CINCINNATI CONNECTS
Weaving together our region’s trails

FINAL REPORT
December 2015

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Project Management and Leadership provided by Groundwork Cincinnati-Mill Creek
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The generous support of Interact for Health, the leadership of Groundwork Cincinnati, the active and invaluable participation of many individuals and organizations, and a talented technical team have forged this groundbreaking Cincinnati Connects Plan. This initiative builds upon the 2014 Green Umbrella Regional Trails Alliance (now called Tri-State Trails) project, funded by Interact for Health, that inventoried and mapped existing and planned trails throughout the Tri-State, nine-county region.

Continued public and private support for trails will be critical to the successful achievement of the Cincinnati Connects vision. Implementation of the trail network will also ultimately hinge on the continuing collaboration and support of the Mayor of Cincinnati, Cincinnati City Council, Cincinnati Park Commission, Cincinnati Planning Commission, Hamilton County Transportation Improvement District, Great Parks of Hamilton County, and the Ohio/Kentucky/Indiana Regional Council of Governments.

Working together we can accomplish so much more.

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In order to achieve health improvements, roads need to be designed to be more pedestrian, bicycle, and public-transit friendly and allow people to use active transportation methods in their everyday lives. Increasing active transportation options leads to improvements in rates of diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease.

Megan Folkerth, Program Officer, Interact for Health
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Cincinnati Connects Plan represents a bold vision for a healthy, vibrant, and revitalized city with a robust alternative transportation system that offers enhanced mobility and connectivity for all of its citizens. This plan will implement portions of the city’s most notable plans over the last decade, including the 2012 Plan Cincinnati and the 2007 Centennial Parks Plan. Further, Cincinnati Connects presents the region’s first in-depth analysis for connecting existing and planned trails together into their most advantageous alignments - in this case, urban loop trails.

As envisioned, the 42-mile Cincinnati Connects Urban Loop Trail will pass through at least 32 neighborhoods and run between Mill Creek to the west and the existing trails at Armleder Park, Lunken airport, and the Ohio River Trail Schmidt Fields to the east. Two smaller loops can be formed within the major loop: the Urban Core Loop encompassing uptown and downtown, between Mill Creek and Torrence Parkway; and the Urban East Loop between Torrence Parkway and Armleder/Lunken.

This interconnected loop of pedestrian and bicycle trails will include six connector trails and four primary trails, the Ohio River West, the Mill Creek Greenway, Oasis Transportation Corridor/Ohio River Trail, and Wasson Way. Other completed local trails in fragmented locations (e.g., the central riverfront trails, the Central Parkway Cycle Track, the side path along a portion of Martin Luther King in uptown, the Ohio River Trail Schmidt spur, and trails in Armleder Park and around the Lunken airport) will be integrated into the future urban trail network. The map on the cover of this report shows the best and recommended alignments for all of the primary and connector trails, forming the overall urban loop trail for the City of Cincinnati.

The trails will link city neighborhoods to downtown and will be integrated with public transit and existing transportation infrastructure to create a seamless multi-modal transportation system. The trails will be free, accessible and convenient, making it possible for people of all ages and abilities to travel safely through the City without a car.

In addition to people-powered (walking, bicycling, and wheelchair) transportation opportunities, the trails will provide other quantifiable economic, environmental, public health, social, and recreational benefits. These far reaching benefits are described in Section 2.2.

How can this be accomplished? In Section 2.4, the plan takes a look at the status of the city’s four primary backbone trails in varying states of development, as well as a smaller but strategic trail, Little Duck Creek. The primary trails are the building blocks of the loop trails and form the skeletal framework of Cincinnati’s future trail system.

In Section 3, the plan then looks at how best to link the primary trails together. The Cincinnati Connects technical consultants examine in detail a number of potential alignments for each Connector trail. This gap analysis focuses on a total of 8.6 miles of future connector trails in the following geographic areas:

- Queensgate Connection (connecting the Mill Creek Trail in Lower Price Hill to Price Landing, Ohio River Trail West, and through Queensgate to the downtown riverfront trails).
- Mill Creek Corridor Connection (encompassing the Mill Creek railroad corridor from South Cummins ville to Lower Price Hill).
- Uptown North Connection (connecting Mill Creek from the west to Wasson Way to the east).
- Uptown South Connection (including Martin Luther King Drive capital project).
- Duck Creek Trail Connection.
- Murray Trail Connection.

Section 4 contains maps of each of the recommended alignments, designated as “Alternative A” on the Section 3 maps. Section 5 provides a summary of the preliminary engineering cost estimates for the best connector alignments. This connector trail information, when added to the preliminary design and cost estimates for the primary urban loop trails, will strengthen the city’s competitiveness in seeking future federal, state, and private grants to build the loop.
What are the costs and benefits of creating Cincinnati’s urban loop trails?

The Economics Center in Cincinnati completed a detailed Benefit/Cost Analysis for Cincinnati Connects (see Appendix B for the full report). The Center used a standard benefit-cost methodology for transportation projects (including the discounting of future benefits) and examined multiple variables, from reduced vehicle miles traveled to air quality impacts to health and recreational factors. It concluded that the cumulative net economic benefit from building the connector trails and forming the network will be about $43.5 million.

The cost for building the connectors is close to $21 million, plus an annual maintenance expense for 8.6 miles of connector trails estimated at $34,400 per year. The Economics Center concluded that the benefit-cost ratio is 2.78 to 1, indicating that the economic benefits are almost three times as great as the cost for building the urban loop trails. This confirms that implementation of the Cincinnati Connects loop trail will be a sound investment that will pay major public and private dividends for decades to come.

How can this plan be implemented?

The time is now. At the 2010 Cincinnati Neighborhood Summit, 93% of the respondents to a survey on urban priorities said that creating a walkable and bikeable transportation system is important to the future of Cincinnati. And, while city voters have just rejected (November 2015) a permanent parks levy, those for and against the levy all expressed strong support for funding and maintaining trails and parks.

