

**NOTICE OF STUDY SESSION
Great Rivers Greenway (GRG)**

CITY HALL, Fifth Floor
6801 Delmar Blvd., University City, Missouri 63130
**Monday, February 23, 2026
5:30 p.m.**

AGENDA

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

At the Study Session of the City Council of University City held on Monday, February 23, 2026, Mayor Terry Crow called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

In addition to the Mayor, the following members of Council were present:

Councilmember Stacy Clay
Councilmember John Tieman
Councilmember Steven McMahon - *excused*
Councilmember Lisa Brenner
Councilmember Dennis Fuller
Councilmember Bwayne Smotherson

Also in attendance were Interim City Manager Brooke A. Sharp, City Attorney John Mulligan, Jr., Gabby Danback, Civic Engagement Manager, and Mara Perry, Senior Project Manager for Great Rivers Greenway.

2. CHANGES TO REGULAR AGENDA

None

3. GREAT RIVERS GREENWAY (GRG) PRESENTATION

Ms. Sharp stated the project team for the Great Rivers Greenway is here tonight to make a presentation on the Centennial Greenway Project, which will extend from I-170 to Heman Park.

Ms. Danback stated that with her tonight is Mara Perry, who is the Project Manager.

The Project Team

Gabby Danback
Mara Perry

The Engagement Team

Lorna Kurdi and Beth Quindry of Shockey Consulting
Andrew Holzman, Hank Moyers, and Chris Cline of Confluence, Inc.
Ramin Ashrafzaden, Jervis Atagana, and Brady Jordan of Horner & Shifrin, Inc.

The Sustain Team

This team assists municipalities with maintenance, conservation projects, and programming on the greenways.

GRG Overview

- Regional multi-county public agency for parks, greenways, and trails district:
 - City of St. Louis
 - St. Louis County
 - St. Charles County

- Actively building over 20 greenways across the region
- 140 miles of greenway planned, designed, and built so far
- 250+ successful working partnerships with municipalities and institutions
- Our goal is to create a legacy of greenways for future generations to enjoy

What is a Greenway

Greenways are outdoor spaces connecting people and places, somewhat like a linear park. GRG works with residents to make sure those using the greenway have input into developing:

- Pedestrian & Bicycle Trails
- Conservation Projects
- Trailheads & Amenities
- Neighborhood Connections

Ms. Perry stated that approximately 10 years ago, GRG met with residents and the Council about exploring a potential connection; however, at that time, the route being discussed was not something residents were very interested in. A few years later, a resident reached out to GRG and suggested another route. They looked at it, put it on some of their maps, and decided to revisit it again to see if this would be a better connection.

Centennial Greenway

The name of a Greenway helps make connections to different areas. This greenway is intended to go from Forest Park to Creve Coeur Park, with a connection to St. Charles County. But there are other greenways that will take you from Forest Park to the Arch grounds.

- Ackert Walkway makes a connection to Forest Park and Washington University.
- GRG is currently partnering with St. Louis County for a project on Vernon that will take you from Ackert Walkway to Heman Park. There are matching funds to replace the roadway and construct a 10-foot-wide shared-use path. Construction is scheduled to start in 2027.
- The Centennial Greenway proposal is to find a connection from Heman Park to I-170, where there is an existing greenway that takes you to Shaw Park and connects under I-170 along Olive.
- GRG is in the design phase for a connection from Olive to Dielman Road. Last summer, there was a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the section of the greenway that goes from Dielman to Five Oaks at Warson within Olivette.
- GRG has received federal funding for the next section of a greenway that takes you through an industrial park onto Bower and U.S. 67 (Lindbergh). They are currently in the design phase to build a bridge over Lindbergh for bikes and pedestrians.
- GRG is currently partnering with St. Louis County for a project on Schultz Road.
- This greenway will take you from Schultz to a larger Ameren Corridor, which they will soon begin working on.
- GRG is also working on some connections that will take you to Creve Coeur Park.

 ***Solid green lines on the map represent completed greenways***

 ***Green dashed lines on the map represent greenways that are in progress***

 ***The red circle on the map represents the greenway being proposed for U City***

Ms. Perry stated that the importance of all these things happening right now is that, typically, their projects take four to five years from the planning stage to final construction. So, the fact that so many of these greenways are in the design or construction phase means that the Centennial Greenway is something U City should envision happening soon.

Planning Process - Centennial Greenway

- Meeting with stakeholders
- Analysis of the area
- Open House: Presentation on their analysis of the area - March of 2026
- Meeting with stakeholders - Boards/Commissions
- Feedback on Alternate Routes
- Open House: Discussion of alternatives and potential routes - April 2026
- Report for City Council
- Design Phase - 2026-2027
- Construction Phase - 2028-2029

Ms. Perry stated that GRG would also like to work with the School District and other significant organizations to make sure everything has been taken into account, and their engineering team is very aware of the floodplains and the many other things that will need to be taken into consideration. So, with that, Ms. Perry stated that the goal today is simply to get a sense from the Council as to whether this is something they would like GRG to move forward with.

Councilmember Fuller stated that he was in attendance when the initial project came up and was in attendance for the County's presentation on Vernon, but when all is said and done, who is responsible for maintaining these greenways? Ms. Perry stated that they start very early in the planning phase, talking with cities about operations and maintenance. So, we'll discuss what U City can maintain, what they want to maintain, and how it could be maintained by your staff. Typically, operations and maintenance are turned over to the community or entity responsible for that area once construction is completed. However, if a route is within a County right-of-way, like North and South, GRG has an Operations and Maintenance Agreement with the County that requires them to maintain that section.

