Independence: overview

The City of Independence includes approximately 8–8.5 miles of the historic route, and a large number of trail related historic sites, mainly located near the historic square and town center. For the most part, the historic route coincides with modern roads, and the proposed trail alignment follows those roads. There are, however, some deviations proposed from the historic route (up to 0.75 miles) either to capitalize on existing adjacent trail or park lands (segments 6 & 13), avoid technically challenging road segments (segments 11, 12, and 13), or to maintain a through route where the trail cuts across neighborhoods and private parcels, away from public road right-of-ways (segment 14). These conditions and proposals are noted on the individual segment pages.

The trail is distant from public transit for much of its length (north of McCoy Park, and south of the downtown Independence area), but has significant overlap with multiple bus lines in downtown Independence and near the I-70 corridor, on the border with the City of Kansas City.

See notes about potential locations for trailheads, opposite page.

The length of the proposed retracement routes within Independence is approximately 10 miles, including both routes north of downtown (segments 6 and 7 on all three NHTs, 1.68 miles, and segments 8–10 only on the Santa Fe and California NHTs, 3.02 miles). The final length depends on the route chosen in the vicinity of the historic square, see segment 11.
Independence: overview

Most of the historic trail related places in Independence are concentrated around the downtown area, roughly between McCoy Park and the Bingham-Waggoner Estate. The overall trail segment in Independence, however, can be anchored by Mill Creek Park, on the boundary with Sugar Creek, and a major public transportation node at I-70 and Blue Ridge, on the boundary with Kansas City. Santa Fe Trail Park provides public facilities (e.g. parking, restrooms), access to the trail, and visible trail swales.

In the downtown area, the trail will mainly follow existing sidewalks. Major access points could be provided at:

- McCoy Park, which has existing NHT interpretive exhibits, as well as a new trail-themed playground, parking, and other public facilities
- Independence Square, which dates from the period of trail significance, is close to various buildings from trail times, and offers the NPS visitor center for Harry S Truman National Historic Site as a primary point of contact
- National Frontier Trails Museum, which is staffed in regular hours and offers interpretive exhibits and access to an extensive historical library on trail topics; it is also located across Pacific Avenue from the Bingham-Waggoner Estate, which provides public access to a set of interpreted visible trail swales on the south side of the property
Independence: Segment 6

0.97 Miles. North River Boulevard from Mallinson Road to Mill Creek Drive, then off-road trail following Mill Creek south to US Highway 24 exit ramps.

ISSUES:
- North River Boulevard does not yet have sewer system for development on the north end and a trail could be demolished if sewer system is later constructed
- Narrow right-of-way space along North River Boulevard

CORRIDOR CONNECTIONS:
- Connects to Harry S Truman Walking Trail
- Connects to Mill Creek Park, Slover Memorial Park, and McCoy Park

OPPORTUNITIES:
- Existing 10 foot wide recreational trail connects Jones Street on the south edge of Mill Creek Park to the US Highway 24 underpass (north side of McCoy Park)
- The City of Independence plans to build a pedestrian bridge over Mill Creek to connect the two halves of Mill Creek Park, which could also be used by the trail
- Existing underpass at US Highway 24 has a sidewalk, although no bike infrastructure

RELATIONSHIP TO HISTORIC ROUTE:
The planned trail deviates from the historic route at Mill Creek Park to: a) take advantage of the existing shared use path between Mill Creek Park and McCoy Park, and b) avoid limited right-of-way along River Boulevard. It is 0.15–0.2 miles away from the historic route in this section.
Independence: Segment 7

0.71 Miles. Bess Truman Parkway from US Highway 24 exit ramps to Spring Street, then south on Spring to White Oak Street, then east on White Oak to Liberty Street.