The Cincinnati Connects partners have agreed to transition from their planning role over the past fifteen months to an implementation focus and will participate in public presentations, and briefings and working sessions with the City of Cincinnati and other major public and private partners. The Cincinnati Connects Steering Committee recommends that implementation of the Cincinnati Connects Plan be supported and endorsed by:

The City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County Transportation Improvement District, Ohio/Kentucky/Indiana (OKI) Regional Council of Governments, planning commissions and other governmental agencies, utilities that own/control property within the Cincinnati Connects alignment, Groundwork Cincinnati-Mill Creek, Ohio River West, Oasis, Wasson Way, local foundations and corporations, hospitals and other health care institutions, bicycle and running groups, Great Parks of Hamilton County, Queen City Bike, Tri-State Trails, civic organizations and businesses, Cincinnati Neighborhood Councils, and other interested partners.

Implementation strategies may include, but not be limited to:

1. Incorporating the urban loop trails in their entirety (primary trails and connector trails) into the OKI Regional Council of Governments 2040 Long-range Transportation Plan.

2. Maximizing, when feasible, the value of local trail investments by using the local funds and Cincinnati Connects synergies to competitively leverage larger Federal and State grants.

3. Achieving cost savings and efficiencies by incorporating the recommended pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure into future plans for economic development, housing, parks and recreation, and major road and bridge projects.

4. Preserving public ownership of property within the recommended Cincinnati Connects urban loop trail alignment for future trail development.

A full list of the implementation recommendations are in Section 6 of the plan that also includes a summary of federal, state, and private funding sources.

Appendix A of this report includes enlargements of the recommended urban loop trail map and maps of each segment of the urban loop.

Appendix B includes the Economics Center’s benefit/cost economic analysis for the envisioned trail system. Appendix C includes a two-page matrix of federal funding for trails, a glossary of terms, and a list of references used in preparing the plan.

In summary, the Cincinnati Connects Plan sets forth the vision, justification, and landscape and preliminary engineering design and cost estimates for creating the city’s urban loop trail that will make Cincinnati one of the top pedestrian and bicycle communities in the nation. When the Plan is fully implemented, the City of Cincinnati will have an interconnected urban loop trail spanning 42 miles that will connect thousands of residents living in over 32 neighborhoods to parks, recreation centers, rivers, employment centers, business districts, transit hubs, cultural resources, schools, and other destinations.
2.0 INTRODUCTION

“A transportation system that is well planned, maintained, interconnected, and that offers multiple modes of transportation options can positively affect the economy and the overall quality of life in the City.”

Plan Cincinnati Report, 2012
2.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Green Umbrella Regional Trails Alliance (now called Tri-State Trails): In summer 2012, Green Umbrella and Groundwork Cincinnati convened a small group of trail advocates who agreed to work together to gather available data about trails throughout the Greater Cincinnati region and to plan a first-ever regional trails summit to raise awareness and move the regional trails agenda forward. The trail summit was held at the Cincinnati Zoo in spring 2013 and included 105 participants.

There were several important outcomes from the summit that included a heightened sense of awareness about existing and planned trails throughout the nine-county region and a realization that individual trail groups could benefit from forging a coalition to share information and support each other. The participants agreed to create a Green Umbrella Regional Trails Alliance to provide a forum for continued collaboration and to serve as the collective voice of the regional trails community.

Following the summit, a new partnership emerged between the Regional Trails Alliance and the Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati. In summer 2013, the health foundation changed its name to Interact for Health and announced a grant to Green Umbrella Regional Trails Alliance to underwrite an inventory, assessment, and mapping of existing, planned, and potential trails that require more study. This body of work is found in the Green Umbrella Regional Trails Plan.

The technical consultants for this process lead two rounds of public meetings attended by over two hundred people in nine counties and three states. The inventory and mapping included 391 miles of existing trails, 439 miles of planned trails, and 1,293 miles of potential trails. The results were presented at the spring 2014 Regional Trails Summit and revealed a startling and sobering picture of trail fragmentation in the nine-county area. Each trail exists in isolation from the others.

Cincinnati Connects: In summer 2014, Interact for Health asked Groundwork Cincinnati to develop a high visibility project to address this fragmentation and to stimulate trail development. There was a need to demonstrate how to link major trails together to maximize their value, and how to create a compelling case for major investment required to catapult interconnected trail development. In addition, the foundation wanted a pilot project that could provide lessons learned for other trail groups within the Greater Cincinnati region. The Cincinnati Connects Plan is helping to achieve these goals by collaborating with Tri-State Trails to disseminate information and recommendations to about seventy trail groups.

Finally, although this study focuses on trails east of Mill Creek in the City of Cincinnati, it recommends that the study be repeated for the western portion of the City. It also has an eye on creating spur trails inside the urban loop, uniting with other trails in Hamilton County and the Greater Cincinnati region, and eventually linking to state and national trails.

It’s all about mobility, access, and connections.
2.2 BENEFITS OF TRAILS

Trails, and especially greenway trails, provide quantifiable and nationally documented economic, transportation, public health, and environmental benefits. They enhance quality-of-life for everyone when there is equitable access to active transportation and recreational opportunities. Based on evidence from around the country and on technical research and analysis completed for this study, it’s clear that implementation of the Cincinnati Connects Plan will help transform Cincinnati into a hub for active transportation, healthy living, sustainability, and economic vitality.

Briefly, here is a highlight of the benefits that Cincinnati can expect:

I. Economic

In the Midwest, other cities are reaping economic benefits from their urban trails. In Indianapolis, according to a 2013 Partnership for Sustainable Communities report, the eight-mile Cultural Trail, built in 2008, is credited with playing a role in the City’s downtown revitalization — an overall effort that is expected to ultimately create more than 11,000 jobs and an economic impact exceeding $863 million. In addition, property values have increased by 148% for properties located within a block of the Indianapolis Cultural Trail. In Pittsburgh, the Three Rivers Heritage Trail attracts over 600,000 users per year with a total economic impact of $8,286,026 in 2014 alone. The trail is credited for attracting tourism and new talent to the city.

