Trail Watch Helps Keep Greenway Safe
Volunteer safety patrol bikes the corridor every night

By Jackie Blair

Ever wondered about that friendly group of Greenway riders who patrol the trail at night in bright yellow vests? These are Trail Watchers, an incredible group of volunteers who help keep the trail safe.

Trail Watch is a nightly bike-mounted safety patrol for the Midtown Greenway and Hiawatha LRT Trail. Trail Watchers act as extra eyes and ears for law enforcement by observing and reporting suspicious behavior or unsafe conditions. In 2012, 81 volunteers participated in Trail Watch, logging 1,614 volunteer hours.

“By keeping the number of crimes low, we help riders feel safe, and help keep the number of people using the Greenway up,” says Gabriel Hoffman, the overall Trail Watch Coordinator, “which in turn keeps the trail safer.”

Out of an estimated 1.5 million bike trips taken on the Greenway each year, on average there are just two or three reported crimes against trail users (usually robberies; almost always after dark). Of course, the Midtown Greenway Coalition would like to see a crime rate of zero in the Greenway.

“Trail Watch has made a huge difference in reducing crime,” says Soren Jensen, executive director of the Midtown Greenway Coalition. “Now, trail users can help Trail Watch get the crime rate to almost zero the Greenway. Trust your ‘Spidey’ sense. If something looks or feels wrong — like a group of people loitering under a bridge or near stairs at night — stop and turn around, don’t just power through. Get to a safe place and call 911. No concern is too small to call – the MPD will determine the appropriate response.”

While the Midtown Greenway remains “one of the safest places to bike in Minneapolis, we’ll never be satisfied until crime is virtually nonexistent. Thanks to our wonderful Trail Watch volunteers, we are getting there,” says Jensen.

Not only does Trail Watch deter crime, but it also helps to keep the trail user-friendly by getting rid of broken glass, reporting malfunctioning emergency phones, and by being a visible, accessible resource to trail users.

Trail Watch riders bike for a few hours, every night of the year. Each
continued on page 4

▲ Trail Watch volunteers patrol the Greenway every night to help keep it safe. Photo by Ellie Kingsbury.
Dear Friends of the Greenway,

As we enter a new year, I’d like to take a quick look back on 2012 and thank our many members and volunteers for their amazing support. As an organization that receives no funding from the government, we rely on hundreds of member donations and volunteers to help us run programs that protect and enhance the Greenway.

Thanks to our members and volunteers, we accomplished great things in 2012, including:

• We celebrated our successful fight against the power company’s plan to place high-voltage power lines in the Greenway. In early 2012, the Public Utilities Commission ruled that Xcel had to place the power lines under 28th street instead.

• We partnered with the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition to successfully advocate for improved bike lanes on Park and Portland, and safer access to the Greenway.

• We successfully appealed a Planning Commission decision to allow a proposed building to cast excessive shadows on the Greenway. That building, now under construction, is being stepped back away from the Greenway to increase sunlight in the corridor.

• We worked with Freewheel Bike and the City of Minneapolis to install new safety striping in front of Freewheel Midtown Bike Center, to reduce biker-pedestrian crashes.

• We partnered with the Northern Spark art festival to bring more than 2,000 people to the Greenway for an evening of free artistic performances and installations, and launched our new Greenway Glow night bike ride on the same night.

We also established our new Crime Prevention Task Force, and our Trail Watch volunteers continued to patrol the Greenway at night, even in the winter months. In addition, hundreds of volunteers helped us keep the Greenway clean, green, and full of activity.

Thanks to all of our members and volunteers for a wonderful 2012. With your help, we’ll continue to protect and enhance the Midtown Greenway in 2013 and beyond.

See you on the Greenway!

Soren R. Jensen
Executive Director

THE MIDTOWN GREENWAY COALITION BOARD MEMBERS
The Coalition board of directors consists of one seat for each of the 17 neighborhoods along the Lake Street-Midtown Corridor, and four at-large seats.

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We are currently seeking a volunteer board member to represent the following neighborhood:

o Central

FOR A LIST OF BOARD MEMBERS’ ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, VISIT WWW.MIDTOWNGREENWAY.ORG. CLICK ON “THE COALITION,” THEN “BOARD OF DIRECTORS,” OR CALL 612-879-0105
Bicyclists and drivers near 28th street and the Greenway have no doubt encountered the construction work being done by Xcel Energy, which is burying high-voltage power lines under the street. As Midtown Greenway Coalition members know, our Coalition helped lead the fight to keep the power lines out of the Greenway.

Work to bury the lines under 28th is expected to last well into 2014. “The construction has certainly been a pain for drivers,” said Soren Jensen, executive director of the Midtown Greenway Coalition, “and has also resulted in several detours for Greenway bicyclists trying to cross 28th. However, along with this pain comes our continued celebration that the power lines were kept out of the Greenway.”

The Midtown Greenway Coalition was also a member of a citizen’s group convened by Xcel to design artistic treatments for the outside of power line substations that will be built next to the Greenway (one near the Sabo Bridge; the other between Portland and Oakland Avenues in Midtown). Special thanks to Tim Springer, our former executive director, for volunteering to represent the Midtown Greenway Coalition on the committee and for his many hours of work.

Xcel’s original substation design, approved by the citizen’s group, had artwork wrapping almost entirely around the station near Hiawatha and the Sabo Bridge. However, due to final cost projections being higher than anticipated, Xcel reduced the amount of artwork.

Midtown Greenway Coalition staff and volunteers worked with Xcel to come up with a solution to orient the remaining artwork more toward the Greenway. In addition, more than 70 citizens sent in letters and provided comments supporting the Greenway. However, it appears Xcel is unwilling to change the final design, which favors views from cars and trains on Highway 55/Hiawatha at the expense of views from the Greenway. While this is very disappointing, the substations will at least have some artwork.