ISSUES:
• Many sidewalks may need improvement

CORRIDOR CONNECTIONS:
• Leads people into downtown Independence
• Connects to Truman Historic Walking Trail
• Connects to McCoy Park interpretive site
• Travels within one block of historic site, Owens-McCoy House
• Connects to Brady Park
• Connects to public transit at Truman Library/US Highway 24 and on Truman Road

OPPORTUNITIES:
• Existing pathways in McCoy Park allow for off-road pedestrian travel
• The City of Independence plans to build a connector trail within McCoy Park to the McCoy Park interpretive exhibits
• Additional opportunity to celebrate the trail during local Santa Calgon Festival downtown each year

RELATIONSHIP TO HISTORIC ROUTE:
Connecting to the existing trail at the US Highway 24 underpass, the route through McCoy Park remains up to 0.2 miles away from the historic route, but passes near an existing interpretive site and historic house, and rejoins the historic route just northwest of Independence Square.
Independence: Segment 8

1.03 Miles. Kentucky Road from North River Boulevard to Liberty Street, then south to Colonel Drive.

ISSUES:
- No bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure along either Kentucky Road or Liberty Street

CORRIDOR CONNECTIONS:
- Connects to segment 4 just south of Wayne City Landing interpretive site
- Passes in front of, and could provide safe pedestrian connection to, Mill Creek Elementary School

OPPORTUNITIES:
- Kentucky Road has a broad right-of-way and undeveloped shoulders

RELATIONSHIP TO THE HISTORIC ROUTE:
This segment is approximately on a historic route of the trail, although this route is only a designated part of the Santa Fe and California NHTs, not the Oregon NHT.
Independence: Segment 9

1.19 Miles. Liberty Street from Colonel Drive to Elizabeth Street.

ISSUES:
• No bike or pedestrian infrastructure currently exists along Liberty Street north of Jones Street; from Jones south, sidewalks are present on one or both sides of the street

CORRIDOR CONNECTIONS:
• Travels within one block of historic trail site, Lewis Jones House
• Can connect with Mill Creek Park and segment 6 via Kemper Avenue
• Could provide safe pedestrian connection to nearby Christian Ott Elementary School
• Passes near the Vaile Mansion, a museum and Victorian home, and non-NHT historic site

RELATIONSHIP TO THE HISTORIC ROUTE:
This segment is on a historic route of the trail, although this route is only a designated part of the Santa Fe and California NHTs, not the Oregon NHT.
Independence: Segment 10

0.80 Miles. Liberty Street south from Elizabeth Street to White Oak Street.

ISSUES:
- Many sidewalks may need improvement here
- US Highway 24 is a major trafficway and may present crossing challenges

CORRIDOR CONNECTIONS:
- Leads people into downtown Independence
- Connects to Harry S Truman Walking Trail
- Travels within one block of historic trail site, Lewis Jones House
- Travels within two blocks of historic trail site, Lewis-Webb House
- Could provide safe pedestrian connections to nearby William Chrisman High School
- Connects to transit along US Highway 24 and Truman Road; a bus station and Park & Ride commuter lot are located within 3 blocks to the east

OPPORTUNITIES:
- Signalized pedestrian crossing at Liberty Street and US Highway 24
- Passes within 2 blocks of Harry S Truman National Historic Site visitor center, where trail users can learn about trail history and other historic sites to visit in the area

RELATIONSHIP TO THE HISTORIC ROUTE:
This segment is on a historic route of the trail, although this route is only a designated part of the Santa Fe and California NHTs, not the Oregon NHT.
Independence: Segment 11

Approx. 1.90 Miles. As of plan publication, the City of Independence is working to determine the preferred route in the vicinity of the historic square [white dotted box on map]. From Pleasant and West Pacific Streets, west on Pacific to Crysler Avenue, and south on Crysler to West 23rd Street.

ISSUES:
• Many sidewalks are in need of repair
• Route bypasses Bingham-Waggoner House Swales, signage or other guidance may be necessary to encourage trail users to find the site

CORRIDOR CONNECTIONS:
• Passes through downtown Independence
• Passes near Truman Courthouse, which has several trail related historical markers on the grounds and houses the Jackson County Historical Society
• Connects to Harry S Truman Walking Trail
• Travels within a few blocks of Independence Square, the 1827 Log Courthouse, Bingham-Waggoner House Swales, Harry S Truman National Historic Site visitor center, Jackson County Jail, Kritser House, Overfelt-Campbell-Johnston House, and Woodlawn Cemetery (off map to east)
• Connects to National Frontier Trails Museum and Bingham-Waggoner Estate
• Connects to transit at Truman Road and West Lexington Street
• A bus station and Park & Ride commuter lot are located within three blocks to the east

OPPORTUNITIES
• The general National Frontier Trails Museum/Bingham Waggoner Estate area could be a good opportunity for trailhead and/or NHT experience interpretive development