In Cincinnati, the Economics Center conducted a Benefit-Cost Analysis for the Cincinnati Connects Plan (see this report in its entirety in Appendix B). The Center focused on economic indicators of:

- Enhanced Sustainability — reduction in vehicle miles driven, reduction of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and other air pollutants, and increased mobility of residents.
- Economic competitiveness — lower total vehicle operating costs and travel time savings, and other external benefits, including less traffic congestion; and
- Livability — reduction in health care costs and increases in new recreational options for residents.

The preliminary cost estimate for construction of the connector trails is close to $21 million and the estimated annual operation and maintenance cost is $34,400 for about 8.6 miles. The 30-year cumulative net economic benefit from building the connector trails to link the four primary trails together (Mill Creek Greenway, Ohio River West, Oasis, and Wasson Way), plus the increase in trail use resulting from the formation of an interconnected trail network, is estimated at $43.5 million.

This figure does not take into consideration pedestrian benefits, use of the urban trail loops for short trips unrelated to bike commuting, higher rates of trail usage, and trail use on other parts of the four primary trails. If those variables are included in future studies, the economic benefits will certainly increase.

The final benefit-to-cost ratio determined by the Center is 2.782:1. This confirms that the expected benefits of creating the urban loop trails significantly outweigh the costs, making the Cincinnati Connects loop trails competitive for future federal funding applications. Further, while there is a major investment required upfront, the fairly low maintenance cost will result in the cumulative annual benefits quickly surpassing the costs.

Creating the Cincinnati Connects urban loop trails will produce additional financial returns, including increased property values and enhanced marketability of new housing and economic development in neighborhoods adjoining the trails, spin-off impacts from expenditures during and after construction, increased local tax revenues, and diverse recreational opportunities. Building the infrastructure for the Cincinnati Connects loop trails will stimulate diverse businesses and produce jobs for surveying crews; landscape architects; engineers; biologists; construction laborers; asphalt and concrete specialists; maintenance workers; nursery and landscaping fieldworkers; artists; and manufacturers and suppliers of solar power (e.g., for lighting and pedestrian/bike crossing signals) and other green technologies, materials and products. Further, non-motorized transportation will help support and create small businesses located near the trail, including cafes and restaurants, bike shops, and a variety of retail stores.


II. Transportation

A transportation system that is well planned, maintained, interconnected, and that offers multiple modes of transportation options can positively affect the economy and the overall quality of life in the City. (Plan Cincinnati, 2012.)

In Cincinnati, 242,000 residents live within a mile of the planned Cincinnati Connects urban loop trails. Of those, 164,956 people are between the ages of 18 and 64 and could potentially use the loop trail for commuting to work. The Cincinnati Connects trail loops will be integrated with public transit and the existing transportation infrastructure, creating a multi-modal transportation system.

Short- and mid-term, the City of Cincinnati has an opportunity to create 42 miles of interconnected urban trail loops that will initially run through 32 neighborhoods and connect people to hundreds of destinations, including employment centers, schools, shopping, health care facilities, and City parks and recreational facilities. The Cincinnati Connects plan recommends that a similar study be conducted for the City neighborhoods west of Mill Creek.

Longer-term, the City can create a network of spur trails radiating from the urban loop trails that will reach into all of the City’s neighborhoods and connect trail users to many more destinations. Further, there are excellent opportunities to connect City trails to other great trails in Hamilton County and the Tri-State region.

The Economics Center quantified the annual cyclist mobility benefits for trail commuters at $336,834 annually. However, the highest mobility benefits are expected to accrue to people who don’t own a vehicle. The Center’s research found that workers without access to vehicles are four times more likely to bike and walk to work as those who own cars.

Significant reductions in vehicle miles traveled as a result of people using trails for short trips has been verified by the Rails to Trails Conservancy, World Watch, and U.S. Department of Transportation. According to Rails to Trails, about one half of all trips taken in the U.S. are short trips of three miles or less. These daily trips can be shifted, to some degree, from driving to walking and bicycling if the infrastructure to support people-powered transportation is put into place. In 2008, the Oregon Blue Ribbon Committee for Trails determined that 5%-15% fewer vehicle miles are traveled in communities with accessible and affordable walking and bicycling conditions than in more automobile-dependent areas.

In addition, a robust trail system will create important benefits for motorists. Over time, as the number of vehicle miles on roads and highways are reduced by bike commuters, the remaining motorists will benefit from concurrent reductions in traffic congestion, noise, and accidents. These external benefits are quantified at $114,874 per year.

Therefore, creating the recommended urban loop trails in Cincinnati can be expected to reduce traffic congestion and fossil fuel emissions from mobile sources by increasing the frequency and incidence of walking, bicycling, and public transit use; decreasing automobile use for short trips; and increasing bike commuting.

III. Public Health

There are enormous public health and economic repercussions for communities that haven’t been designed for walking and bicycling. Physicians and health organizations are increasingly advocating active transportation (walking, running, bicycling) in response to declining physical activity; soaring obesity rates; and chronic health conditions including diabetes, hypertension, cancer, and heart disease. The State of Ohio is ranked 8th highest in the country for adult obesity (32.6% of the adult population) and 14th highest for children ages 10-17 (17.4%).

Step It Up! The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities recognizes the importance of physical activity for people of all ages and abilities. It calls on Americans to be more physically active through walking and calls on the nation to better support walking and walkability.

Source: http://stateofobesity.org
The Children’s Defense Fund reports that health and poverty are so interrelated that many indicators of poverty have become predictors of child health problems. Germane to the City of Cincinnati, the 2012 American Community Survey found that our City has the second highest poverty rate for children in the country, with 53.1% of children living below the poverty line. Children in economically distressed neighborhoods without access to amenities (sidewalks, hike/bike trails, parks and recreation facilities) have 20-45% higher odds of becoming obese or overweight compared to children who have access to these amenities.

Conversely, where neighborhoods have good public transit, sidewalks, bike paths, trails, greenways and traffic-calming devices, there is more walking and bicycling, greater physical activity, and lower rates of obesity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has found that there are significant health cost savings and prevention of chronic diseases when there is access to a functioning pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. From a public policy perspective, the health and economic benefits of trails for economically-distressed areas of the city can be one of the ranking criteria used for determining future funding priorities for trails.