To get involved with Greenway land use, development, and transportation issues, volunteer for the Greenway Improvements Committee. Contact soren@midtowngreenway.org for more information.
night of the week is a little different: the group determines the pace and character of the ride. All riders agree on one thing: Trail Watch is fun and a great way to stay connected. It’s also a great way to get in some exercise while helping the community.

“I volunteer to stay connected to my neighborhood, the cycling community, and the city,” says Mark Ambroe, a longtime Trail Watch Captain.

“I do it not only for the physical activity, but for the opportunity to meet so many fun active people from all walks of life, and to promote safe biking in the Twin Cities,” says Kathy Koch, a regular Trail Watch rider.

“We can always use more people on the rides. If you are thinking of joining us, try a few different nights, and see which one best suits your personality and riding style. All the rides are fun, and we can always use your help to keep the Midtown Greenway safe!” says Hoffman.

We wish to extend a special thank you to all of our Trail Watch Riders who totaled more than 35 rides in 2012: Neal Axton, Dave Evans, Jim Holm, Paul Holt, Kathy Koch, and Rick Stafford. We would also like to thank our dedicated group of ride leaders: Mark Ambroe, Dave Evans, Gabriel Hoffman, Paul Holt, Hakan, Kathy Koch, Andrew Paule, Emmett Pokorny, and Rick Stafford. Thank you to our sponsors: Bryant Lake Bowl, Freewheel Bike, Galactic Pizza, Green Mill Uptown, Krav Maga Minneapolis and Pizza Luce Uptown.

For information about how to volunteer for Trail Watch, visit www.midtowngreenway.org, call 612-879-0103, or e-mail Jackie@midtowngreenway.org.

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### Thank You to Our Trail Watch Superstars (2012 Quarter 3)

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<tr>
<th>Volunteered for 10+ Rides:</th>
<th>Volunteered for 6+ Rides:</th>
<th>Trail Watch Sponsors:</th>
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<td>Neal Axton</td>
<td>Mark Ambroe</td>
<td>Bikes and Pieces LLC</td>
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<td>Dave Evans</td>
<td>Hakan</td>
<td>Bryant Lake Bowl</td>
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<td>Jim Holm</td>
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<td>Freewheel Bike</td>
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<td>Paul Holt</td>
<td>Kathleen Sullivan</td>
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<td>Kathy Koch</td>
<td>Shannon Walsh</td>
<td>Green Mill Uptown</td>
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<td>Rick Stafford</td>
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<td>Pizza Luce Uptown</td>
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<td>Sean Walsh</td>
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For information about how to volunteer for Trail Watch, visit www.midtowngreenway.org, call 612-879-0103, or e-mail Jackie@midtowngreenway.org.
The 2nd Annual Greenway Glow is scheduled for June 29th on the Midtown Greenway. The event will again feature free artistic performances and installations, as well as a night bike ride that raises money to support the Greenway.

Last year’s Greenway Glow coincided with the Northern Spark art festival, which will be moving to St. Paul (only) for 2013. The Midtown Greenway Coalition organized more than a dozen artists last summer for “Northern Spark on the Greenway.”

“We’re disappointed that Northern Spark won’t be in Minneapolis this summer,” said Michael Nelson, chairman of the Greenway Glow, “but we look forward to continuing our new tradition of having artistic performances and installations on the Greenway at night. We’ll be reaching out to arts organizations and local artists to ask them to join us for the “Greenway Glow Illuminated Art Festival and Night Bike Ride.”

The artistic performances, installations, and activities will be free for everyone.

For those who would like to raise funds to support the Greenway, the Coalition will once again organize a night bike ride, with prizes for the bikes with the most creative lights, as well as the largest team of riders. Riders will also receive glow-in-the-dark t-shirts, glow lights, free food and beverages, and other prizes.

For more information on the Greenway Glow, visit www.midtowngreenway.org or call Soren at 612-879-0105.
Thank you to our members, donors and volunteers!

(9/10/2012-1/8/2013. Please call if we have missed you!)
Robert Kean
Kristin Koehnen
Edith L. Johnson
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Ruth & Herb Launitzen
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Steven and Dawn Nelson
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Hakan
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Bryant Lake Bowl
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Children’s Hospitals and Clinics of MN
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Gigi’s Cafe
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Holy Land Restaurant and Deli
Kitchen in the Market
Krav Maga Minneapolis
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Old Chicago
Opening Night Framing Services & Gallery
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Penn Cycle
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City, State, Zip ____________________________
Phone, E-mail ____________________________

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☐ $50 – Greenway Advocate
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☐ Any amount comfortable for you $__________
☐ Yes, I want to volunteer ____________________
My main interest is: ________________________

Please make your check payable to:
“Midtown Greenway Coalition”
and mail to: Midtown Greenway Coalition
2834 10th Avenue South, Greenway Level, Suite 2
Minneapolis, MN  55407
or donate at www.midtowngreenway.org

CALANDER OF EVENTS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Fourth Thursdays, 6 PM - 8 PM
February 28, March 28, April 25

GREENWAY IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE
Second Thursdays, 6 PM - 8 PM
February 12*, March 14, April 11
*date adjusted for holiday

ARTSPACE COMMITTEE
Third Wednesdays, 5 PM
February 20, March 20, April 17

CRIME PREVENTION TASK FORCE
Second Mondays, 6 PM – 8 PM
February 11, March 11, April 8

Unless indicated, all meetings are held at the Midtown
Greenway Coalition’s office (2834 10th Avenue South,
Greenway Level, Suite 2, Minneapolis, MN  55407).