</sup> & Michigan, looking south:



32<sup>nd</sup> & St. Paul, looking south:



National & 37<sup>th</sup>, looking east:



37th & National, looking north:



37<sup>th</sup> & Scott, looking north:



Greenfield & 37<sup>th</sup>, looking east. (Could a HAST directional sign be added to the pedestrian crossing?)