The Economics Center has estimated $213,590 in annual health benefits if existing and new bike riders were to use the urban loop trail today, and a $2,068,630 economic benefit from a likely estimate of increased physical activity and recreational uses of the urban loop trails by existing and new bike riders. If urban trail usage is high, the economic benefit could be over $3.4 million per year.

IV. Energy and the Environment

In Indianapolis, the 2013 Partnership for Sustainable Communities report for the Cultural Trail estimates that the amount of fuel savings projected over the next 25 years is $21.4 million, as walking and cycling offset local vehicle miles traveled by 83 million miles. The report notes that air quality will also improve by replacing cars with bikes and walkers. Cincinnati will achieve reductions in energy consumption and fossil fuel emissions as increased walking and biking to work and for short trips become commonplace in the City, resulting in fewer vehicle miles traveled. The Economics Center calculated that 324 metric tons of carbon dioxide and 119 metric tons of other vehicle emissions (e.g., particulates, volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides, and sulfur dioxide) can be reduced annually by future Cincinnati Connects bike commuters. In monetary terms, this air quality benefit is worth $50,547 annually. That figure will continue to rise as trail commuting and travel to other destinations becomes the new norm in Cincinnati.

In addition to cleaner air and reduced energy consumption, there are clear and compelling urban conservation and restoration benefits from trails and greenways, including the transformation of blighted and underutilized urban and industrial properties as the trails are developed, preserving and improving the health of natural landscapes, reforesting trail corridors and increasing carbon sequestration, and helping to link fragmented wildlife habitat together. A network of trails and greenways will also connect the city’s parks and greenspaces together, and connect people to the city’s river corridors. Unlike roads, greenway trails function like linear parks and facilitate safe, less stressful, and more enjoyable travel from place to place.

“Cities are starting to put pedestrians and cyclists before motorists. That makes them nicer and healthier to live in.”

“By definition, livable and sustainable neighborhoods have healthy natural resources and healthy people living in them.”
- Groundwork Cincinnati, Mill Creek Healthy People/Healthy River Strategy, 2013

Note: At the time the Economics Center conducted its benefit-cost analysis, it was working from a description of the six connectors that differed slightly from the final configuration presented in this report. As a result, some of the numbers in the Economics Center’s analysis will need to be updated in addition to a benefit/cost analysis of the entire urban loop trail prior to their use in the submission of future grant applications.
2.3 ALIGMENT WITH NOTABLE PLANS

The Cincinnati Connects Plan will help the City meet national livability criteria required to secure grants from the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities that includes the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). In addition, Cincinnati Connects is consistent with and will help implement a number of landmark local plans. These documents include but are not limited to:

“We see the Cincinnati Connects plan as more than parks and recreation initiatives, and more than amenities that would be nice to have when other more important projects are done. What we see is the opportunity for the City to reinvest and reclaim itself, embracing the beauty of our rivers and hillsides, and utilizing spaces that have been under appreciated. Most importantly, we will be investing in our people, providing new opportunities for access, linking our amazing historic neighborhoods, and making new places of choice for people to call Cincinnati home.”

- Dave Zelman, architect, co-chair of the River West Working Group, and member of the Cincinnati Connects Steering Committee.

Plan Cincinnati is Cincinnati’s first comprehensive plan in over thirty years. It was adopted unanimously by the City Council in November 2012 after a three years long development process and unprecedented public participation through direct engagement of thousands of Cincinnati stakeholders.

One of Plan Cincinnati’s guiding principles is to “Preserve or create a pedestrian-scaled city.” Two “Connect” goals are to “Develop an efficient multi-modal transportation system that supports neighborhood vitality” and to “Expand options for non-automotive travel.”

To learn more please visit:
http://www.plancincinnati.org/

The Cincinnati Parks 2007 Centennial Master Plan honors the rich legacy of park planning and design by revisiting the transformative powers that parks can have in shaping a city; by expanding the connective network that Kessler started with the 1907 park system master plan; and by weaving in contemporary issues such as sustainability, crime prevention through environmental design, and a re-engagement with our citizens and partner institutions to provide services and facilities that are current, relevant, responsible and efficient.

The plan recognizes the importance of parkways, greenways, and trails, particularly along Mill Creek and the Ohio River, and recommends an expanded connected network of both natural and built components.

To learn more please visit:
http://www.cincinnatiparks.com/about-us/
One of the major strategies of the 2014 Cincinnati Health Department Creating Healthy Communities Strategic Plan (2015-2019) is to help prevent obesity and chronic diseases by increasing levels of physical activity in addition to increasing healthy eating and decreasing tobacco use. The plan identifies the need for access to physical infrastructure in city neighborhoods that will foster active living.

To learn more please visit:
http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/health/environmental-health/health-promotion-worksites-wellness/

The Greater Cincinnati Regional Trails Plan, completed in 2014, is a living document that captures a dynamic regional dialogue in three forms: a Graphic Information Systems (GIS) database, a user-friendly online map, and a Model Resolution. A collective partnership of public agencies, nonprofit organizations, private firms, and trail advocates in the nine-county region worked together through the collective impact model to create a comprehensive vision for trails and greenways in the nine-county Greater Cincinnati region. The plan addresses the need to link existing and planned trails that are currently isolated from each other.

To learn more please visit:
http://www.greenumbrella.org/TriStateTrails

The mission of the City of Cincinnati Bicycle Transportation Plan is to make bicycling an integral part of daily life in Cincinnati, so that persons of all ages and abilities utilize bicycles for all types of trips.

To learn more please visit:
http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/bikes/
Within the framework of regional multimodal transportation, OKI has developed the **2008 OKI Regional Bicycle Plan and the 2004 OKI Regional Pedestrian Plan**. The goal of these plans is to study the positive impacts bicycling and walking provide alternatives for single-occupant vehicle (SOV) travel and a means of connecting with transit. Whether they replace motor vehicle travel or support transit use, bicycle and pedestrian trips help reduce congestion, fuel consumption, and vehicle emissions. The use of non-motorized modes is especially valuable for replacing short distance auto trips, which have the highest rate of emissions. In addition to transportation and environmental benefits, these modes also contribute to personal health and quality of life.