Councilmember Clay posed the following questions and comments to Ms. Perry:

Q. I'm not a cartographer, so can you assist me in understanding where this will go up Vernon?

A. *The Vernon section; which is a completely separate process from the one being proposed, goes from where Ackert Walkway comes up at the Fire Station, and the crossing will be enhanced on the north side of Vernon all the way up until it reaches Heman Park. When it reaches Heman Park, there is a section a little past the eastern edge of the park that turns into a wider path where a connection will be made. The remainder of the sidewalk near the last section of Heman Park is going to be replaced in the same location, but the remainder of that section, going from the Fire Station all the way down to the connection into Heman Park, will be a 10-foot-wide shared-use path with a little bit of a buffer between the roadway and the path. GRG and St. Louis County held a couple of public meetings regarding this section in January of 2025, and they are currently talking with various property owners about replacing their driveways and, if needed, making agreements for temporary construction easements. They are trying to work within the existing right-of-way by narrowing the roadway, so there will be a center turn lane and only one lane of traffic in each direction. They will also be enhancing some of the pedestrian crosswalks at key intersections.*

Q. The 3rd Ward Task Force has some dollars coming to them that will basically be used for improvements from Olive to Page, but one thing that came out of their discussions was the discovery that walkability was high on a lot of folks' lists of priorities. I don't know if you have seen that or whether there could even be any collaboration in the work that GRG is doing to gain an understanding about some of the dynamics around Olive to make it more walkable, but I would offer that as maybe something you could consider in your planning phase.

A. *We are definitely aware of that redevelopment area and have it on our list of things to get more information about, especially after St. Louis County informed us that they had been contacted about making better pedestrian connections.*

But right now, we don't necessarily want to make any other connections to the greenway since the goal is to connect it all the way down to Heman Park. However, there are some potential ways to make connections to our greenway, so the question might be, would someone want to use our existing greenway to make the proper connections on accessible sidewalks? So yes, that can definitely be a part of our conversations, but keep in mind that we don't just do updated sidewalks; we do shared-use paths, and at a minimum, they need to be 10 to 12 feet wide, which does not always work in some areas.

Mayor Crow stated he thinks that the first time GRG presented their proposal, they probably had more of a challenge because that route was going through some private neighborhoods, and this one is all public areas. He then posed the following questions to Ms. Perry:

Q. Vernon has a number of residents who he believes have more cars than their driveways can accommodate. So, his assumption is that there are going to be questions about whether the street parking will be similar to how it exists today after the greenway is constructed?

A. *Yes. In the design study, we met with representatives from the Fire, Police, Parks, Planning, and Public Works Departments, who made them aware that there is on-street parking in certain areas where people don't have driveways or lack adequate parking. Many times, they like to keep the on-street parking adjacent to the greenway because it makes it safer for people walking. But, I also know that the County has made assurances that areas that need to have street parking will still have street parking.*

Q. Is there one primary point of contact for the City to utilize?

A. *Typically, you should contact Gabby because she is the community engagement contact for this project. But I am also available for all kinds of questions and concerns.*

Q. Ms. Sharp, is there one primary contact for GRG to utilize?

A. *(Ms. Sharp): Yes, Mirela, the Director of Public Works is the primary contact.*

Q. Will GRG be making outreach to the Parks & Traffic Commissions, or has that already occurred?

A. *(Ms. Sharp): We had GRG present to the Parks Commission last week in the event they wanted to make any recommendations, and I think we've discussed meeting with the Traffic Commission.*

Councilmember Smotherson stated that you have the project area highlighted on one slide, but when you go to the next slide, that area has been reduced. So, are you eliminating Olive from this project? Ms. Perry stated that they are looking at the overall project area. The larger project area will be used when they talk to the community about how they can make connections within the entire area. What should they be connecting to? Are we connecting to the high school? Are we connecting to Brittany Woods Middle School? What are the various private schools or parks that we need to connect to? And based on the answers to those questions, our consultants will use the map to start figuring out what sections they need to map out, which could include making some changes. She stated that they also do not have the ability to use eminent domain or condemn property, so when they look at where their greenway is going to go, they look for a right-of-way that is wide enough, utility corridors, and old paper streets. So that's why it has been narrowed down a little bit on the slide, because they are trying to focus on streets with potential and multiple routes within that area.

Councilmember Brenner posed the following questions to Ms. Perry:

Q. I see lots of potential in Wilson because it runs along the river towards Heman. Isn't that where we're buying property right now?

A. *Yes.*

Q. Since there is already a path behind the Green Center, I'm assuming that you have already checked those things out?

A. *Yes, we have already started gathering that information, and those areas will be on the initial maps and drawings that will be shared with the community to get their feedback.*

We have already started looking at existing right-of-ways and what you have purchased so far, because oftentimes you can work on getting paths through areas like that. Obviously, taking into account what kind of permits you will need from FEMA and things like that.

Q. Can you see Groby as a potential since it is wide enough?

A. *Yes. Groby and Old Bonhomme are wide enough, and we do see the potential. But here again, oftentimes you can partner projects together. So, if there happens to be something that the City needs to be resurfaced or improved, sometimes you can partner with us, and our funding can help get you over that edge for getting that section repaired by adding a greenway.*

Ms. Perry provided the Council with maps of their greenways.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Crow thanked Green River Greenway for their presentation and wished them good luck. He then adjourned the Study Session at 6:00 p.m.

LaRette Reese
City Clerk, MRCC