RELATIONSHIP TO THE HISTORIC ROUTE:
Any route chosen in the vicinity of Independence Square will be within a few blocks of a historic route. From the National Frontier Trails Museum, it diverges to the west (maximum approximately 0.75 miles) to make use of existing or planned pedestrian improvements on Pacific and Crysler, and avoid a dangerous crossing of West 23rd Street.
Independence: Segment 12

1.02 Miles. Crysler Avenue south from West 23rd Street to West 31st Street.

ISSUES:
• Route is significantly west of historic trail route, although historic trail corresponds to existing streets in this area.
• Requires a spur connection to trail swales and proposed trailhead at Santa Fe Trail Park

CORRIDOR CONNECTIONS:
• Connects to transit at West 23rd Street

OPPORTUNITIES:
• Pedestrian improvements to Crysler Avenue are already underway
• Crosses West 23rd Street at a signalized crossing for safety

RELATIONSHIP TO THE HISTORIC ROUTE:
Most of this segment is approximately 0.5 miles west of the historic route, to capitalize on existing safe crossings of railroad tracks and major streets, and planned or ongoing pedestrian and bicycle improvements along Crysler Avenue.

Legend:
- Proposed NHT alignment
- Proposed NHT alignment – other segments
- Approximate historic trail route
- City boundaries
- Bike lane
- Marked bike route
- Marked share the road
- Unmarked share the road
- Pedestrian hiking trail
- Shared use path
- Mountain bike trail
- Equestrian trail
- Bus & public transit routes
- NHT sites
- NHT trailhead opportunities
- Schools
- Bus stops
- Adjacent segment number

Map data sources: see Appendix E, p. 212
Independence: Segment 13

0.86 Miles. Spur east along West 31st Street to Santa Fe Trail Park. Main route continues south on Crysler Avenue to West 35th Street.

ISSUES:
- Requires a spur connection east from main proposed route to trail swales and proposed trailhead at Santa Fe Trail Park

CORRIDOR CONNECTIONS:
- Connects to historic trail site, Santa Fe Trail Park swales
- Connects to Lipton Conservation Area, potentially offering an additional nature trail connection

OPPORTUNITIES:
- Parts of this segment are within the city’s master plan for sidewalk improvements, and several areas already have sidewalks
- The swales in Santa Fe Trail Park make it a good candidate both for trailhead and NHT experience/interpretive development

RELATIONSHIP TO THE HISTORIC ROUTE:
Although South Santa Fe Street follows the historic route closely though this area, this segment deviates from the historic route to the west (0.25 miles or less) to avoid very limited right-of-way on South Santa Fe Street, particularly south of West 31st Street.

Legend:
- Proposed NHT alignment
- Proposed NHT alignment - other segments
- Approximate historic trail route
- City boundaries
- Bike lane
- Marked bike route
- Marked share the road
- Unmarked share the road
- Pedestrian hiking trail
- Shared use path
- Mountain bike trail
- Equestrian trail
- Bus & public transit routes
- NHT sites
- NHT trailhead opportunities
- Schools
- Bus stops
- Adjacent segment number

Map data sources: see Appendix E, p. 212
Independence: Segment 14

1.47 Miles. Crysler Avenue from East 35th Street to East 39th Street, then west on East 39th to Blue Ridge Boulevard, then south on Blue Ridge to boundary with Kansas City.

ISSUES:
• Pedestrian access improvements are needed across the Blue Ridge Boulevard bridge over Interstate 70 and US Highway 40

CORRIDOR CONNECTIONS:
• Travels within a half mile of Firehouse Park, where wagon ruts are said to remain
• Leads to commercial area, and major bus stop and Park and Ride
• Could provide safe pedestrian connection to nearby John W. Luff Elementary School (off map to east)

OPPORTUNITIES:
• Segment along East 39th Street is a future planned improvement project which could be integrated with implementation of the national historic trails
• This segment attempts to reconnect neighborhoods which are currently separated by interstate highways by providing pedestrian access between them

RELATIONSHIP TO THE HISTORIC ROUTE:
The historic route cuts across neighborhoods and away from public right-of-way in this section. The segment route was chosen to approximate the historic route as closely as possible under current conditions (within 0.25 miles) and access the existing road bridge on Blue Ridge Boulevard to cross Interstate 70 and US Highway 40.