**To learn more please visit:**

In **2008** Cincinnati adopted the **Green Cincinnati Plan** as a roadmap for how Cincinnati can be a national leader in addressing global climate change -- and make Cincinnati a healthier place to live.

The plan calls for reducing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions, reducing dependence on nonrenewable energy, and improving air, land, and water quality.

**To learn more please visit:**
Uptown Consortium Inc. (UCI) initiated the **MLK Reading Road Corridor Study** in order to plan for the impacts of the new I-71 interchange work.

The vision aims to build on the existing institutional, residential, business, cultural, social, and physical assets of the area in order to guide policy decisions and promote positive investment in the Uptown neighborhoods.

**To learn more please visit:**

2.4 PARTNER TRAILS

In September 2014, representatives from Groundwork Cincinnati-Mill Creek, the Ohio River Trail West, Wasson Way, Oasis Transportation Corridor, and Little Duck Creek met for the first time to explore the potential benefits of forming a Cincinnati trail coalition and partnership that could boost the development of each of the partner trails and provide the City of Cincinnati with an interconnected trail system. The potential outcomes from linking the partner trails together (Mill Creek Greenway, Ohio River Trail West, Wasson Way and Oasis) to create an off-road super highway for pedestrians and bike riders were astounding:

- Tens of thousands more people living in a greater number of city neighborhoods could use the urban loop trail to reach hundreds more destinations.
- Greater positive impacts on air quality, the environment, and public health, as more people use the trail for active transportation and recreational purposes.
- Increased reductions in vehicle miles traveled, resulting in energy savings and less traffic congestion for motorists.
- More competitive grant applications for federal transportation and other funding to design and build the trails. And,
- Greater economic benefits.

*In other words, for Cincinnati Connects, the sum is greater than the parts.*

The primary partner trails form the skeleton of the Cincinnati Connects urban loop trail. In addition, the Little Duck Creek, a smaller but strategic trail, is included in this plan. While the entire length of the Oasis Trail and Wasson Way are part of the loop trail, only a portion of the Mill Creek Trail and Ohio River Trail West are part of the loop.

The southern portion of the Mill Creek Greenway Trail, about five miles in length, is included in the urban loop trail and called the Mill Creek Corridor Connector Trail. When the city’s entire Mill Creek Greenway Trail is built, it will connect an additional five city neighborhoods (Spring Grove Village, Winton Hills, Carthage, Roselawn, and Hartwell) to the urban loop trail, and link to at least eight suburban communities.

Phase 3 of the Ohio River Trail West crosses Mill Creek and runs east to the Smale Riverfront Park downtown, approximately two miles from Lower Price Hill. It is called the Queensgate Connector Trail in this plan. When the entire twenty miles of the trail are built (between Mill Creek and Shawnee Park to the west), it will connect Queensgate, Lower Price Hill, East Price Hill, Riverside, Sedamsville, and Saylor Park neighborhoods as well as the communities of Addyston, North Bend and Cleves to the Cincinnati Connects trail.
Location
The Ohio River Trail West runs twenty miles along the Ohio River, from Smale Riverfront Park in downtown Cincinnati to Shawnee Lookout Park at the Ohio-Indiana boundary.

Length
The overall length of the trail is 28 miles as currently conceived, which includes 20 miles from Smale Riverfront Park to the Brower Road entrance of Shawnee Lookout Park, and an eight mile loop around Shawnee Lookout Park.

The trail plan is divided into four phases as shown on the maps in the “Connections” section below. Phases are not necessarily in chronological order of development. Phase 1 is three miles from Evans Recreation Area and the planned park at Price Landing in Lower Price Hill to Gilday Recreation Complex in Riverside. Phase 2 is approximately seven miles from Gilday Rec to Fernbank Park in Sayler Park. Phase 3 is two miles from Smale Riverfront to Price Landing. Finally, Phase 4 is 16 miles from Fernbank Park to and around Shawnee Lookout Park.

The expected route of Phase 1 was presented at a well-attended community meeting hosted by Cincinnati’s Department of Transportation and Engineering and the Ohio River Trail West in July 2014. Based on the route, plans, and renderings, community members expressed overwhelming support for Phase 1.

At this time, only one quarter mile of the trail in Phase 1 is complete. It is adjacent to the Peter Cremer site south of River Road near Sedamsville. More significantly, $1.3 million funding has been secured for Phase 1-Segments 1 and 2. This includes a $1 million Federal Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) grant awarded in January 2015, which will be available no later than 2019.

Beyond Phase 1-Segments 1 and 2, the focus of future fundraising and trail development efforts will be: 1) Phase 1-Segment 3; 2) two miles of Phase 2 from Gilday Rec to Anderson Ferry; and 3) crossing the Mill Creek from Price Landing on the way to Smale Riverfront Park.
Ohio River Trail West has always seen the Ohio River Trail West as the connector of communities and greenspaces across western Hamilton County and beyond. Communities and neighborhoods directly engaged include the Cincinnati Banks, Queensgate, Lower Price Hill, East Price Hill, Sedamsville, Riverside, Delhi, Sayler Park, Addyston, North Bend and Cleves. Some important parks and greenspaces along the route include Smale Riverfront Park, Evans Recreation Area, Price Landing, Mt. Echo Park, Boldface Park, Embshoff Woods, Gilday Recreation Complex, Anderson Ferry, Hillside Park and Ballfields, Bender Mountain Preserve, Nelson Sayler Memorial Park, Fernbank Park, Harrison’s Tomb, Gulf Community Park, and Shawnee Lookout Park. And, of course, many schools and other institutions will be served by the trail, such as Oyler School and Community Learning Center, Learning Matters and Community Matters located at the former St. Michael the Archangel Church in Lower Price Hill, nearby Holy Family School, Roberts Academy, St. Lawrence School and Rees E. Price Academy in East Price Hill, Riverside Academy, St. Vincent DePaul School, Mount Saint Joseph University, Sayler Park School, and Taylor High School.

Relation to Existing Plans
The Ohio River Trail West has six major regional linkages that make it a vital part of the Tri-State Trails:

1. At Smale Riverfront Park, it will link to the Ohio River Trail - Oasis Transportation Corridor, east of downtown
2. The Mill Creek Greenway’s southern terminus will be its linkage with the ORTW in the vicinity of Price Landing
3. At Anderson Ferry, it will connect to the Ohio River Trail in Kentucky
4. Near Cleves, it will link to the future Great Miami Trail going north to Dayton
5. West of Shawnee Lookout, it will connect to the Whitewater River Trail
6. Also, west of Shawnee Lookout, it will link to the Oxbow Trail and the Lawrenceburg Trail

Partners
Our public partners in the creation of the Ohio River Trail West work collaboratively based on deploying resources most effectively. The following roles are generalizations that may not apply in specific situations. Cincinnati Department of Transportation and Engineering provides leadership in the development of preliminary designs and construction plans within the City other than in City parks and recreation facilities. Cincinnati Park Board provides leadership in the integration of existing and future plans. Cincinnati Recreation Commission provides leadership in the development of preliminary designs and construction plans within CRC facilities. Great Parks of Hamilton County provides leadership in the development of preliminary designs and construction plans outside of the City. We will develop similar relationships with Addyston, North Bend and Cleves.

Our neighborhood partners currently include the community councils of Lower Price Hill, East Price Hill, Sedamsville, Riverside, and Sayler Park.
### Timeline

**January 2015**  
Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality grant for Phase 1 announced

**April 2015**  
ODOT and OKI scope of services review for CMAQ grant

**Early 2016**  
Design/construction drawings for Phase 1-Segments 1 and 2 funded by CMAQ

**2017**  
Integration of CMAQ with additional funding sources

**NLT 2019**  
Commence construction of Phase 1-Segments 1 and 2

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### Contact Information

**Ohio River Trail West**

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**Location, Conditions and Multi-objective Strategy**

The multi-objective Mill Creek Greenway Trail is located in the geographic heart of the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County and within the economically distressed Mill Creek river corridor. Because a high percent of Mill Creek households don’t own vehicles and many neighborhoods lack pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, mobility and connectivity are key issues and an alternative transportation system is critically needed.

The City of Cincinnati’s Mill Creek Trail will generally follow along Mill Creek, from its northern terminus at Galbraith Road in Roselawn to its southern terminus at the Ohio River to the south. In a number of places in the congested corridor, the trail must detour around existing public and private development along the river, making it an urban experience for trail users.

In addition to creating free, accessible, and convenient opportunities for people-powered transportation and for outdoor exercise and recreation, the City’s Mill Creek Greenway Program is a vehicle for transforming blighted, derelict properties along Mill Creek into public greenspace, edible forest gardens, and trails; for supporting economic revitalization of Mill Creek neighborhoods; for improving the health of the river and other vital natural resources; and for educating, training, and employing youth. Groundwork Cincinnati serves as the project manager for the City’s Mill Creek Trail.

The five-mile southern leg of the Mill Creek Trail, between Mill Creek Road in South Cumminsville to the Ohio River, serves as the Mill Creek Corridor connector trail.

**Length**

The City of Cincinnati’s portion of the Mill Creek Greenway Trail is approximately 15.5 miles between the Ohio River and Galbraith Road in Roselawn. About five miles of the City’s trail has been built to date in two locations:

1. Three miles between the Winton Road and Spring Grove Avenue intersection (adjacent to Spring Grove Cemetery) south to Beekman Avenue in South Cumminsville/Millvale and
2. 1.9 mile between Seymour Preserve and Caldwell Recreation Park.

Over the next year, Groundwork Cincinnati plans to build about one-mile of off-road trail and improve walking and biking infrastructure to link the two trail segments together to create about eight miles of trail. In addition, preliminary plans call for a 2.5 mile West Fork Creek Greenway Trail extending from Mt. Airy Forest to the tributary’s confluence with Mill Creek in South Cumminsville.

When the entire Mill Creek Greenway Trail is completed, encompassing the City’s portion of the trail and the planned suburban parts of the trail in Hamilton and Butler Counties, the trail will be at least 28-30 miles in length. Other planned tributary trails include West Fork Mill Creek (Winton Woods to confluence of the tributary with Mill Creek at Galbraith Road, and the Sharon Creek Trail.

**Connections**

The Mill Creek Greenway Trail serves as a major north/south route and a connection to the western portion of the City of Cincinnati. It is also considered a backbone trail for the Tri-State Trails regional network.

**City Neighborhoods**: The Mill Creek Trail will pass through and near fifteen city neighborhoods (Hartwell, Roselawn, Carthage, Winton Hills, Spring Grove Village, Clifton, Northside, Camp Washington, South Cumminsville, Millvale, North Fairmount, South Fairmount, Lower Price Hill, East Price Hill, and Queensgate.

**Parks**: The Mill Creek Trail will connect to the Hamilton County Fairgrounds in Carthage, Caldwell Preserve, Caldwell Park, Seymour Preserve, Salway Park, Spring Grove Cemetery, Mt. Airy Forest and Wayne Park (West Fork Creek Trail), Evans Field, and the future Price Landing park near the mouth of Mill Creek.

**Business Districts**: The Queen City Commercial center between West Mitchell Avenue and Clifton Avenue and the historic Northside business district.
**Trail Connections:** In Lower Price Hill, the Mill Creek connector trail links to the Ohio River West trail and the planned Price Landing park, and to the downtown riverfront via the Queensgate connector trail. The Mill Creek Corridor connector trail will also link to South Fairmount. It will connect to South Fairmount via the proposed walking paths that are part of the Metropolitan Sewer District’s Lick Run stream daylighting project.

This Connecting City Trails report also recommends a connector trail extending between Mill Creek, through Clifton and the Uptown area of Cincinnati to the Wasson Way trail. There are opportunities to create trail linkages between Mill Creek and the City’s other major trails.

Outside of the Connecting City Trails project and the City limits, there are exciting plans to connect the City’s portion of the Mill Creek Trail to Hamilton County and Butler County suburban communities, and to West Fork Mill Creek communities. Partners include the Connecting Active Communities Coalition, Hamilton County Transportation Improvement District, Great Parks of Hamilton County, General Electric Aircraft Engines, and Arlington Heights, Lockland, Wyoming, Woodlawn, Glendale, Reading, Evendale, and Sharonville.

**Partners**

**Mill Creek Neighborhood Councils:** To date, Carthage, Winton Hills, Winton Terrace Residents Council, Spring Grove Village, North Fairmount, Northside, Camp Washington, South Cummins valley, and Millvale. For future trail phases, Clifton, South Fairmount, Lower Price Hill, East Price Hill, Queensgate, Hartwell, and Roselawn.

**City of Cincinnati Elected Officials:** Mayor’s Office and Cincinnati City Council.

City Departments: Parks, Recreation, Transportation, Health, Public Services, Planning, Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD), and Office of the Environment and Sustainability.


**Other Valued Partners:** Cincinnati Public Schools, the Connecting City Trails Steering Committee Members and organizations they represent, the Hamilton County Transportation Improvement District, Mill Creek Valley Conservancy District, New Prospect Baptist Church, Niehoff Urban Design Studio, University of Cincinnati, PAR Projects, Queen City Bike, Rain Garden Alliance, Safe Routes to Schools, University of Cincinnati School of Design, Working In Neighborhoods.
Relation to Existing Plans

The Mill Creek Greenway Trail Program is helping to implement a number of local, state, and regional plans including but not limited to:

- Mill Creek Watershed Greenway Master Plan (1999).
- Regional Trails Alliance Master Plan (2014).
- City of Cincinnati Bike Plan (2010).
- Revive Cincinnati: Neighborhoods of the Lower Mill Creek Valley Plan (2010).
- The Hamilton County Park District's Master Plan (2003).
- The Ohio Greenways Plan administered by the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association.

Timeline

2015-2016:
Phase 5 - Winton Road to Center Hill Road (about 2.9 miles).

2016-2018:
Phases 6 & 7 - Mill Creek Road in South Cumminsville to Ohio River Trail in Lower Price Hill, with connections to Price Landing and the downtown riverfront. The trail construction is contingent on the City's ability to secure a permanent easement or long-term lease on the CSX railroad corridor.

2018-2020:
Phases 8 & 9 - Caldwell Park to Galbraith Road.

2019-2020:
West Fork Creek Greenway Trail – Mt. Airy Forest to Mill Creek in South Cumminsville.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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www.groundworkcincinnati.org
**TRAIL DESCRIPTION**

**Location and Length**

The main trail will go 7.6 miles from Blair Court in south Avondale to the Little Miami Scenic Trail in Newtown/Mariemont (marked in yellow on map below). An extension of 1.4 miles has been added that will go north from Xavier University, along the east side of Victory Parkway, to Paddock Hills and eventually south Bond Hill (marked in yellow going north from Xavier on Victory Parkway). Another extension has been added from Wasson Way to the Ault Park Valley Trail, the trail going north on Red Bank Road, Murray Trail (marked in light blue and green). The total network is over 11 miles.

**Connections**

The WW will have some critical connections to other trails including: at eastern end to Little Miami Scenic Trail, to Armleder Park and Lunken Airport and eventually to Martin Luther King Drive in Avondale/Clifton area. Along the way it will connect to important shopping areas, schools and the second largest employment district in the metropolitan area-UC, Clifton, hospitals and EPA Center.

**Shopping areas:** Mariemont Kroger, Hyde Park Plaza, Rookwood Commons, Wasson Road, Xavier shopping center, Norwood and the new office/shopping that will develop at the MLK interchange.

**Schools:** connect Terrace Park to Mariemont schools, Withrow HS, Walnut Hills HS, Clark Montessori, Xavier University and UC.

**Parks and Recreation:** South 80 Park in Mariemont, Ault Park, recreational area behind Withrow HS, Avondale Blair Park, north on Victory Parkway to three Cincinnati Recreational areas and Norwood’s Lower Millcrest Park.

**Partners**

We have received tremendous support from Mayor Cranley, Cincinnati City Council (three unanimous votes), Hamilton County Commissioners, OKI, SORTA, Senator Portman, Senator Brown, nine neighborhood councils, Fairfax, Norwood, Mariemont. We are working closely with Cincinnati DOTE, City Planning, SORTA, Xavier. Interact for Health, Haile Foundation and private donors have provided important funding.
Relation to Existing Plans
As shown in the trail map we will be a major part of the Cincinnati Connects network, connecting not only geographically, but also connecting the major population and employment centers.

Lead Agency Description
The Wasson Way is a joint effort of the City of Cincinnati DOTE/Planning, Village of Mariemont, Norwood and Fairfax with the Wasson Way Organization (WWO) non-profit group providing overall coordination. The WWO has a strong social media presence with 4300 “friends” on our Facebook page http://facebook.com/wassonwayproject and over 1100 email newsletter subscribers.

There is a website at http://wassonway.org.

Susan Schaefer, President of WW Board
susanschaef1@gmail.com

Wasson Way, 2692 Madison Road box 115, Cin. 45208.
wassonway@gmail.com

Timeline
Wasson Way was approved for a $500,000 grant from the State of Ohio. This funding will help construct a section of the Trail from Madison Road in Hyde Park to near the west side of Norwood in early 2016.
TRAIL DESCRIPTION

Location
The Oasis trail when complete will be a rail with trail that will provide a critical connection between Cincinnati’s growing Riverfront Parks to the existing Lunken Airport trails. The trail will traverse along a corridor that is full of history from the Torrence Road Station to the many forgotten staircase that would bring residents from Cincinnati’s eastern neighborhoods down to the banks of the mighty Ohio River.

Length
4.75 miles Install a 12’ wide multi-purpose transportation corridor on the north Oasis railroad track from Carrel St. to the western terminus of the International Friendship Park.
Relation to Existing Plans
The Ohio River Trail Oasis connects the Ohio River Trail east to the Ohio River Trail West, that connects to the Mill Creek Trail, that connects to Wasson Way, that connects to the Little Miami Scenic Trail, that connects to the Oasis Trail to complete the planned 44-mile Cincinnati Connects urban loop trail.

Connections
The Trail will become the southern terminus of the 330 mile Ohio to Erie and 80 miles Little Miami Scenic Trail and the link between Ohio River Trail West and Ohio River Trail East. It will connect Armleder Park, Lunken Playfield, Avoca Park, Smale Park, International Friendship Park, Eden Park, Alms Park.

Partners

Timeline
Planning and design are in process and it is hoped that construction can begin in the summer of 2016 and be complete by spring of 2017.

Contact Information
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donations@ohioriverway.org
PO Box 812, Cincinnati, Oh 45201
**Little Duck Creek Trail**

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION**

**Location**
The Little Duck Creek Trail runs along Little Duck Creek between Bramble Park (on the Murray Avenue Trail) and Plainville Rd in the Madisonville neighborhood of Cincinnati. Currently, the trail is a natural surface hiking trail.

**Length**
The length of the proposed shared-use trail is 1.1 miles.
A report published by the City Planning Commission in January 1976 stated, “In 1975, the Madisonville-Eastwood community plan recommended that a linear park-recreation area should be developed along 65 acres of open space along Little Duck Creek through Madisonville. This recommendation was endorsed and given a high development priority in the 1974 Master Recreation Plan for Cincinnati’s Eastern Communities.”

**Connections**
This small trail would help to connect Madisonville residents to major shopping and food centers on Red Bank Road.

**Partners**
The City of Cincinnati
OKI Regional Council of Governments
Madisonville Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation
Madisonville Community Council
Friends of Little Duck Creek Trail

**Relation to Existing Plans**
Regional connections are accomplished by connecting to the Murray Avenue Trail.

**Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>City Planning Commission Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Natural Surface Trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>Engineering Studies to commence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next steps</td>
<td>Acquiring funding sources for construction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When complete, the Cincinnati Connects trails will traverse a wide range of landscapes including railroad corridors, urban neighborhoods, parks, industrial corridors, and many others. While the primary focus of the Cincinnati Connects Plan is on construction off-road trails, the reality is that the envisioned urban trail system passes through highly developed areas that are unable to accommodate space required for an off-road trail. In these locations, the technical team have identified phased solutions that retrofit existing transportation infrastructure to create a safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities
4th Edition
This guide provides information on how to accommodate bicycle travel and operations in most riding environments. It is intended to present sound guidelines that result in facilities that meet the needs of bicyclists and other highway users.

NACTO FACILITIES DEFINITIONS

One-Way Protected Cycle Track
Street level bikeways that use physical protection from passing traffic along streets with high motor vehicle volumes and/or speeds.

Raised Cycle Track
Vertically separated from motor vehicle traffic along streets with higher speed streets with few driveways and cross streets.

Two-Way Cycle Track
Physically separated cycle tracks that allow bike movement in both directions on one side of the road.

Buffered Bike Lane
Conventional bike lanes with a designated buffer separating the bike lane from adjacent motor vehicle/parking lane.

Contra-Flow Bike Lane
Allow bicyclists to ride in the opposite direction of motor vehicle traffic and are separated with yellow center lane striping.

Left-Side Bike Lanes
Conventional bike lanes placed on the left side of one-way streets or two-way median divided streets.

Bicycle Boulevards
Design Elements
- Route Planning: Direct access to destinations
- Signs and Pavement Markings: Easy to find and to follow
- Speed Management: Slow motor vehicle speeds
- Volume Management: Low or reduced motor vehicle volumes
- Minor Street Crossings: Minimal bicyclist delay
- Major Street Crossings: Safe and convenient crossings
- Offset Crossings: Clear and safe navigation

NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide
The purpose of the guide is to provide cities with state-of-the-practice solutions that can help create complete streets that are safe and enjoyable for bicyclists.
(http://nacto.org/)
TYPICAL SECTIONS - ON-ROAD FACILITIES

**BL1: BICYCLE Lanes WITH SIDEWALK**

- Bike Lane
- 6" Min.
- 10'-11" Min.
- 10'-11" Min.
- 5'-0" Min.
- 5'-0" Min.
- 3'-3" Min.
- 2'-8" Min.
- 2'-8" Min.
- 5'-0" Min.
- 5'-0" Min.
- 6" Com.

*L&D Manual, Volume 1, Fig. 501-4
Lane(s) 10' (Residential), 12' (Commercial)

**BL2: BICYCLE Lanes WITH SIDEWALK & PARKING**

- Parking
- Bike Lane
- 7'-0" Min.
- 9'-0" Min.
- 10'-11" Min.
- 5'-0" Min.
- 5'-0" Min.
- 3'-3" Min.
- 2'-8" Min.
- 2'-8" Min.
- 5'-0" Min.
- 5'-0" Min.
- 6" Com.

*L&D Manual, Volume 1, Fig. 501-4
Lane(s) 10' (Residential), 12' (Commercial)

**BL3: TWO-WAY CYCLE TRACK WITH SIDEWALK**

- Use only where there are a minimum number of crossing streets and driveways through the cycle track.
- Bike Lane
- 5'-0" Min.
- 3'-3" Min.
- 11'-12" Min.
- 11'-12" Min.
- 3'-3" Min.
- 3'-3" Min.
- 2'-8" Min.
- 2'-8" Min.
- 5'-0" Min.
- 5'-0" Min.
- 6" Com.
TYPICAL SECTIONS - ON-ROAD FACILITIES

BL5: TWO-WAY BICYCLE LANES ON ONE-WAY STREET WITH SIDEWALK, PARKING BOTH SIDES

BL6: TWO-WAY BICYCLE LANES ON ONE-WAY STREET WITH SIDEWALK, PARKING ONE SIDE

BL7: ONE-WAY STREET WITH ONE-WAY BICYCLE LANE